

# City and Hackney 'Super Youth Hub' Project

Participatory Action Research  
Report and Findings



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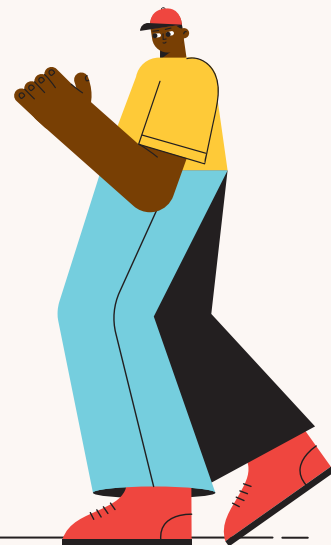
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# 01

# Introduction

Project brief and context

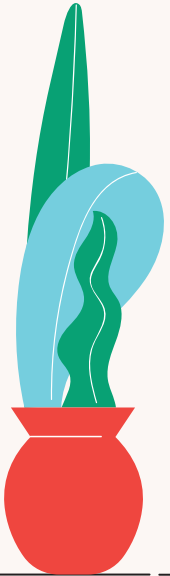


# Project Brief



In collaboration with City and Hackney the organisation 3Ps undertook a comprehensive project throughout 2023 aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of young people's requirements concerning youth health and well-being services.

This was project came about in response to young people telling us that health and wellbeing services in City and Hackney were hard to navigate and designed around services rather than service users.



# Key Questions

The 3Ps team were provided with a detailed literature review (written by Population Health Hub) that identified areas where more data was needed in relation to creating a ‘Super Youth Hub’ for City and Hackney. The identified areas were:

- What are the **perceptions and barriers** to accessing current support, what are **CYP’s experiences**
- How we could make local **healthcare services easier to access and better suited to the needs** of CYP
- How to **engage with diverse cohorts** of young people specifically Charedi CYP, LGBTQ+ CYP
- What would an **integrated healthcare offer** look like, what services would it include, where would it be



02

# Process

Research Methodology,  
Recruitment



# Research Methodology



## Recruitment



Role advertised through schools and youth settings with support from Young Hackney. 30 applications received. 2 recruitment days and 16 young researchers recruited.



## Training



4 training days covering: participatory approaches; research tools; methodology, and; fieldwork planning. Research questions were determined by the young researchers in these sessions.



## Fieldwork



April - July 2023, reaching 231 young people across 23 different provisions in City and Hackney



## Analysis



2 analysis sessions held mid-fieldwork to refine research questions and target second phase of fieldwork. Final 2-day analysis sessions where overall themes, findings and recommendations were created. Findings presented and validated.



# Young Research Team

Demographics of the group captured through an anonymous survey.



**16**

Number of Young Researchers recruited. 13 still engaged at end of the project.

**17% SEND**

83% identified as having no additional needs.

**15-18**

Age of young researchers at the start of project.

**75% Global Majority**

A very mixed group from varied backgrounds.



**83% Female**

17% Male, 0% identified as non-binary

**36% Clissold Park**

6 of the 8 neighbourhoods represented (not London Fields and Springfield Park)



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*Total responses from Young Researchers to demographics questionnaire: 12 out of 16*



03

# Key Findings

Analysis, themes and  
recommendations



# Fieldwork Demographic Data

Demographics of participants in the research were captured through an anonymous and optional form.

**231**

Young people reached through fieldwork

**10-19**

Age range of participants

**54%**

Identified as female. 46% as male.

**45%**

Added some data to demographics sheet.

**E9**

Was the most common postcode of participants given (although only 24 gave postcode information)

**5**

told us that they have special educational needs (in addition, two sessions were delivered specifically with SEN YP).

