

NeurOX YPAG: FOCUS ON IMPACT

May 2021 – May 2022: by Vanessa Bennett

Three impact areas:

1. Promoting, supporting and developing ethical frameworks for young people's (YP) involvement
2. Direct impacts for young co-researchers, and researchers
3. Indirect impacts (knowledge production) benefiting research and YP

1. Promoting, supporting and developing ethical frameworks for young people's involvement

Respecting YP's Rights to be involved in research that affects them (UN Convention approaches).

- Development of an inclusive strategy and environment to widen involvement of YP in research as co-researchers.
- Creatively exploring involvement methodology and evaluation: capturing the 'multiple' impacts of our approaches.
- Identifying opportunities and building external relationships and collaborations to sustain and widen involvement of young people.
- Offering PPI consultations and supporting researchers in developing and facilitating on-line advisory sessions between researchers and young researchers.
- Communicating relevant outputs to support and motivate researchers to ethically and inclusively involve YP focussing on *Accessibility, Transparency and Trust, and Sustainability*.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/NeurOXYPAG>

Watch animation: <https://youtu.be/4BkcwTVjCBM>

2. Direct impacts for young co-researchers and researchers

This is defined by what young co-researchers and the researchers find 'meaningful' (the benefits) in their involvement, and how we adhered to the principles of co-production throughout our work together (whether advisory, consultation or co-production). We have:

- used reflective feedback on our projects at various stages.
- focussed on training requirements to build young researcher's capabilities.
- included creative enquiry into how we can ethically capture the involvement experiences of the research on young co-researchers and determine the elements and outputs that they find most rewarding, and challenging.

"It made me feel really happy to be a part of something like that. Because I know I'm making a positive change that's going to help other people in the long term. I feel like it's positively impacted my well being as well as my mental health."

Young co-researcher

Overall, it is clear that our young co-researchers are motivated by *making a difference* to themselves and others through their involvement.

Several projects have documented ‘change’ as a proxy for impact for young co-researchers and researchers.

Being in a YPAG – different perspectives and roles across a range of projects

“Because of my involvement in the YPAG, I got increasingly interested in that process of empowering young people, giving them a voice. And also, realising that they are much stronger than you think, their ideas are so innovative – realising their huge potential.”
Neurosec researcher

“I feel like I’m a changed person, but it’s a positive change, because I’ve grown in myself, and found out about myself. And I’ve also got a better understanding of the world and what goes on in the sense of research, because research actually plays a big part in like, everything.”
Young co-researcher

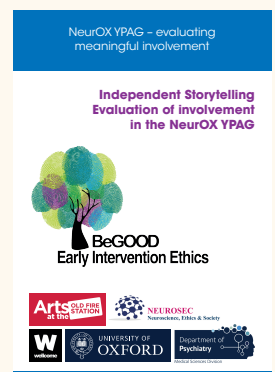
“I learned to not be as afraid to give my view on things, and it was nice for my contributions to have an effect on the overall result.”
Young co-researcher

The *Storytelling Impact Report* details the journeys of some young co-researchers and researchers and what they found meaningful over the past 2.5 to 6 years with the NeuroOX YPAG on a range of advisory and co-production research projects and consultations. Overall, the report identified significant evidence of positive changes for all involved.

Read report: <https://bit.ly/StorytellingImpact>

Key themes identified from members experiences:

1. Confidence
2. Progression
3. Empowerment
4. Mutual benefit
5. Community
6. Diversity and inclusion
7. Connections
8. Positive change
9. Learning together



“I think the importance of a community was also very clear to me from the YPAG. And for them, it was really important, because it was something really unique. It was an opportunity for them to learn from the views of all kinds of young people coming from all walks of life. And just creating a very welcoming, accepting environment at the beginning of each session was important, so that they knew their presence and their opinions were valued.”

Neurosec Researcher

Work Experience – developing research knowledge, skills and personal development

A week of intensive internal and external engagement, and project work across the breadth of the research life-cycle.

