



COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTHCARE ACCESS

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
IMPACT CASE STUDY

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*Research Theme : Safer Management of
Multiple Long-Term Conditions in
Disadvantaged Communities*



Cost-of-living crisis and young people's healthcare access

BACKGROUND

The cost-of-living crisis is causing a drop in disposable incomes as wages and benefit increases are exceeded by inflation. This particularly impacts those with low incomes and could impact young people's healthcare access if they cannot afford to attend healthcare services.

This project aimed to involve young people in exploring their perspectives on the barriers to healthcare access during the cost-of-living crisis and potential solutions to improve access.

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HOW WERE YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED

Forty young people were involved by sharing views on perceived barriers and solutions to improve local healthcare access. They were invited to contribute either through their own lived experience or by creating fictional characters which helped ensure everyone felt comfortable and able to contribute.

01

Who were involved

Young people from two youth groups in the North East – Young Person's Advisory Group (YPAG) North East and Youth Forum in Gateshead. Both groups also included young people with lived experience of healthcare access and those financially affected by cost-of-living crisis.

02

Co-design and feedback

Feedback from the interactive sessions was used to develop a model depicting barriers to healthcare, which was presented back to the young people to ensure it accurately represented their views.

03

Further engagement activities

They were also shown a live theatre performance about food poverty in the North East, informed by those greatly impacted by the cost-of-living crisis as a further learning experience.

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WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT

Involvement of young people helped identify key themes around barriers to healthcare access in the current cost-of-living crisis.

Barriers included: lack of local and accessible healthcare; transport access or costs; dependence and family situations; negative perceptions and mistrust; and lacking or confusing communication.

Suggested solutions for improving healthcare access involved: increasing local outreach services at trusted locations; increased education about accessing healthcare in schools, online and phone communications to negate travel or accessibility concerns; subsidised travel; increased family-friendly services; clear signage at healthcare locate locations; and communication from practitioners.



It has been so important to me to hear that young people are getting a chance to influence things that are targeted towards them.

-Tynara

[LINK TO BLOG](#)

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WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT

The young people's responses were incredibly valuable and insightful. The identified themes also informed a topic guide for interviews with parents on the financial impacts of emergency childhood illness.

More work in this area would ensure equality of healthcare access for young people. Importantly, there are cost neutral opportunities (e.g. improve communication), but it is vital that young people's views are incorporated into hospital quality improvement projects and healthcare access plans for targeted benefits.



Incorporating PPIE into my PhD project was an invaluable experience for developing both my research itself and my skills as a researcher.

-Abigail

[LINK TO BLOG](#)

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REFLECTIONS AND LEARNINGS



The process helped us to explore and together understand the issues surrounding young people's healthcare access in the North East of England

As a PhD student and researcher, I gained experience facilitating group sessions and working with young people

Were there any challenges?

Engaging the young people could be difficult at times, but this was easier after initial discussions with the young people and facilitators to help build some trust and openness to discussions