



Young People's  
Health Partnership



# Working with young people to improve health & wellbeing

**A toolkit to support  
takeover challenge  
activities**

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# 1. Welcome to Takeover

**Takeover Challenge is a framework for public, private and voluntary sector organisations to give young people the opportunity to be involved in decision making about issues that affect their lives.**

Since the original event in 2006, Takeover has grown to become a national movement, and is coordinated by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England. Organisations in all sectors can hold Takeover events. This Toolkit is aimed at supporting events in the health and wellbeing sector.



It is important because we know that young people's voices are often not heard in these settings, and young people have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them.

Takeover is a chance for organisations to engage directly with the young people who access their services. This means young people can be involved with decision making and influence policy and practice, to develop better services.

Since 2013 the Young People's Health Partnership have run 15 national Takeover challenge events with NHS England, Public Health England and the Department of Health.

We plan and deliver events where young people are challenged and inspired by the opportunity to be involved in influencing serious, meaningful decisions that have a lasting impact.



The Young People's Health Partnership is a consortium of six organisations working with young people aged 10-24. We have a network of 1,000 voluntary sector agencies and reach over 500,000 young people each year.

For more information about how we support young people's health please visit: <http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/yphp>

If you are planning a Takeover challenge event, and will be using the ideas in this toolkit, please contact us at: [info@youngpeopleshealth.org.uk](mailto:info@youngpeopleshealth.org.uk)

## 1.1 About the toolkit

This toolkit has been created to support organisations that commission and deliver health services for young people to organise successful Takeover activities.

It is full of ideas to support your event. It takes you through how to plan and deliver a meaningful Takeover challenge activity with young people.

It includes example activities and ideas to help you focus your event and make it engaging for everyone involved.

We have also produced a **Resources Pack** which includes templates for applications, agendas and certificates, etc.



## 1.2 Young people's views

### What young people want from Takeover:

- **Build networks**
- **Gain skills**
- **Be educated on job opportunities**
- **Work alongside adults**
- **Recognition**
- **Have an impact and make a change**
- **Be involved**
- **Talk to professionals about what they do and how they could get involved**
- **Be kept informed after the event, with regular updates**
- **To feel safe and cared about**

### What young people do not want from Takeover:

- **People who can make a change already having their minds made up about what they intend to do to “improve” things**
- **Feeling like their ideas aren't being taken on board**
- **Not being taken seriously (despite giving up their free time to take part)**
- **Not feeling safe. Event organisers need to make sure participants know where they are going, and that they can get home safely**
- **No follow up after the event**

### 1.3 What can you do for Takeover...?

The national Takeover challenge event acts as a focus for young people's rights and involvement in decision making.

Involving young people is an ongoing process and takeover challenge events shouldn't limit work with young people to only one day each year. Events can also be held at other times of the year.

To maximise the impact of your event think about linking up with other events for your organisation and your partners.

The challenge when planning a large event that brings together young people and decision-makers is making sure that you balance the expectations of everyone involved, and ensuring that young people's participation is meaningful.

- **Organise a Takeover event where children and young people have the opportunity to be involved in decision making at your organisation**
- **Use the ideas in the *Making it happen* and *Making it work* sections of this toolkit to plan a Takeover challenge event (especially section 2.2, *Designing activities*, and section 5.3, *Be creative*)**
- **Look at section 5, *Making it matter*, to make sure your activities have a lasting impact for young people**
- **Use the practical advice and resources in the toolkit to plan a successful event**
- **Create opportunities for individual young people to shadow staff in your team or organisation**
- **Celebrate and share any examples of good practice in young people's participation in your organisation with others.**
- **Build relationships with local schools, colleges and voluntary and community sector organisations to recruit young people for your event.**

"I think organisations should organise a Takeover Day event as it brings professionals and young people together. It educates us as young people and professionals on the different issues organisations face from day to day. It also allows organisations to come together, and understand the success and obstacles organisations have overcome.

"On Takeover Day, professionals and young people can share views with each other, to come up with solutions to problems or issues that affect young people."

Lisa, 18 years old.

# 2. Making it happen

Takeover is about bringing young people and adult decision makers together to share ideas and work in partnership. To get the most out of the event it's important to have a clear plan that can be understood by both the young people and adults taking part.

Takeover is a great opportunity to involve professionals from across your organisation or team to work in partnership with young people. Having a variety of people involved can make the day more interesting for young people.

## 2.1 Planning

The first step towards planning a Takeover challenge is identifying a key person within your organisation or team who will take responsibility for overseeing and co-ordinating your activities. This person can act as your Takeover Challenge Champion.

