

Ignite Yorkshire was a highly ambitious, multi-faceted project with a mission to:

start a revolution in how Yorkshire's industrial heritage is viewed, understood, enjoyed and looked after by young people.

We take inspiration from the industrial past to develop skills for the future.

Ignite Yorkshire was one of 12 projects to be part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Kick the Dust programme. The funding and practice sharing programme aims to make heritage relevant to the lives of a greater number and diversity of young people, aged 11-25 across the UK.

The Ignite Yorkshire project was led by We Are IVE and developed with partners in 2017-18. After securing funding, the project ran from summer 2018 to summer 2022. It had a key focus on developing the capacity (skills, knowledge, expertise, resilience and resource) within the heritage and youth sectors to better engage a diverse range of young people (aged 14-25), out of school, with the industrial heritage of Yorkshire.







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We had a lot of freedom to try new things. I wasn't expecting that. The project team listened to young people and I've very rarely had that before.

Stakeholder





Foreward

When I first heard about the Ignite Yorkshire project over four years ago, I thought it was too good to be true.

As an aspiring experimental archaeologist, the opportunity to get involved with heritage crafts and learn from experts in the field seemed invaluable; I could hardly believe that I'd get to be part of such an exciting group.

Looking back now, it's incredible to see how much Ignite Yorkshire has grown and developed, being shaped by the young people involved. From speaking at the English Heritage Youth Summit to designing and building a functioning coracle, I never could have imagined the incredible experiences and skills that Ignite has facilitated for myself and so many other 14-25 year olds across Yorkshire.

I believe that one of the greatest strengths of Ignite Yorkshire has been the extent to which it has been youthlead. So often young people are underestimated within, and excluded from the heritage sector, with the assumption that they wouldn't be interested.

Museums and heritage sites should create activities targeted at this age group ensuring that they're not patronising or fail to recognise the capability of young people and the passion for heritage that the right project can awaken.

Watching the Ignite Yorkshire team over the years, I've not only seen the young people realise the extent of their own capabilities, but also the facilitators involved reassess just how much the participants are capable of.

be ople to connect back to what our ancestors might have done, in a hands on, welcoming and fun way. I hope these amazing skills never die out, we might need them again someday.

We need more organisations like Ignite.

Young person

As I watched the bodger's lodge taking shape in front of us, I also saw the growing confidence of the young people. When encouraged to steer the project in their own direction and without the limitations of doubt, the participants not only developed heritage craftsmanship but also acquired invaluable transferable skills: gaining in self-belief, team working and independent thinking.

Now as a student of archaeology, the experience that Ignite has provided for me personally has already been invaluable. As I progress in my career, I know that I will be even more thankful than I am already for the opportunities that the project has provided.

Ignite Yorkshire is filled with so many success stories of so many individuals. The physical achievements are easy to see but no infographic or statistic can convey the extent of the transformative nature that the project has had on so many young people's lives. Ignite Yorkshire serves to demonstrate just how capable young people can be when they are entrusted with responsibility and imparts an undeniable message to the heritage sector: do not underestimate us!

Eden Sedman.

young person, Ignite Yorkshire participant and part of North Yorkshire Youth's Bright Sparks group.



Delivery Model

The programme was delivered by six heritage and youth work core partners, and led by We Are IVE.

Further arts, heritage and culture organisations and creative practitioners supported the programme.

Each partner formed a youth panel and developed activities and programming that was most relevant to their heritage, setting and the young people involved. Young people organised and curated some of the activities and events either for peers or wider audiences.

There were also a number of centrally organised cross-cutting projects that aimed to trial new ways of working and explore themes such as representation, unheard voices and colonialism across partners or with those outside of the core partnership.

Young people from Cactus Crew recruited a graphic designer to create a central branding that could be used across partners, merchandise and the activities they organised.

Each project reported into the programme, which in turn reported to the overarching Kick the Dust programme. This added an additional layer of complexity to monitoring and finances.

66 I couldn't imagine doing this project without a partnership. It was a huge strength of the project. >>

Stakeholder

















Understanding the impact

Ignite Yorkshire was designed to undertake ground-breaking, game-changing work to deliver a raft of impacts for young people, partners and the sector, and to create new ways of working.

