



Acknowledgments

The Young Researcher Network Toolkit was written by The National Youth Agency's YRN team of Dr Darren Sharpe, Tricia Jessiman and Antoinette Long.

The YRN team is grateful to the young people who helped develop the toolkit, in particular Ahmed Munir, Elizabeth Goldsbrough, Elizabeth Summner, Jamie Redfern, John Buckley, Rebecca Hailes and their youth workers Angela Stobbart and Katie Owen –Gant.

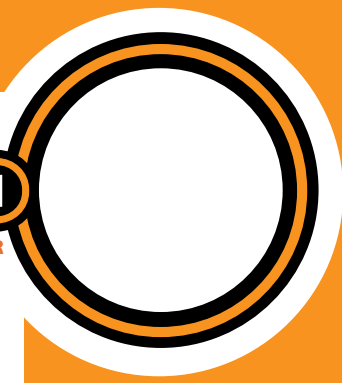
Images used throughout the toolkit are from CHANGE Picture Bank – see www.changepeople.co.uk

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YARN TOOLKIT



Stage 5:

Planning how you will get answers to your research questions

Key Words: Research Design, Methods, Data, Triangulation, Validity, Reliability

What is the research design?

You now have the research question(s) but how do you go about collecting information and making sense of it? A research plan – also called the **methodology** – will help you organise your research into a doable project.

The methodology is the approach (ways of doing research) linking the research question and methods (interviews, visual dairies, surveys, etc): and

- how you select (the sample) **the people** involved in your research project;
- related questions of **ethics and safety** (see sheet 6); and
- finally how you are going to **analyse** (or interpret) the information once you collect it.

Why design your research?

1. The key activity at the research design stage is to select suitable methods and data sources (forms of information) that will best enable you to best answer the research question(s).
2. You also need to develop some understanding of the methodological implications (ethics) and how you will analyse or interpret the data.
3. For other people to have confidence in your research findings you must give convincing reasons for your choice of methods as well as a clear description of how you collected data. This will allow others to examine the research findings and ask whether they are **true** (valid) and **repeatable** (reliable) based on the information you provide.

STAGE 5



How to design a research project?

1. At the start of designing your own research project you will need to think as creatively as you can about data sources (types of information) and methods. Make a fairly long list of possible options.
2. Making a list or a chart of possible research methods and data source options – including those which you are going to reject – can be a good way of forcing yourself to think carefully and consider all the possible options. There is a resources sheet to help you with this. Talking the list through as a group and with your youth worker can be an even better way of broadening your perspective and helping you to see other possibilities.
3. You will need to clearly show how and why you have reached the conclusions you have made. The best way to do this is by looking for three different sources of data. This is called **triangulation** of data.

For example, Ofsted will come into your school or children's home and speak with

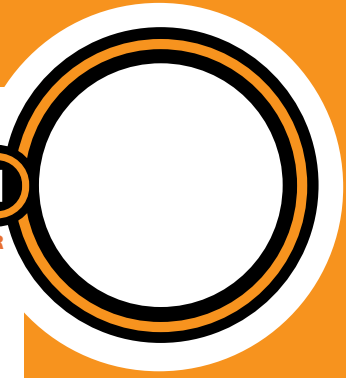
- a) young people;
- b) staff; and
- c) managers

to gather their view or experience of the service. If all three different sources say the same thing we can be more sure that Ofsted's conclusions will be correct.

Once can be accidental, twice a coincidence, but three times, it is unlikely to be wrong.

For instance, if we wanted to learn more about what positive activities mean to young people, we might

- a) interview young people;
- b) survey youth workers; and
- c) look at attendance registers at a youth club against the activity schedule.



Top Tips:

- Be creative in your initial thinking; you can narrow down the options later.
- Using three sources of data will make your conclusions more reliable.
- You persuade others by clear, well written and presented, logically argued accounts which address the research questions that concern them.