You will also need other staff to support activities, and be responsible for health and safety, communications and safeguarding. You will need a member of staff with the appropriate DBS level check to be part of the team.

**(See section 2.6 Keeping young people safe.)**

Involve young people in your planning process as early as possible. Asking them what they want to happen will lead to a more successful event.

A Takeover challenge can also provide an opportunity to build links with other organisations that work with young people. Voluntary and community organisations in your area might be working with young people who would like to be engaged.

Develop a clear idea about what you want to achieve as a result of Takeover. Be ambitious but realistic about your capacity to involve young people. Think about whether you have capacity to host an individual young person or work with a larger group. This will have an impact on the activities you plan.

Think about ways in which professionals who do not have regular face-to-face contact with young people can contribute; there could be a benefit from getting a young person's perspective on the job that they do. (Remember to think about support that people might need if they're not confident working directly with young people.)



## 2.2 Designing activities

To make Takeover effective, organisations need to plan activities that bring young people into direct contact with professionals who make decisions that affect their lives.

For this to work young people need to understand how and why decisions are made in your organisation, and have all the information they need to make a meaningful contribution.

Young people all have different skills and abilities, and different perspectives on issues that affect them. Takeover should be an inclusive event; think about activities that can engage as many young people as possible, giving them the chance to use skills and talents that they already have.

There are many ways young people can get involved in Takeover. The list below gives some examples that have worked for a range of organisations in previous years:

- **Job shadowing or work experience – gives individual young people the chance to see how day-to-day tasks contribute to an organisation's goals, and the responsibilities of individual roles**
- **Question Time: give young people the opportunity to ask questions to a panel of local or national decision-makers**
- **Sharing a challenge – ask young people to come up with possible solutions for a problem or issue that your organisation has to deal with**
- **Takeover! Let young people (either working individually or as a group) take control of your organisation and make key decisions**
- **Business planning – support young people to engage with your strategic objectives for the future.**

There are lots of ways young people can contribute. Think about whether you could organise a range of activities for young people to give them a more varied experience.



## 2.3 Getting young people involved

Young people should be involved in planning and preparing for Takeover as early as possible. Think about how you can involve young people in planning activities for the event.

Engaging young people who are going to take part takes time. You might need to set aside time to build relationships with young people before the event and work to establish shared expectations and objectives.

Takeover is also an opportunity to engage young people who may not normally be involved in influencing decision making, such as young people from BME communities, LGBT young people, young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young people in care or young carers. Start by contacting local projects or services that are already in contact with these young people to see if they can support you to build relationships.

Think about young people who might have disabilities or additional needs when you are planning for a Takeover challenge. Make sure your activities are inclusive and accessible.

Schools, colleges and youth projects are all places where you can invite young people to take part in your activities. Contact them early on in your planning and allow space for workers from the organisation to attend to help support young people.

Depending on how many young people you are going to be working with, and how you plan to organise your day, you might need to develop a selection process. This needs to be done fairly so that young people who are interested all have an equal opportunity to get involved.

**(See resources pack for a template application form.)**

### Activity idea

## Dragons' Den



**Pitch ideas to a panel of young people acting as “Dragons.”**

### How?

**Ask staff from across your team or organisation to prepare proposals for projects that can be “pitched” to a panel of young people. Each pitcher will get five minutes to explain their idea. Then give the Dragons time to ask questions. After every pitch has been made young people can work together to decide which proposal they think is the best.**

## 2.4 Communicating with young people

It is important to develop a clear strategy for talking to young people about Takeover. Young people who are interested in taking part will need clear information about what's happening on the day.

Make sure all the materials you produce are easy to read and get your points across clearly in a way that young people understand.

A poster or leaflet might be a good way of informing young people that a Takeover challenge is happening, but most young people will need more information before deciding to get involved.

Be prepared to meet with young people before the event. Share your ideas for the event and listen to their feedback, get ideas about how you can make the practical arrangements work for them, and think about how you can match your agenda to their interests. Social media could be a good way to directly engage with young people and build interest about your Takeover activities.

Think about how you will tell young people about positive changes that have been made as a result of your Takeover event too. This includes giving feedback to young people who take part, and the wider community.

## 2.5 Publicity

Takeover is an opportunity to create a good news story about young people and your organisation. Think about publicity in the build up to raise awareness, and after the event to celebrate what has happened.

Think about preparing a press release. You could do this in advance of the event to publicise what you're doing, or afterwards to celebrate what has been achieved. Remember to get young people's consent to have their photograph taken and for any quotes or other media activity.