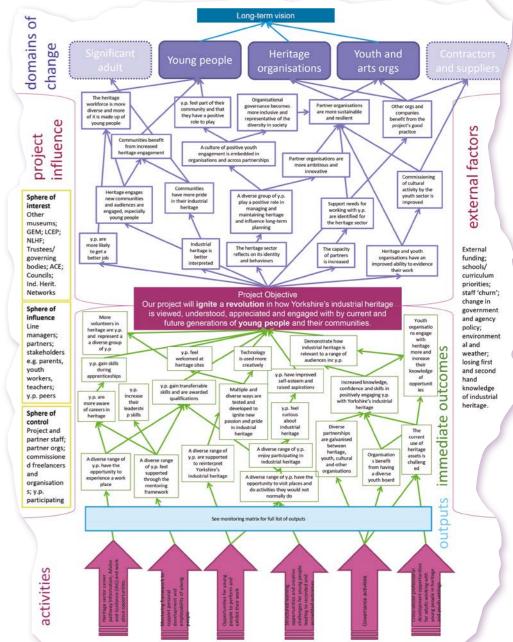
Central to the monitoring and evaluation approach was building an understanding of the programme's journey, its impact and being able to crystallise, share and act upon lessons learnt.

Heritage Insider led the programme evaluation and brought independence and evaluation expertise, in collaboration with We Are IVE and partners. A Theory of Change was central to the evaluation process as was reflective practice. Sophie Hunter led Reflective Labs which were designed to primarily be a focus for partner development, but also fed into understanding the process of programme delivery.

A range of evaluation tools were used across the programme – some existing within partner and/or contractor practice and others developed bespoke. These ranged from key informant telephone interviews and focus groups to documentary video and spider graphs.

Data has been synthesized across these to evidence outcomes and impact, (see pages 14-17) and to identify lessons learnt (see pages 18-19).





resource input

Ignite Yorkshire's secret ingredients

The programme had a distinct approach to planning and delivery.

The 'ingredients' for this approach are explored here and the tools that supported this, for example, reflective practice and a theory of change that evolved as the programme developed and became established.

Throughout, we emphasised that this was a trial and error process and it was OK for things to not go right.

takeholder

Heritage at its heart

Industrial heritage is a big part of the identity of Yorkshire, from very rural places and the coast to what are thought of as traditionally industrial cities like Wakefield or Bradford. Ignite Yorkshire has been concerned with how to make the connection between this sense of place, with young people's self-identity who were born in this century.



Collaboration and ownership

Partnership was a foundation of Ignite Yorkshire.
Working together collaboratively permeated every area of the programme and took many forms.
This spread way beyond the core partners to delivery agencies, young people and contractors.
Stakeholders felt a strong sense of ownership of the programme.

The most benefit was the shared learning, the reflective labs, having a sounding board of youth staff or other partners, tapping into other people expertise. It was a moral support element too.

Stakehold

Authenticity and trust

'Authenticity' is one of the Arts Council England Quality Principles for working with children and young people, and embodied by Ignite Yorkshire. Stakeholders felt that being honest and open was incredibly important to building trust i.e. not claiming to be experts and embracing open sharing of learning with young people over long periods of time, rather than just in task-focussed short bursts. All seven Quality Principles have been an important tool to help stakeholders reflect on their own practice and that of their organisation.



Shifting to a more youth-led approach

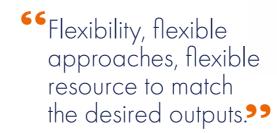
Ignite Yorkshire has created a mindful space where practitioners and organisations can reflect on the power dynamic between their organisations and young people; traditionally under-represented within heritage and programming. This has helped partners to develop methods of shifting this power and the narrative to better reflect the voices, views, experience and expertise of young people.

felt really heard throughout the project.

Young person



Partners worked hard to create 'safe' spaces where young people felt welcomed, included and relaxed. Training in youth work practice and issues such as online safeguarding were essential, as was open listening to young people and responding to their needs and concerns.



Stakeholder



The programme backbone was a series of regular Consortium meetings and Reflective Labs. These were an opportunity for reflective practice which helped to identify challenges and opportunities, share practice, support each other and adapt. The theory of change was an invaluable tool to shift focus from operational issues to check the direction of travel, revisit the bigger picture and plan legacy.

inclusive and safe environment to give ur [sic] opinions on matters that affect young ppl.

Young person

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How Ignite Yorkshire helped change to happen:



Start by ...