- Young researcher investigated and developed their concept of ‘flourishing’ and how they may research this further, continued dissemination work around the Childline/NSPCC project and provided peer-review for a BeingBoing grant proposal (also involving YP).
- As part of the dissemination and impact theme, they learned about third-sector funding, activism, policy, grant applications and peer review skills.
- Through reflection and evaluation they described the knowledge, skills and personal achievements from this participation.

<https://oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk/neurox-ypag-virtual-work-experience-week-26-30-july-2021/>

Childline/NSPCC project – how young people describe ‘making a difference’ and evaluating co-production

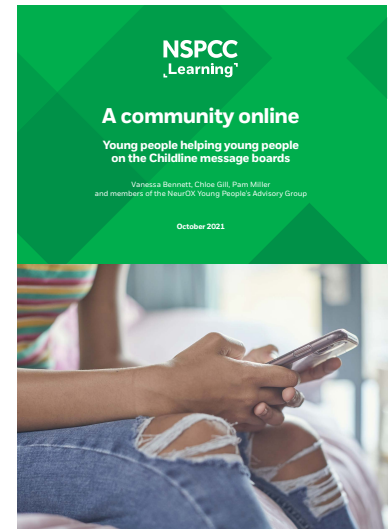
“I think I have become more confident at speaking to people I don’t know and voicing my opinions.”

“When we spoke with the Childline panel directly we felt they really listened to us and took our thoughts onboard in order to continue improving the service.”

“Then we actually met with people from Childline and just told them what we found, how we thought the service could be improved to help people a lot more. Which was definitely very useful for both parties.”

Young people’s perceptions of the change their involvement in co-production has had on them are reported in the Storytelling Impact Report (as above), the co-produced NSPCC External briefing report and a co-authored peer-reviewed external publication (in development).

- The 3-month project researched the Childline on-line message board service.
- Young people were involved in over 130 hours of research and co-developed recommendations.
- To view the NSPCC External briefing report see: https://bit.ly/NSPCC_Bennettetal2021



Training for young researchers to build capabilities

Training and developing skills and knowledge is an important part of sustaining a YPAG. Our young researchers were involved in the following.

- Research training sessions for YPAG members (4 researchers delivered workshops; June 2021).
- Story collecting training session (delivered by Arts of the Old Firestation).
- Podcast training (delivered by a YPAG member who has her own podcast series).
- Co-developed strategy development for peer-peer engagement and recruitment, developing strategic, planning and project management skills, and briefing media designers.

3. Indirect impact (knowledge production) benefiting research, service development and other young people

The wider impact of involving young co-researchers relates to the benefits that the knowledge/evidence produced has for a range of stakeholders, including other young people, services and the research community.

In the absence of robust measures of involvement, we have examined different ways of demonstrating the impact of our involvement in research for different stakeholders (across sectors) at different stages in the research life cycle. Young co-researchers have been involved at various levels from advisory to co-production.

Our outputs have utilised a range of different media relevant to different stakeholders and beneficiaries of the research relating to children and young people’s involvement and mental health and wellbeing. Some are described below in relation to their impact.

Young co-researchers making a difference for other young people

Dissemination activities for the Childline project have had both direct and indirect impacts of those involved in the research through the following activities.

- Regional TV (BBC South Today) and radio (BBC Radio Oxfordshire) broadcasts of interviews with young co-researcher and researcher (training and support provided by the NSPCC Press Office).
- Messages delivered by the young co-researchers through Press release and Department of Psychiatry news piece.
- Across these channels, young co-researchers communicated how through their research, they realised how the non-judgmental caring online community provided by the message boards is an important service offered by Childline for all children and young people, as well as those experiencing abuse.

Extracts from Press release/Departmental news piece:

“The message boards are an ideal place for young people to anonymously speak out about their concerns for the first time without any worry about how other people might perceive them. It’s a way for them to seek out validation in an online society that has proven to me that it cares and won’t judge.”



“I think what struck me most about using the message boards is how often users weren’t sure if their worry was actually a concern and so often, it actually was. It’s a great place to seek initial validation and everyone is very kind and friendly on this platform as it’s monitored very well.”

Young researchers felt empowered when they saw their project on the TV for the Childline/NSPCC Message Board project. They reported the impact of their involvement for other young help seekers.

Adopting Young People’s recommendations and leveraging funding support for service development

It was important to young people that they could see how the research would be applied.