**(See resources pack for a template press release and photo consent form.)**

Try to involve young people in publicising the Takeover challenge. Perhaps they could write a story for your website or for internal communications.

Remember to spread the word about the Takeover challenge in any internal communications you produce and on social media.



Rachel spent Takeover Day 2014 at Public Health England, and wrote this blog about her experiences:

**<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2015/01/26/a-young-persons-perspective-on-public-health/>**

## 2.6 Keeping young people safe

Young people's safety and welfare should be the top priority when planning for Takeover and on the day itself. All professionals who are taking part in Takeover have a responsibility to safeguard young people. A staff member with appropriate DBS check must be part of the team running the event.

Young people under the age of 18 will need written parental consent to participate. Young people who are attending school or college will also need permission from their school or college to attend.

**(See resources pack for a template letter to schools and photo consent form.)**

Make sure all staff taking part are familiar with your organisation's procedures for child protection, and understand what to do if a young person makes a disclosure. Staff who don't usually have direct contact with young people and who aren't familiar with your procedures will need to be briefed about your policies before the event.

Information about child protection should be made available to staff taking part early on, so they can familiarise themselves with the procedures.

All organisations should complete a thorough risk assessment covering all aspects of their Takeover activities. If individual young people who are taking part have additional needs you may need to complete an assessment to identify what support they will need.

It is important that risk assessments and procedures for safeguarding are completed and signed off before the event, in case organisations you're working with request this information.

For more information about safeguarding, see the NSPCC's guidance and resources.

# 3. Making it work

## 3.1 Planning for the event

Make sure that you have a clear plan for your event prepared well in advance.

A detailed plan for what will happen needs to be available for all participants. Make sure that this information is easy to follow and available in advance of the event.

**(See resources pack for a template agenda)**

Professionals who are leading activities or supporting young people will need to know what is expected of them and have a clear understanding of the timings for activities. Make sure that any resources and equipment needed are available and in the right place at the right time.

If you have the capacity, think about having somebody available to troubleshoot and deal with any problems that might arise.



## 3.2 Keeping in touch

Make sure you have contact details for all young people who are taking part in your Takeover activities.

- **Think about keeping in touch with people during the run up to Takeover, so you can share information with them about the event**
- **You might need to contact young people on the day if they are running late or get lost**
- **You can contact young people to follow up after Takeover**

It is also important that you have contact details for parents or carers in case there is an emergency.

Young people attending Takeover will need a named contact who will be responsible for supporting them throughout the event. All of the young people attending Takeover should have a way to contact this person if they have any problems.



## 3.3 Housekeeping

When you are planning your Takeover challenge think about how young people will be travelling to and from the venue. If transport is being provided, they will need details about where or when they will be picked up. If young people are travelling independently, they will need clear directions and details for someone they can contact if they get lost or are delayed.

Have someone available to meet and greet young people; they may be arriving at the venue for the first time and may be unsure how to get to where they need to be.

On arrival give young people a welcome pack containing all the practical information they need.

**(See resources pack for a template welcome pack checklist.)**

Aim to give young people a tour of the venue – or area – they'll be working in, remembering to point out fire exits, toilets and refreshment areas.

Think about providing a meeting point or base for young people for the event. Set aside space where young people can come back to if they get lost, and where there will be somebody to talk to if they are having a problem.

### 3.4 Young people with additional needs

It is important that Takeover activities are accessible and inclusive for all young people. Some young people might need support to make this possible. Make sure that your venue is accessible for young people who have physical or mobility impairments.

Think about how you are going to get the information you need to make your event accessible in advance. This is a good way of collecting information to help you plan your event. This might include preparing resources in alternative and accessible formats.

Some young people might want a worker who they already know to support them. Make sure that the worker has all the information they need about the event.

### 3.5 Breaks and refreshments

Make sure young people get plenty of breaks throughout the event. Some young people might want to take time out during activities, too.

Consider setting aside a space where young people can chill out during their breaks. Have healthy refreshments available. (It is also important to think about the dietary requirements of the young people taking part.)

If young people need to move between locations for different activities make allowances for this in your agenda. You should also make sure young people know where they need to be, and timings for activities.

#### Activity idea

## Service user journey



#### How?

Support a group of young people to map out their experience of a particular service as a timeline. Mark the key points on the journey on the timeline, along with positive and negative experiences.

The group can then look at the journey and identify ways it can be improved. For example, young people might identify the need for more opportunities to self-refer to a service, or that waiting times are too long. At the end of the session the group can produce a new map, showing what they believe would be an improved service user experience.