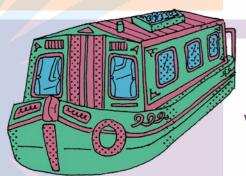
- Targeted marketing and recruitment of young people
- Forming youth panels and groups
- Encouraging a curiosity in heritage through tasters



- Feel supported, welcomed and included in heritage spaces
- Build trust with each other and heritage organisations
- Have channels to express opinions and float ideas
- Gain personal experience of heritage
- Opportunities to share own work, curate events and direct content
- Build confidence, social and work-based skills

And then ...

- Sense of unity, purpose and achievement
- Develop cultural capital and feel respected by heritage organisations
- Build social capital
- Improve employability
- Feel empowered to make change
- More resilient through enhanced aspirations, skills, confidence, network and agency



Within heritage organisations

- Bringing partners together, secure buy-in and build trust
- Developing shared outcomes and vision
- Building capacity through skills, partnerships and contractors

- Experiment with practice and approaches to working with young people
- Develop skills and understanding of the youth audience
- Redefine how youth audiences are viewed and referred to within the organisation
- Reflect on the journey, organisational identity, behaviours
- Develop trust in young people as partners and co-creators

- Adapt and flex approach as needs and context change
- Young people are more visible within the heritage sector
- Embed youth voice into strategy, ways of working and high-quality programming
- Influence other areas of organisations' work and leadership
- Turn project resources into shareable assets and lessons learnt
- More resilient through capacity building, new funding opportunities and strengthened network



Within youth and arts organisations

- Raising the profile of heritage and the opportunities it presents for youth and arts work
- Establish diverse new partnerships
- Sharing skills with heritage organisations

- Trial using heritage to enrich youth and arts practice
- Recognise how heritage can help contribute to building personal and community identity, and place-making
- Value heritage as a vehicle for engaging a diverse range of young people
- More resilient through capacity building, new funding opportunities and strengthened network



Ignite Yorkshire in numbers

3140 young peopl involved

1523 young people consulted

380 days given by young volunteers

1002 recorded outcomes for young people

388 work placement and volunteer opportunities

6200 young people received resources during Covid-19

355 work placement and volunteering opportunities

576 heritage and youth work professionals developed their practice CPD sessions

2078 adults consulted

The young people were probably one of the most visible examples of being part of a museum dynamic. It's about having more young people on site and going to planning meetings and things. We were talking about them more amongst the staff, the staff were more aware and more open to the change of use of the museum space?



1074 days in total given by volunteers

Circa £30,000 equivalent of noncash contributions attracted

Young people's voices are heard in industrial heritage organisations

Ignite Yorkshire has helped to build trust between partners and young people.

The projects and activities have helped to very practically demonstrate what young people can do, and the very tangible benefits that working in partnership with them can bring. This has led to beginning to value young people as partners, rather than just participants.

Ignite Yorkshire has helped find ways for young people to have agency within organisations to collaborate, create, curate and lead, and in this way influence the organisations. Whilst this work is far from over, the project provides 'proof of concept' of the difference listening to young people can make to the way industrial heritage is represented, how we work and how we reach and connect with audiences.

•• The projects are run by young people first. It's people getting their ideas out there without being told no by adults. It's about the young people feeling listened to or that they are in control, knowing there was a budget to use, in a community of peers and taking on roles and playing with ideas. It's about young people having a space to create things that they know other young people want to see. >>



Young people have developed confidence and vital skills

Ignite Yorkshire has created a huge variety of opportunities for a diverse range of young people.

This has included experiencing heritage first-hand, supported work placements for young people with additional needs, learning heritage skills, youth volunteering, paid internships and engagement opportunities, hands-on experience of organising festivals and events, collaborative projects and being part of a youth panel.

As a result young people have:

- Developed transferable skills and competencies such as team working, leadership and entrepreneurialism
- Increased their confidence in their own abilities, around others and in heritage and creative workplaces
- Attained qualifications
- Met new people and developed social capital
- Worked alongside different types of professionals to develop skills such as curation and interpretation
- Developed creative thinking and practice such as stage craft and creative writing
- Improved wellbeing and strengthened their support network, especially through the pandemic.

Originally the project aimed to get more young people into employment in the heritage sector.