“When we spoke with the Childline panel directly we felt they really listened to us and took our thoughts onboard in order to continue improving the service.”

- Recommendations adopted by Childline/NSPCC Boards for online Message Board service
- Presentation of evidence and recommendations produced by young co-researchers (during work experience week) for NSPCC communications group to influence High-value funders and support implementation of recommendations to service development.

Direct grant development to take forward research recommendations

Six young co-researchers were involved in developing a large collaborative grant proposal.

- Supporting further Grant development to follow up on research recommendations from the Childline study.
- Co-REACH: Co-producing Research on Emotional Maltreatment in Online Community Help-Seeking Settings
- MRC/ESRC/AHRC Adolescence Mental Health and Developing Mind Methodological Innovation call (pending, Council ref: MR/X003213/1).

Influencing research and knowledge production

Supporting researchers in the department of psychiatry to involve young researchers via online sessions

- Five young researchers were involved in a session to discuss a research programme on eating disorders with Dr Rebecca Murphy & Emma Osborne.

“The young people provided useful insights into their priorities, preferences, and concerns about our research.... It was so helpful to hear what stood out to young people as they reflected on our research so that we can incorporate their feedback.”

Read these researchers' blog: <https://oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk/involving-young-people-in-planning-a-study-to-evaluate-a-new-treatment-for-binge-eating-disorder/>



Young Researchers contributing knowledge and experience to studies from other research institutions – with University of Nottingham

- In this second session (16 months on), five young researchers reviewed and offered young people's interpretations of the results of their study on patterns of seasonal depression in young people from large health databases.

“This produced a really fascinating discussion where the groups raised lots of issues that hadn't occurred to us, as well as focussing on aspects that we hadn't considered as so important.” (University of Nottingham research Team)

Read these researchers' blog: <https://oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk/involving-young-people-in-studies-using-large-health-databases/>



Providing PPI consultations with PPI Leads at early stages of research design to support meaningful involvement

- Wellcome grant submission – anxiety and panic disorder (Dr. Andrea Reineke)
- NIHR DSE award application – panic disorder (Prof. Polly Waite)
- ARC doctoral fellow proposal – self harm (Dr. Stella Botchway)

Further disseminating knowledge: findings, methodology and co-production involvement approaches

The following publications are in development, co-authored with young co-researchers, from the Childline project.

Bennett V, Gill C, Miller P, Sayers C, NeurOX YPAG, Appleton J. 'In their own words': a naturalistic co-produced study of young people's experiences of emotional maltreatment expressed in anonymous, peer-peer online message forums. [Planned submission to *Child Abuse Review*, June 2022]

Bennett V, Gill C, Miller P, Lewis P, NeurOX YPAG, Lavi I. Understanding help seeking of young people experiencing emotional maltreatment from 'real-world' conversations in online peer-peer communities. [Planned submission to *Health Expectations*, June 2022]

Bennett V, Gill C, Miller P, Wood A, Bennett C, NeurOX YPAG, Singh I. Co-production approach to understand on-line help-seeking for young people experiencing emotional abuse and neglect: methodology, evaluating meaningful involvement and impact. [Planned submission to *Health Expectations*, June 2022]

Strategic involvement in young people's mental health and wellbeing interventions and services

Four young researchers provided input on Oxfordshire County Council's prevention strategy planning for young people's mental health and wellbeing as part of a wider consultation with a range of community groups.

Jack Gooding, a Senior Public Health Principal in the Public Health Team at Oxfordshire County Council, fed back:

"It was a privilege to spend some time with members of the Oxford YPAG and have a rich conversation about strategies that could improve their wellbeing and help to prevent mental ill health. The group were articulate and were able to provide invaluable insight into the themes and topics we discussed including on how to engage children and young people in wellbeing and mental health support. The insight gained from the focus group will be used to inform the direction of the new wellbeing promotion and mental ill health prevention strategy for Oxfordshire and it would be great to come back together at a later date to co-produce the interventions that are taken forward over the next year."

Please see our accompanying Summary of projects & Outputs report which can be downloaded from: <https://bit.ly/NeurOXYPAG>

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