### 3.6 Expenses and incentives

Young people should not be out of pocket as a result of attending Takeover challenge activities. Make sure you can cover their travel and lunch costs and you have a simple process for young people to claim these expenses. Some young people will need cash on the day to enable their participation.

The biggest incentive for many young people is being listened to and being made to feel valued. More formal recognition of their contribution, such as a certificate, is also very helpful. You may also decide to offer a voucher to thank young people for their contributions on the day.

**(See resources pack for a certificate template.)**

# 4. Making it fun

Takeover should be enjoyable for everyone involved. Hopefully, your event will involve young people engaging with complex issues and serious decision making. Some young people might find this challenging at first, so it's worth planning activities to warm up participants and keep their energy levels up throughout the event.



This is especially important if you're working with young people who haven't worked together before, who are working in an unfamiliar environment.

## 4.1 Icebreakers and energisers

It's really important to create a positive atmosphere at the start of your Takeover activities.

The activities below are great ways to get people ready for working together and to introduce groups of people who haven't met before. They are also good for focusing people and keeping energy levels up throughout the event.

### Icebreaker / energiser idea

## Ball and name



### TIMING: 10 minutes

What you need: Balls (you could also use beanbags or rolled up socks, which may not travel as far as balls when not caught)

### How to play

- Stand in a circle
- Take one of the balls and start by saying your own name before throwing the ball to a young person who catches the ball and says their own name before throwing the ball on, and so on
- After the ball has been thrown to everyone in the group once, ask them if they can remember who they threw it to, and get them to do the same thing again in exactly the same order
- Now get them to throw the ball in the same order but instead of saying their own name, this time they should say the name of the person they are throwing the ball to before they throw.

## Icebreaker / energiser idea



# Things in common

**TIMING:** about 10 minutes  
(depending on how many people are playing)

### How to play

- Split the group into pairs. Each pair has two minutes to find one thing they have in common. Explain that it can't be an obvious fact, such as "we're both here today."
- After each pair has found something in common, ask them to share with the wider group. Then put the existing pairs into groups of four. The groups have to find a new thing in common (explain that they can't reuse a fact from the previous group).
- Keep doubling the size of groups until the whole group are working together to find one thing they all have in common.

## 4.2 Evaluation and feedback

Getting feedback from young people who take part is a really important element of Takeover. A thorough evaluation gives you a chance to wrap up the event and identify what needs to happen next. It can also help you start preparing for the next Takeover challenge.

Feedback forms and online surveys are useful for this, but interactive evaluations make the process fun.

## Evaluation / feedback idea



# Sweet feedback

**What you will need:** some sweets – enough for everyone in the group to take a few. (Remember to take dietary requirements into account.)

### How to do it:

- Start by offering sweets to everyone in the group. Explain that people can take as many sweets as they want, but that everybody needs to take at least one sweet. (Make sure people don't eat their sweets straight away.)
- After everyone has taken sweets explain that people need to give feedback, and that the number of sweets they have taken determines how many pieces of feedback they have to share.
- You can decide if you want people to only share positive points, things they have learnt, things they would change or all feedback.

## Evaluation / feedback idea



# Stickperson feedback

What you will need: flipchart paper, pens, and sticky notes

### How to do it:

- Draw a large stickperson on a sheet of flipchart paper. On the stickperson draw a heart. Then draw a lightbulb above the stickperson's head, a bin by their feet, and a bag near one of their hands.
- Give everyone sticky notes. Explain to the group that you want them to give feedback about the day. Comments about things they loved should be stuck around the heart, ideas they liked by the lightbulb, things they didn't enjoy around the bin, and things they will take away from the event near the bag.
- You could colour code the sticky notes in case people can't get their comments on the right place on the drawing.
- After everyone has added comments read them out to the group.

# 5. Making it matter

**Takeover Challenge is an opportunity for organisations to engage young people in focussed activity. To make sure your Takeover has an impact that can be seen and felt by young people, it's important to think about the wider context of young people's rights, set realistic expectations and think about how to follow up activities that take place.**



## 5.1 Takeover Challenge in context

Young people are more likely to participate actively if they see that your organisation genuinely values their contribution, instead of feeling that the event is a 'one off'.

It's important to think about the wider national and international policy context when thinking about Takeover. For example:

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN, 1989) which was ratified by the UK government in 1991**
- **Recommendations published by Public Health England and The Association for Young People's Health "Improving young people's health and wellbeing: A framework for public health" (2015)**
- **The Department of Health's 'You're Welcome' quality criteria for young people friendly health services (DoH, 2011)**
- **Patient and public involvement in decision making in the NHS, such as the NHS Youth Forum, Patient Participation Groups and HealthWatch.**

All these policies and initiatives are important for framing Takeover as part of a wider movement to put young people at the heart of decision making that affects them.

