# The challenges of embedding the diversity of young people's voices through the research process: managing expectations in co-production

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National Children's Bureau

# Outline of presentation

- NCB and its approach to participation with children and young people
- Expectation management: who is to be included?
- Challenges: practical
- Challenges: conceptual
- Suggested take-aways

# National Children's Bureau – its make-up

| United for a Better Childhood | |
|---|---|
| | Health and Participation (Council for Disabled Children – CDC) |
| | Social Care - CDC |
| | Early Years |
| | Education |
| | Research & Policy (All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children) |
| | Information Advice & Support Programme (CDC) |
| | Anti-Bullying Alliance |
| | Sex Education Forum |
| | Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) |
| | Childhood Bereavement Network |

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# NCB – voices of children and young people

- Young NCB & Young NCB Advisory Group
- **F**riendship, **L**earning, **A**chieve, **R**each and **E**mpower (FLARE - 16 x 13-25-year-olds)
- **Y**oung **R**esearch **A**dvisors (YRAs – 60 X 7-25-year-olds)
- **F**amily **R**esearch **A**dvisory **G**roup (FRAG)

Project examples: Child Policy Research Unit and Obesity Policy Research Unit – participation partners; steering group membership – Bristol University; Manchester Metropolitan University; Roehampton University; APPG and giving evidence to select committees

# Expectations: who needs to be included?

# Challenges: practical

- Access and travel
  - Accompaniment versus empowerment
- Your approach to risk (safeguarding)
- Payment and incentives
  - Impact upon benefits?
- Group dynamics
- Managing the inevitable – what happens when your young person is no longer young?

# Challenges: conceptual

- Inclusion and participation – what does it really mean?

- Where to 'bring participation in' (including ethics & governance)

- 'Diversity' of voices – balancing *your* project requires versus make-up of existing groups

# Main take-aways

- Reconceptualise participation
- Danger of over promising – be realistic
- Impact of support needs and role of parents/carers
- Unintended impacts upon your participants – danger of assumption-making
- Recognition of role of 'knowledge-holders/sharers'
- Heterogeneity of young people who may have nothing in common beyond their age

# Thank you

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