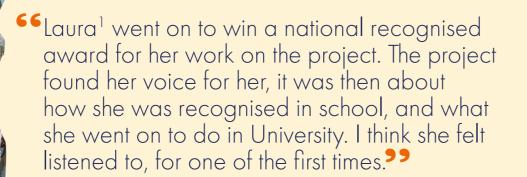
especially as I was moving from a scientific background to a creative one, it help me build my CV a lot. And meeting amazing [people] that pretty much made the person I am today.

Young person

Youth groups have helped me to make more friends of the same interests and age and helped me to feel more comfortable around people too. They've also helped me to feel more solid in voicing my opinions and what I want to achieve through the group.

One young lady in a foster care placement, in both the drama and music group, came along to every single session, we had about 50-60 session online...she clearly really needed that. It made a difference in their lives at that [pandemic] difficult time.

Stakeholder





Cana



Mini case study: A life-changing journey

'Thomas¹ is autistic, with related anxiety and sensory processing difficulties that were making his life very hard at that time. Days at college really taxed him to the limit and he had no mental capacity or motivation to do anything else that involved leaving the house.

When I discovered Canal Connections, I immediately knew it would be great to try to get Thomas, then aged 16, involved. For a long time it had been his ambition in life to live on a canal boat and he was a boy in desperate need of something new in his life.

The first time I dropped Thomas off he was so looking forward to the session that he found the courage to head over to the waiting boat by himself. I was extremely proud of him as even just managing to get in the car to go to Leeds was an obstacle that Thomas had to overcome.

Thomas's confidence soared - he finished his Competent Crew course and Skipper qualification. He has learned how to handle boats and gained loads of practical skills fitting out boats and fixing them. Also, more importantly, he has been confidently working with members of the public, crewing trips for Canal Connections. I was so impressed when Thomas recounted how he had done a good job of giving the safety talk for one of the trips. It has done so much good for Thomas's mood, self-esteem, confidence and people skills.

As for the future, Thomas is hoping for an apprenticeship opportunity with Canal Connections.'

Paren

From being barely able to leave his room, to now being able to confidently hold his own as a crew member; conversing with the public, boat builders etc, has been an amazing transformation that was largely due to Canal Connections. I am incredibly grateful for everything they have done.

Through their work with young people like Thomas, Canal Connections have discovered that practical engagement and tasks are fundamental to wellbeing.

They have seen first-hand how wellbeing derives from a range of intrinsic rewards that come from directly engaging with activities that have a practical outcome, not just for yourself but for others through a sense of:

- Meaningfulness and purpose
- Choice, ownership and responsibility
- Competence and satisfaction
- Progress.

These all contribute to **complex problem solving skills**³ – an asset for both life and employment.



ootnote:

- 1 Name changed for anonymity.
- 2 Extract from parental testimonial
- 3 World Economic Foundation



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The story of Yorkshire's industrial heritage has been retold

Historically, the museum and heritage model was based on reminiscence. However, as generations pass, the tangible connection with this history and our industrial past is diminishing. What's the Plan B?

Ignite Yorkshire has explored how young people can be at the centre of both in-situ and digital place-making.

Young people have brought fresh perspectives, energy, dynamism and a creative spark to the curation and interpretation process. Furthermore, they have been able to bring new voices and diverse identities to the table.

This way of working can help industrial heritage to find a fresh relevance for contemporary audiences that represents overlooked voices, almost forgotten skills and seldom heard stories. Ignite Yorkshire has shown that young people relish the opportunity to draw inspiration from the past to inform their futures.

Furthermore, this approach has given young people:

- A stronger connection to the place where they live
- Confidence in their own identities
- A self-recognition that they have a lot to offer heritage
- A greater personal sense of belonging through finding a 'tribe' in like-minded peers, and helping to define the future of heritage in their communities.

66 Having so much free rein and trust was really exciting for me. I wasn't anticipating that I would have so much choice and control. We really led with what was interesting to us and that in itself was a real and very welcome surprise. 99

Young person

66 It has shown us how working with young people can be successful. It can animate a site and there is so much you can get back from young people that

Stakeholder

new people but excited to discover what the project was. Throughout the week, I learnt about the impact of colonialism and its links to the Leeds Industrial Museum. It taught me to always ask questions instead of passively dismissing all the different buildings in Leeds and the possible significance they have in aiding our understanding of history.

