



**VOICE
OPPORTUNITY
POWER**

**A YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN
THE MAKING AND MANAGING OF THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS.**

Session 1 – Your lived experience Activity Pack

LOCATION



Community Centre
or Youth Club

LENGTH OF TIME



2 hours

ATTENDEES



Young people
Youth worker/s
Facilitator or
assistant
Design team

AIMS

- Launch the project in an interesting way
- Introduce the project team to the group of young people
- Listen and learn about their lived experiences
- Teach new mapping and analysis skills

OUTPUTS

- A map of the local area, labelled by young people
- Initial manifesto themes
- Quotes from young people, including their best and worst places in the local area

ACTIVITIES

- Favourite childhood memory
- Best and worst place
- Map exercise and interviews
- Front door game

RESOURCES



Laptop



Projector or
screen



Smart phones



WiFi



Printed map
of local area
@ 1:1000 on
foamex



Red, orange
and green
post-it notes



Red, orange
and green
stickers



Key locator
stickers



Red, orange
and green
pens



Flipchart

We are at
this stage



RIBA Stage 0
Strategic
definition:
outlining the
project scope,
objectives and
programme

RIBA Stage 1
Preparation
and briefing:
drafting an
initial brief in
line with the
objectives

Session 1:
Your lived
experience

Session 2:
Show us your
neighbourhood

Session 3:
Tell us what
you want

RIBA Stage 2
Concept
design: initial
proposal and
specification

Session 4:
Tell us how
we are doing

RIBA Stage 3
Developed
design:
progressed
proposal
following
consultation

Session 5:
You said,
we did

Planning
submission

RIBA Stage 4-7
Includes
technical design,
construction,
handover
and ongoing
maintenance

SESSION OVERVIEW

The purpose of this session is to introduce yourself and the design team to the group and to start finding out about the spaces and places where the young people live.

Working on their terms means starting to listen and understand their lived experience. Beginning with the game about your favourite childhood memory, we set the scene for everyone to be thinking about the freedoms, pleasures and risk taking involved in being young. From there, we look more closely at places around their neighbourhood, introducing them to mapping exercises and analysis that will be used throughout all the sessions. We then move into more detail, playing a game called 'My front door' and finish by agreeing a walking route for the next session, when the group will introduce us to their neighbourhood.

The session has four short activities and lasts two hours. It has a 10-minute break in the middle which allows you to split it easily into two separate one-hour sessions. If you would like to run a shorter version of the session you could wrap up after the map activity and interviews, which would reduce the session to 90 minutes without a break.



We want to know
what you think of
the toolkit.

Tell us here!

What you'll need:



15 minutes



1 group

INTRODUCTION

Start by sitting in a circle or around a table. Avoid a classroom format. This introduction can be led by a youth worker and facilitator.

Use the following text and adapt it how you see fit. You may need to add information about toilet breaks, WiFi codes, snacks and drinks as well as other aspects that we have not included here.

"Welcome to the workshop. I'm [youth workers name] and this is [assistant/facilitator's name]. We are going to be working with [design and development team] on a project with you over the next few months so that you can help shape what is being proposed."

Carry out initial introductions around the room. The design team will talk more about the project once you have introduced the process.

This is what we want to achieve through this process:

- *To work closely with you over 5 sessions and listen to what you have to say*

- *For you to show us your local area and tell us your experience of what it is like to live here*
- *For us to better understand the spaces where you live and what you think about them*
- *For you to create a manifesto about how you want the spaces and places in [project location] to work for you*
- *For the design team to take your manifesto on board, and where make changes to the proposals where possible if you think they are needed*
- *And ultimately, for you to agree that the final proposals have met your manifesto*

"Today's session will last two hours. During this time, we will talk about what it's like to live in your neighbourhood. What you think of the buildings, streets and open space. We'll hear about the plans to change this area and how you can directly influence them. The team from [design/architect group] are here today to introduce themselves and to talk to you about their proposals for [location]."

The most important point I want to make today is this: you are experts in your local area. You know things about the area that we don't. You experience it in different ways. And you might want different things for it in the future. This is about us listening to all of you so we can start to understand what life is like for young people around here. And that helps us create a place for the future that works for young people and for everyone.



Over the next few weeks, we'll get out and about. We'll walk round this neighbourhood as well as visiting a different one. We'll ask you to analyse every place carefully and work together on a manifesto, which is like a list of priorities or objectives, that we'll give to the design team and they will use to help create their proposals.

