Youth Matters Matter
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Funded by New Horizon Youth Centre
New Horizon Youth Centre

- day centre for young people who are homeless, vulnerable and/or at risk
- engages about 2,000 young people per year
- advice services
- primary health care and counselling
- employment, training and advice
- independent living skills – practical, emotional, communication
- outreach
- youth-targeted approach

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Scoping exercise

• What do you feel are the kind of issues young people need advice on?

• What are the barriers to young people accessing appropriate advice?
Some stats

Some of the problems
- 2 million young people experience problems requiring rights-related advice
- 1 million young people coping alone with their problems
- legal aid cuts reduces access to legal advice at the rate of 75,000 fewer children and young people

Why youth-targeted advice is important
- 80% of young people with legal problems fall within at least one vulnerable group
- 70% report improved physical or mental health after receiving advice

Source: JustRights (2014) *Make Your Rights Reality Manifesto*
Youth-specific advice issues and needs

1. Housing
2. Benefits – sanctions, calculation, entitlement
3. Fines
4. Criminal justice
5. Debt
6. Immigration

“How easy they are to sanction you ... I got the letter after the appointment happened. Three times I’ve had it, three times” (JustRights 2014)
Barriers to access

1. Age
2. Language
3. Ability
4. Feeling unsafe
5. Local availability / location
6. Visibility of services
7. Knowledge about young people’s rights / entitlement

“It took me a year of research to find out where I could go.”

96% of young people believe a good advice service is one that allows you to drop in and ask anything (or nothing) (JustRights 2014)
Youth-targeted approaches

1. Low threshold / opening hours
2. Listening / non-judgemental
3. Avoid jargon / explain without patronising
4. Be upfront / don’t make promises
5. Friendly, open communication
6. Be mindful of young people’s communication-style

“The ideal adviser is honest and consistent, respects us and earns our trust.” (JustRights 2014)

“All young people should see someone face-to-face if they have a problem, so you can see they are listening and you can tell if they are going to help you.” (JustRights 2014)
Prevention

1. Get to young people before crisis point
2. Pick up early on additional issues – and signpost/refer onwards
3. Mediation
4. Upstream work

“We should get the help we need to enforce our rights and entitlements before we reach crisis point” (JustRights 2014)

“A lot of young people need more than just practical support, they need emotional support as well.” (JustRights 2014)
1. Specialist onwards referrals
   >> tailored and follow-up
   >> good interagency communication
   >> satellites / agencies coming into service

2. Job Centre Plus

3. Formal partnership
   >> North London Housing Partnership
   >> London Youth Gateway
   >> Creating Positive Futures Project

“actively support us to access independent sources of advice and legal support – and to be held to account when they don’t.” (JustRights 2014)
‘Top Tips’

Listen to, and believe, young people

Be aware of youth specific services – locally and plan-London

Young people may deselect you as a service

Accessible feedback loop

Tailor your advice to specific needs

Empower young people

Come and see us!