I really enjoyed the unconscious bias training because I learnt a lot about how prejudice and preconceived judgment can determine our interactions with others. This project has inspired me to explore other places around Leeds and learn about what role they played in history and what role they currently play in shaping the future. 99

Young person

can guide what we do.

When I first started the project, I was nervous to meet

Mini case study: Locks to legacies

A core group of 10 young people worked together to research. write, produce and launch a new interpretation of Leeds' waterways. Together their creative responses to what they found can be enjoyed via an audio walk, podcasts and an exhibition. These help visitors to explore the often untold or hidden Black History and colonial links of these blue veins through the city.

'Locks to Legacies' is a partnership project of Ignite Yorkshire, We Are IVE, Geraldine Connor Foundation, Heritage Corner and Canal Connections. The work is co-funded by Leeds Inspired and the National Lottery Heritage Fund via lanite Yorkshire.

Partner organisations are more resilient

Organisational resilience is made up of multiple factors¹. Ignite Yorkshire has contributed to partner resilience in a number of ways, for example:

Networks and relationships

- Effective partnerships Partners have collaborated together and with a wide range of other organisations. This has expanded their network and strengthened the ecology of organisations working with young people and heritage
- Breaking silos Broken down boundaries between sectors and fostered understandina
- Internal resources Provided staff and volunteer training and development opportunities and increased capacity for quality work with young people through additional staff and volunteer capacity. and through leveraging additional funding
- Leveraging knowledge Youth work and arts organisations can utilise heritage as an asset and recognise the benefits of doing so. All partners have captured the impact of the approach and can use this to support future planning, advocacy and funding bids

Leadership and culture

- Situation awareness Partners have built a rich understanding of the youth audience. Reflective practice has helped to identify opportunities and challenges
- Innovation and creativity Young people have led in curating dynamic new content, interpretation and events for peers and diverse audiences

Change ready

- Stress testing plans The project has provided the focus and resource to develop and test new, more inclusive ways of working
- Planning strategies Youth voice is better reflected in organisation plans and strateaies.





1 Source: Resilient Organisations, www.resorgs.org.nz

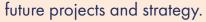


A 'lates' event specifically for young people, they are in the museum and they have curated what is on display and the place is full of young people there to enjoy themselves. It has been instrumental in the museum changing the way it curates to attract more young people..."

Sharing insights

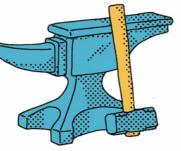
Ignite Yorkshire was a process of continual learning for all involved, as individual and organisational practice developed and evolved.

The following are examples of lessons learnt identified by stakeholders. These can help to inform the design of future projects and strategy.





Breaking out of the project box



The project provided a 'sandbox' in which to try new ways of working, new collaborations and to make mistakes as well as fine-tune delivery models. However there is always a danger of staying within the project 'bubble' and missing the opportunity to influence the wider operating context.

Stakeholders found that Ignite Yorkshire had relevance to other areas of work from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the workforce and audiences to marketing tactics, governance, representation in the curatorial process and storytelling and wider engagement programmes.

They reflected that early discussions about what benefits the organisation would like to achieve by authentically involving young people would have been beneficial for buy-in from senior leadership and trustees. Regularly engaging and communicating with colleagues not involved in the project was another way of avoiding 'siloing' that isolates the project from wider organisational work.

better youth engagement? That question will make people feel more uncomfortable than they realise, it is not always an easy answer to hear.

Embedding youth voice

Ignite Yorkshire has been a learning journey in being youth-led by building trust, finding ways to empower young people, then valuing and responding to youth voice. Stakeholders reflected that there has been a shift from a deficit model where young people come to museums and heritage organisations to be 'filled with experience and enriched' to a more growth mindset and more asset-based approach, where young people are valued by organisation. For example, the project trialled paid opportunities for young people – working with young people as partners, not for them.

However, Ignite Yorkshire struggled to find ways to integrate youth voice fully in Consortium meetings, for example and the learning journey is not over by any means.

Constantly having young people's voices in the room where decisions are made. Creating multiple entry points for young people to engage with your organisations.

Stakeholder

66 If you organise an event, stick up a poster or put something on Facebook, and expect young people to come along, you'll end up with an empty room.

Stakeholder

Our words can be barriers

The project found that terms such as 'industrial heritage' that are commonplace in the sector can create barriers to getting young people interested in opportunities.