Once the designs have started to progress, we'll ask the team to come and present them to you. We'll discuss how well they deliver on the manifesto and what needs to change. We'll also talk about the scope for a 'meanwhile project' that could improve something in this neighbourhood quickly in the short-term.

In the final session, we'll examine the proposals in more detail and test whether you think it looks like a place that will work for young people. You should be able to see specific aspects of the design which reflect your ideas and your experience. It won't contain everything. But you will have real influence on the proposals.

Now I'm going to hand over to [design team] who are going to tell you a bit more about the process."

Design team to introduce themselves: name, role and responsibilities and give a brief overview of the project.



What you'll need:



10 minutes



1 group

ACTIVITY 1: FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY

The first activity is an icebreaker which everyone takes part in, young people and adults. It is an opportunity to shift the discussion away from 'place-based provision' and onto an experiential level. Credit for this game goes to Wendy Russell from the University of Gloucester.

It's a reminder of the importance of freedom to play and explore as part of young people's lives and their sense of wellbeing.

The game goes like this:

"I'd like you to stand up if you were once, or still are, a young person."

Everyone stands up

"I'd like you to take a moment to think about your favourite memory growing up. Remember where you were, who you were with and what you were doing. Recreate that picture in your mind and hold it there for a moment."

"I'd like you to stay standing if that memory was outside."

Pause whilst some sit down

"I'd like you to stay standing if that memory was with other young people."

"I'd like you to stay standing if there were no adults present."

"I'd like you to stay standing if there was any risk in what you were doing that might have caused an injury."

You may find that most people are still standing after these four questions. This might come as a surprise to everyone. It can be a very levelling moment. Take the opportunity to ask a few people about their memory, including an adult. This is a common and important aspect of childhood and it will reveal to the adults:

- * How important these experiences are;
- * How they often took place outside, but were unlikely to occur in a designated playspace
- * That young people continue to have these experiences.

It will set the scene for a debate about the kind of public realm and the kind of experience you want people to be able to have in the new development.



What you'll need:



10 minutes



1 group



WiFi



Phones for sli.do



Screen or a or a Flipchart

ACTIVITY 2: BEST PLACE AND WORST PLACE

The second activity starts to look at the local area. It can be carried out on a flipchart but works well using an app called sli.do. Sli.do allows young people to start engaging in a group and ask questions or give comments without having to speak out. Sli.do is a Q&A or polling app that can be controlled from a phone, tablet or computer, with delegates interacting on their own phones while the activity is displayed on the main screen.



Scan to visit Sli.do

For this activity we want to start talking about the local area and finding out the places that young people like and don't like. Use the sli.do app (or a flipchart) to start recording what they say. Introduce the activity and ask everybody to log onto the WiFi and the sli.do website, entering the number of the event.

Before you start, make sure everyone has access to the WiFi so that they don't have to use their own mobile data for this exercise.

The questions you're going to ask are:

Q1.

What is your favourite place in your local area?

Q2.

What is the worst place in your local area?

As the young people start to enter the answers they will appear on the screen, ask a bit more about what they are saying and why they do and don't like these spaces. You will revisit this format later in the session as part of Activity 4, 'My Front Door'.



ACTIVITY 3: MAP EXERCISE & INTERVIEWS

For this session, divide all the young people into two groups and explain that they will be working on two separate exercises for 20 minutes each and then swap over.

Whole group introduction

"Your memory and the places you have talked about are important to you. We call this your 'lived experience'. It tells us a lot about what it's like to live here. Designers and architects can then use these experiences to write a brief and design places that work for everyone.

We want you to now think about your experience in specific places and start to understand how you feel about them. We are going to do two exercises in a moment, one where you look at a map of your neighbourhood and think about the different spaces. The other will be talking in pairs or threes about your local neighbourhood."

During all the sessions we run together, we're going to focus a lot on the outside spaces near

where you live, because this helps us design the whole neighbourhood better. We are talking about all the streets, paths, open spaces, parks and green areas. And the way we analyse these outside spaces is by using a really simple method called the 'Traffic Light System'."

The traffic light system allows you to give a colour to a space on the basis of how much freedom you have to do what you want there. It's not about whether you 'like' a space. It's about the level of freedom and choice you have there."

This is what the colours represent:

 **A green space** is a place where you feel safe and totally free to do what you want: there are very few rules.

 **An amber space** is a place where it might be safe to play or hang out but there are some rules. Somewhere like a school playground, or maybe a football pitch, where you can't do anything you want there. There might be signs or other people telling you what to do.