**21**

told us they were entitled to free school meals

**75%**

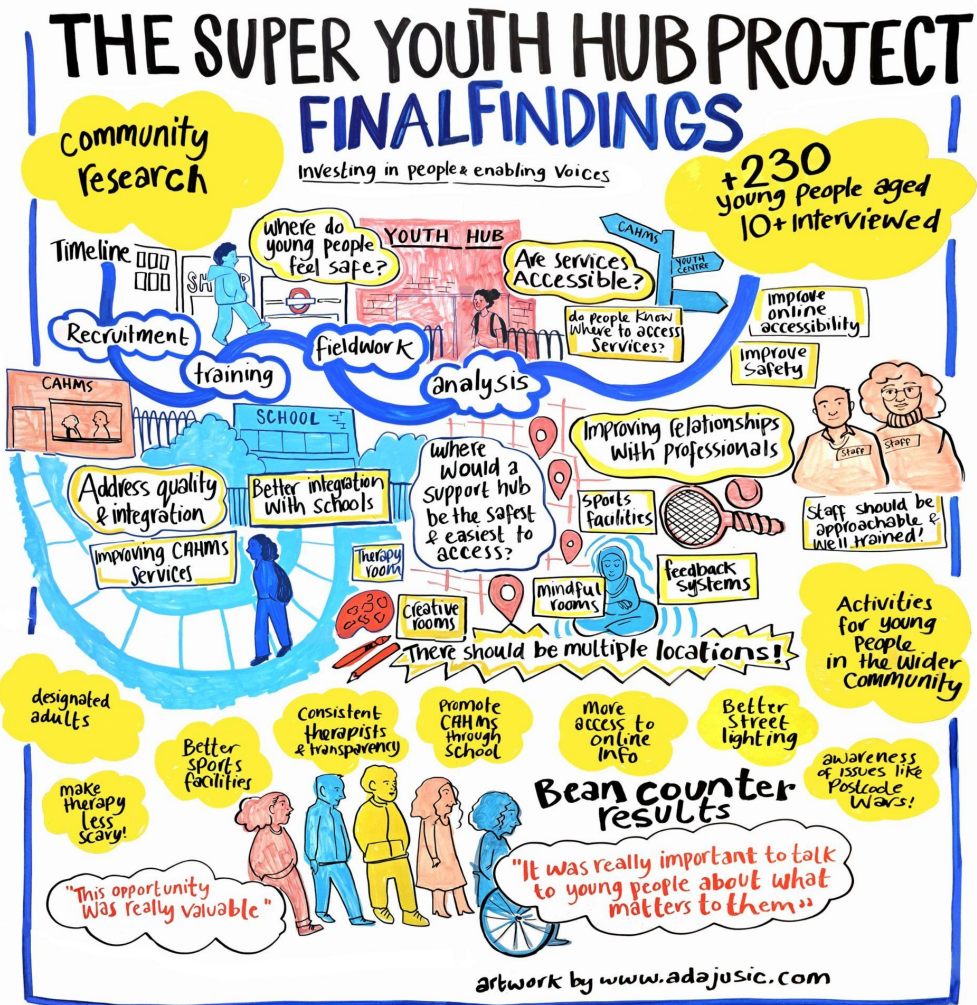
Of session attendees from Global Majority



105 Fieldwork session attendees added data to the demographic sheets.



# What were the findings?





# Key Themes and Findings

Themes	Summary of Findings
<b>Connections</b>	Build on YP's trusted relationships to support interventions, and develop relational skills of professionals working with young people.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Work with YP to co-produce communications through avenues they use and engage with, and consider what information is available ahead of access.
<b>Quality &amp; Integration</b>	Improve the understanding, and accessibility of CAMHS services, and enhance the integration of and promotion of health and wellbeing services in schools.
<b>Comfort</b>	Ensure that the physical spaces that CYP access services are accessible and comfortable, and embed promotion of healthy lifestyles.
<b>Youth Hubs</b>	Use Youth Hubs as a space to integrate and offer services through, building on the trusted relationships with youth workers. Consider ways to improve safety of physical locations including outdoor spaces and parks.