This also touches on a major conundrum that heritage organisations need to surmount – when the 'nostalgia' draw for audiences runs dry, how can they find relevance? The project trialled shifting focus from looking backwards to using the past to inform debate and action for the future – a sometimes subtle, but effective change.

I've learnt that history is actually important. So many important things such as Equiano and David Oluwale were people we never learnt about.

Young person

For young people there is societal pressure to be cool, heritage in its raw state is not cool, it's about making heritage interesting without making it uncool.

Stakeholder

It's about balancing civic pride or the 'what made Britain great' narrative, with the pollution, the exploitation of people, both in this country and globally.

itakeholder



Next steps and signposting to toolkit

After over 5 years in planning and delivery, the Ignite Yorkshire journey doesn't stop here.

Thinking past the end of the project brings the challenge of how to 'unpackage' the project and all its learning. Partners identified a number of challenges in doing so, for example, how to:

- Weave the ethos and ways of working into the everyday operations of their organisations
- Sustainably resource this often resource heavy, but hugely impactful work
- Continue to move towards a point where young people, with their diverse identities, feel represented in their communities and local heritage
- Embed young people and youth voice into the fabric of heritage organisations, and to value them as an asset
- Ensure heritage (and heritage organisations) is relevant and accessible in young people's every day and working lives
- Create clear pathways into heritage for young people
- Normalise working with young people to collaborate and co-produce content and programming
- Link-up youth panels and programmes across organisations to create a movement
- Continue to articulate and advocate for the benefits of working with heritage and young people, and win the hearts and minds of more people and organisations.

The partners have worked together, and within their organisations, to find workable solutions over the project's last 18 months, for example, Museums Sheffield have been able to write the work into strategy and operational plans.

Ignite Yorkshire has already spawned offshoot projects and activities and the project has prepared the ground for a future major collaborative project that moves placing youth-voice in place-making to the next level. We Are IVE have made a commitment in their new strategy to supporting organisations to integrate youth voice into the governance of organisations and to take an 'asset-based' approach to valuing young people.

Partners also identified an opportunity to turn the valuable resources created and tested during the project into assets for the partners, and to share with the wider sector.

These are freely available at igniteyorks.org.uk/resources

Ignite Yorkshire and the wider Kick the Dust cohort of projects, has truly been a catalyst for change. The project has taken a passage from slow beginnings building trust and establishing partnerships, agreeing shared principles and new ways of working to demonstrating confidence to push the boundaries, lead on the key issues and opportunities around youth engagement and empowerment, and in influencing others.

Despite the compelling evidence of change and the difference this type of approach can make¹, young people 'remain largely anonymous from heritage conservation policy and practice' and are still underrepresented across heritage².

However there are positive signs for the future.

As Ignite Yorkshire drew to a close, the youth groups formed during the project started to take on a life of their own, growing from strength to strength through the passion, energy and ideas of young people.

Cactus Crew are a great example of this move. Having been asked time and again for their insights 'into what teenagers want', they established The Spikey Truth to provide paid reviews and advice on what venues offer for teens. Their impressive client portfolio now includes Landmark Trust, Science and Media Museum, Natural History Museum and the National Coal Mining Museum for England.

The new industrial revolution has begun...

I would like to see the museum make use of young people in an advisory role at the museum or as ambassadors helping with recruitment of young people.



CREW TIPS Training by teens for museum teams

Tuesday 23rd August 2022



11am - 2.30pm Carlton Lodge Activity Centre Thirsk YO7 4NJ





ootnote:

- Institute for Community Research & Development/Arts Connect. (2022).
 The Value and Meaning of Young People's Engagement with their historic environment. University of Wolverhampton for Historic England.
- 2. Taking Part survey. (2019). Department of Culture, Media and Sport.



66 For us it's about giving up power, giving up control, it's about forgetting about current processes, even getting rid of some of them and finding new ways of doing.

It's about asking why do you want to have better youth engagement? That question will make people feel more uncomfortable than they realise, it is not always an easy answer to hear.

Stakeholder



Getting to bounce ideas off a youth worker, the casual conversations were the most useful. Their perspectives were really valuable. It is easy to be in a 'silo' working situation so to have a second opinion about simple things stays with me even now.

akeholder



Stakeholo

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