## 5.2 Managing young people's expectations

Organisations should be ambitious in their planning for Takeover, and young people are likely to be enthusiastic about taking part in decision making about important issues. To make the event successful, organisations need to make sure that they manage young people's expectations carefully.

This means:

- **Being clear with young people about who has the final say about decision making**
- **Being prepared to listen to young people's ideas and feedback**
- **Ensuring young people have all the information they need to make informed decisions**
- **Supporting young people to develop ideas and solutions that are practical and achievable**

- **Communicating with young people in an open and honest way**
- **Making sure group decisions are made in as fair a way as possible, and that individual's ideas and opinions are respected.**

It's important to engage decision makers in your organisation with Takeover so that they understand what's happening, and recognise your organisation's commitment to respond to young people's ideas.

### 5.3 Be creative

The more creative your organisation is in planning for Takeover, the more likely young people are to engage and make the event successful. Ambitious ideas can have a significant impact, and focus people's attention. Think about ways young people can show off their skills and talents while making a contribution to your organisation.

Involving young people as early as possible will help you to match your activities with their skills and interests.

The list below shows some of the ways that young people can be involved in Takeover.

- **Involve young people in a Dragons' Den style event where professionals pitch ideas to a panel of young people**
- **Let young people take over your organisation's social media as a way of engaging other young people in different ways**
- **Set young people a challenge – think of a problem that needs solving and let them brainstorm potential solutions**
- **Give young people responsibility for creating a marketing campaign to raise awareness of an issue**
- **Have young people take over from key decision makers in your organisation – and let them do their job**
- **Give young people the chance to get involved in business planning – let them shape your priorities and objectives, and think about creating a chance for young people to allocate resources, too**
- **Let young people chair an important meeting and set the agenda**
- **Let young people deliver training to professionals about a subject that's important to them**



## 5.4 More than just one day

**Make sure you have a plan for following up your Takeover event with the young people involved. There might be loose ends that need tying up. It might be necessary to give young people feedback on ideas they've put forward, after decision makers have had time to consider them. Or, young people might need to respond to action that has taken place because of their input.**

A one-off event with no follow up could be seen as tokenistic by young people. They may not feel their contribution is valued if they can't see any lasting impact. Create an action plan for the 'next steps' after Takeover.

This could include thinking about regular opportunities for young people to have a say on policy and practice, setting up a young person-led steering group, giving individuals extended periods of work shadowing, or having mini Takeover events to continue the work started by young people.

Think about working with partner organisations to put together long term opportunities for young people.

Social media could be used to create 'virtual' groups where young people can continue their involvement after Takeover events.

Keeping in touch with participants will also give you the chance to get more feedback after the event, and to measure whether involvement has had a longer term impact on the young people who attended. This could help you evidence the benefits of young people's participation.

# 6. Links

This toolkit has been produced by The Young People's Health Partnership. We are a partnership of 6 organisations with VCSE networks across England from the youth and young people's health sectors.

Find out more about the partnership here: <http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/yphp>

## General information about Takeover Challenge:

The Office of the Children's Commissioner for England:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/learn-more/takeover-challenge>

## Organisations that support young people's participation:

The Association for Young People's Health (AYPH): <http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/>

Addaction: <http://www.addaction.org.uk>

Ambition: <http://www.ambitionuk.org/>

Brook: <https://www.brook.org.uk/>

StreetGames: <http://www.streetgames.org/>

Youth Access: <http://www.youthaccess.org.uk>

British Youth Council: <http://www.byc.org.uk/>

NHS England Youth Forum: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/patients/public-voice/yth-for/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHSEnglandYF>

Twitter: @NHSYouthForum



**Young People's  
Health Partnership**

The Young People's Health Partnership represents the interests of young people and young adults aged 10 – 25. We focus specifically on young people facing health inequalities. We are a partnership of six organisations with VCSE networks across England from the youth and young people's health sectors.

- We support young people to exercise empowered and active voices
- We provide advice on how policies and services can affect young people differently, particularly marginalised groups
- We increase understanding of good age appropriate care for young people and why it is important
- We focus on young people's wellbeing and increasing understanding of effective prevention work
- We support the youth and young people's health sectors to work in partnership with the health system

The partnership is led by the Association for Young People's Health and includes: Addaction, Ambition, Brook, StreetGames and Youth Access