# Connections

The role of friends and trusted adults in a young person's life and how professionals can build relationships with CYP



## Sub-Themes

## Findings

Fostering stronger bonds

Improving relatability & relationships

- Young people identified cultural barriers to asking for help or talking about problems.
- Young people identified the difficulties in opening up to professionals and the value of relationship building.



## Recommendations

- Services should consider offering young people the option to **bring a trusted person to appointments**
- There should be a drive to **increase diversity of staff in health and wellbeing services**
- Reassurance for young people around the **confidentiality of spaces and services**
- Build on **existing activities and social environments** for young people to aid connection
- Explore opportunities for **family involvement** and how they can also provide support
- Staff should be able to appropriately **communicate with young people and be approachable**
- More **transparency on what to expect** from services
- **Increased communication between services** to ensure the right support for the YP



# Accessibility

How young people are able to find, navigate, access and use services.



## Sub-Themes

## Findings

Improve online accessibility

Improve accessibility to services

- Young people aren't aware of online directories of services, and generally aren't following service social media and websites.
- Young people said that online options can improve accessibility in situations where physical services can not be accessed.
- Young people told us that they are often afraid to access services due to fear of the unknown, and feel they don't have clarity on complaints processes which hinders quality of service.

## Recommendations

- **Easy lines of communication** e.g. online forms for quick sign-ups, chat functions on websites etc.
- Utilisation of the **right social media platforms** to reach a wider audience (e.g. working with influencers on TikTok)
- Still having **in person services** available for those who want them
- **Online feedback forms** to help improvements
- Waiting time reduction through **more staffing or bridging services during the wait time**
- Family solutions - **increase information reaching young people via parents** being conscious of cultural sensitivities
- Offer the **possibility of other designated adults** (not parents) if safeguarding issues arise



# Address Quality & Integration

Reflections on CAMHS and how services can be embedded within schools and promoted effectively



## Sub-Themes

## Findings

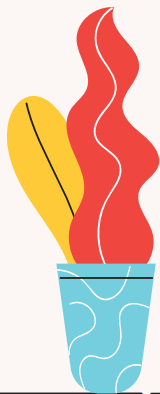
Improve CAMHS services

Better integration of services in schools

- Young people want a 'smoother process' with starts and finishes with services.
- Young people think that CAMHS is understaffed with very long waiting lists.
- Young people think that direct signposting and active promotion of services within schools is needed. They say that posters and passive advertising is not helpful.

## Recommendations

- **Consistency in clinicians and other frontline staff** to maintain and develop trust
- More **transparency about the process**, expectations and confidentiality
- **Better relationships between CAMHS and schools**
- **Longer sessions** to help get the most out of the process
- **Promote services actively** through assemblies and form time - not just posters
- **CYP should be able to speak to teachers that they trust**
- **Making PSHCE days more frequent and impactful**, introducing services in these sessions
- Bringing in **external providers to talk about issues/promote services** as this is more engaging



# Think About Comfort

*How we can create more comfortable spaces for young people, and embed health messaging*



## Sub-Themes

## Findings

Create comfortable spaces

Building healthy lifestyles in youth hubs

- Holistic approach is needed that promotes mindfulness, sleeping and diet
- Need for a commitment to diversity and inclusion so that no groups feel alienated
- Some issues with reporting and responding to issues and discrimination within youth hubs

## Recommendations

- **Ensuring that inclusion is a priority** and that all groups are respected and included
- **Learn from other successful services** to see what works well for certain people
- **Mechanisms for feedback** in place - someone to speak to easily
- **More recreational rooms/spaces** to encourage self growth e.g quiet rooms, gyms
- More education on how to form **healthy coping strategies**
- More range of **sports activities** on offer through the hubs
- More **awareness of health benefits/ discounts** that are available for young people e.g. free gyms for young carers
- More **education on substance misuse** but less centred on 'don't do drugs' mantra and more understanding around addiction and help