Red is space where there are lots of restrictions. A road is a good example because it's clearly not safe to hang out in the middle. Or it might be somewhere that feels dangerous because of the way other people behave there. Or there are simply very tight rules in place.

People will apply different traffic light colours to different places, which is fine because not everyone feels the same.

ACTIVITY 3: MAP EXERCISE

This activity is about marking up a local map with key locations and coloured flags or stickers. **It is the first use of the traffic light system and applies their lived experience to places in the local area.**

Young people tend to find this exercise very engaging and will start talking about specific places in their local area together. You can use the activity to open up a discussion about the different types of space. Make sure they mark as many as they can with a key locator sticker, outline in a coloured pen or place a flag with a comment.

"Looking at the map here in front of you, we want you to label the locations you are familiar with using the key locator stickers, as well as marking spaces according to the traffic light system we talked about.

Use the coloured flags and stickers so that we can see which places you see as red, amber or green.

We also want you to think about these places at different times of day. If the space feels different at night, then let's talk about that too."

Describe as many spaces as you can, even the roads. And don't worry about different people having different opinions. Remember this is about how YOU feel and it's good to hear different thoughts.

You've got 20 minutes to do this exercise and we'll let you know when you've got 5 minutes left."



ACTIVITY 3: INTERVIEWS

This part of the activity is a chance to begin a discussion in smaller groups about what spaces are like in the local neighbourhood, what works and what doesn't work. **These thoughts will start to inform the manifesto that the group will develop over their first three sessions.**

Ask the group to divide into pairs or threes and start talking together about their own area. Invite them to think about spaces that they like or don't like, or that work and don't work.

If they feel comfortable, ask them to conduct an interview and video each other having these discussions. Alternatively, they can take some notes.

The facilitator, assistant and design team can listen in to these discussions and prompt with questions, also taking notes.

At the end of both parts of this activity, bring the groups together for a short discussion about what they came up with.



What you'll need:



15 minutes



1 group



Phones for sli.do

ACTIVITY 4: MY FRONT DOOR

This activity starts as a game about front doors. It is designed to **provoke discussion about a place that everyone uses** - the entrance to their home - and to start thinking about space at a smaller scale, after the larger mapping exercise.

Use this opportunity to start talking about social space, doorstep play, hanging out, and safety. Note that the first question needs to be set up to provide multiple answers.

Q1.

Name three things that you need next to your front door.

Q2.

Think of a new idea for something we should design.

As the answers come in you can talk about who is saying what. Encourage them to think of different things. The 'one idea' adds an element of competition. Ask everyone to vote on which is the best idea that someone has come up with. It might be playful or very functional, it's up to the group to decide.

Scan to visit Sli.do



What you'll need:



15 minutes



1 group



Flipchart



Post-it notes



Map

WRAP UP AND PREPARE

To finish the session, start to bring together some of the issues that have arisen. Use a flip chart or post-it notes to summarise what you have been hearing and group them into initial themes for the manifesto.

Ask questions such as:

- * Are there enough spaces which are 'green' or 'amber' (where you have the freedom to do what you choose)?
- * Are the spaces round here safe enough?
- * Are there enough spaces to hang out with friends?

Talk around these issues as a group and create about 6 themes describing things you want to see in the new development. These can be broad for now and you can start placing some of the thoughts from today into each theme. You will be returning to this activity in the next session.

To finish off, plan the route for your walking tour in the next session. Ask the group to come up with six spaces they would like to take you to in the next session and then reduce that down to four that everyone feels happy with. Try and get a range of open or shared spaces that they know. This could include a street but it doesn't have to.

At the end of the session ask each member of the group to think of one good thing and one bad thing about it, so that you can work on any improvements for the next one.

Example manifesto themes:



Open



Safe



Inclusive



Fun



More nature



Better things to do



Easier to get around



Less cars



SESSION PLAN / TIMINGS:

Enter timings here:	Time	Activity
	10 mins	Welcome, sign-in, introductions
	5 mins	Explaining the session
	10 mins	Activity 1: Favourite childhood memory
	10 mins	Activity 2: Best place and worst place
	20 mins	Activity 3: Map exercise (part 1)
	<i>Up to 15 mins</i>	<i>Break</i>
	20 mins	Activity 3 cont: Interviews (part 2)
	15 mins	Activity 4: Front door game
	15 mins	Wrap up and prepare
Total	120 mins	