# Youth Hub Provision

*The perception of safety in the community and how youth hubs can offer 'safe spaces'*



## Sub-Themes

## Findings

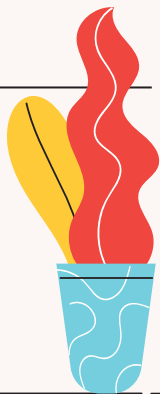
Improve safety of locations and open spaces

Super Youth Hub

- Opinion on the safety of parks is divided however young people feel there are measures that could be taken to increase safety
- Young people want to feel safer in places they grew up in and feel more sense of community
- Young people feel that one main central hub would be useful with other bases around the borough so that it would be accessible for everyone
- Young people identified parks and playgrounds as effective places to create connections

## Recommendations

- **Improved lighting and CCTV** to increase safety with consistent park rangers on duty
- **Stronger community links** where youth hubs are
- **Central access to information through online means**
- **Mindfulness spaces** - both religious and non-religious
- **Convenient times around school timetable** with extra support during exam season
- **Increased conversations around sexual relationships**, sexual abuse and relevant services available
- **Varied opportunities and activities** e.g trips, sports, awards
- Open **feedback system**





Our Young Researchers also used their research with young people to explore the idea of a *'Super Youth Hub'*

**This is what they found...**

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# Recommendations for a Super Youth Hub

How can we engage with and involve our diverse CYP population in the development of a SYH?

- Create **safe and comfortable spaces** for culturally diverse youth to discuss their struggles.
- **Train staff in conflict resolution** and ensure **diversity among the staff** to enhance representation.
- Establish **accessible feedback systems** for issue resolution.
- **Link community services** to the SYH to increase diversity.
- **Foster relatability** between researchers/designers and CYP.

How can staff at a SYH help CYP feel welcome, listened to, and engaged?

- Promote **transparency about the service** process.
  - **Encourage longer interactions** to build connections between professionals and young people.
  - Ensure **approachable and confidential communication**.
  - Maintain **consistent staff** to build trust.
  - Provide **recreational areas** like playgrounds for building connections.
-

## What services and approaches to delivering services should be available at a SYH?

- Offer **online signup forms and information** about services.
- **Promote services in schools** and **diversify family solutions**.
- **Centralise and promote services online**.
- Use **influencers and social media** for promotion.
- **Enhance Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**.
- Create **comfortable spaces** and improve **online accessibility**.
- Provide **gyms, sexual health services, and physical health services**.
- Improve **confidentiality**, decrease **wait times**, and offer **feedback systems**.
- Offer **diverse activities** like sports, art, music, trips, exam preparation, and gaming.
- Invest in **spiritual well-being spaces** and meditation/**mindfulness activities**.



## Where should a SYH be located?

- Choose a **location that makes CYP feel safe** with **ample lighting, CCTV, and park rangers**.
- Ideally, situate the SYH in or **connected to a park** for familiarity and comfort.
- Ensure **accessibility during convenient times** for students.
- Consider the **safety of parks** like Clissold Park and Victoria Park.

## What would a SYH space look like?

- Offer a **range of activities**, including sports, art, music, mindfulness, trips, exam support, and gaming.
  - Maintain **updated facilities** and incorporate **award programmes**.
  - Create **different spaces for quiet/prayer, socialising, and recreational activities**.
  - Provide **services related to sex and relationships education, recreational rooms, and sports facilities**.
  - Consider **multiple hubs as part of a central system, online support, and draw inspiration from organisations** like Concorde, Mouth That Roars, Project Indigo, and Hackney Ark.
-

04

# Learning

Informing future research



# Learning from Co Production



## Youth Voice

We have learnt that YP are open to, and are able to share experiences, awareness, and concerns with other young people. We now have a group of excellent young researchers who have been trained and could be employed again to amplify youth voices in the future.

### Recommendations:

- Commitment to hearing the voices of YP through participatory research processes
- Explore further opportunities for employing the YRs to conduct more research with other teams



## Skills and Opportunities

A significant impact of this this project has been the opportunity and ability to employ the YRs which fosters financial independence whilst giving work experience.

### Recommendations:

- Develop projects that provide employment opportunities for young people to gain work based skills and experience





# Learning from Process



## Data



Understanding the population being looked into is a key part of the research process. There were some times where data collection was challenging due to the effort made to reach as many groups as possible. Additional factors that affected the data collection could have been the questions being asked, session location, etc.

### Recommendations:

- Consider alternative research methods to help encourage engagement from different groups
- Working with schools, parents and more of the voluntary sector to widen the reach of our participants
- Strengthen the initial mapping process to help frame the fieldwork

## Timing



There were some challenges around delivering to a specific schedule and the time that the research was being completed. There was also difficulty around finding consistent touch points with the research and project teams.

### Recommendations:

- Avoiding holidays and exam periods when working with YP in education
- Set up fieldwork sessions in advance so that teams can be allocated to deliver and prepare beforehand

## Project Team



One of the challenges in this process was delays in the project team recruitment at the start.

### Recommendations:

- Having the project team recruited as soon as possible
  - Clearly defined roles between project team, and research team
  - Expectations of researchers need to be clear and reinforced throughout the process
-



# “It was really important to talk to young people about what matters to them” Young Researcher

‘Undertaking a participatory research project with young people is an invaluable endeavour for City and Hackney. Not only does it empower young people by giving them a voice and platform to express their perspectives and concerns, but it also fosters a stronger sense of community engagement and ownership. Moreover, such projects build trust and credibility among our youth, bridging the gap between generations and creating a more inclusive environment. By actively involving young people in research, we not only gain a deeper understanding of their unique needs and aspirations but also foster a sense of responsibility and active citizenship within our community, and presenting City and Hackney as a vibrant and responsive local authority.’



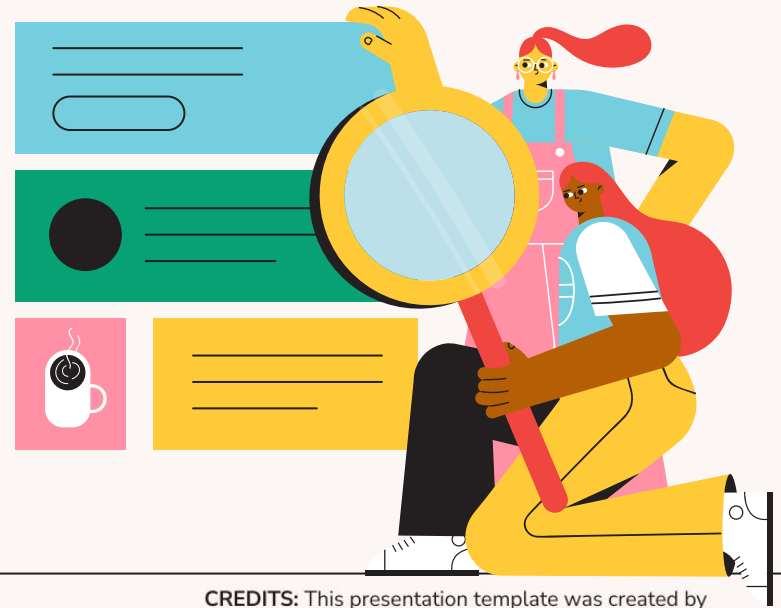
# Thanks!

A huge thank you to all the people involved in making this happen. Particularly to our team of Young Researchers:

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Download and read the full report here:

[www.3ps.org.uk/city-and-hackney-participatory-research-project-2023/](http://www.3ps.org.uk/city-and-hackney-participatory-research-project-2023/)



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