

Co-designing for Inclusivity: A PPI Approach to Enhancing a Nurse-Led Paediatric Perioperative Intervention

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BACKGROUND

The Little Platypus initiative is a nurse-led intervention aimed at reducing perioperative anxiety by giving paediatric patients a choice of fabric surgical caps matched by the anaesthetic team.
A previous evaluation indicated positive outcomes regarding rapport, patient and parent/carer perioperative experience, and project participation.

However, data suggested the intervention was less effective for neurodivergent children or those with higher anxiety levels, highlighting a gap in equitable care delivery (Velazquez-Ruta et al., 2026) and informing the need for further investigation to address it.



AIMS

This poster reports on a PPI event conducted in January 2026.

The primary aims were to:

- Collaborate with children and young people (CYP) to identify alternative, sensory-friendly intervention items and themes
- Refine project documentation for better inclusivity
- Ensure language in evaluation tools is age-appropriate and inclusive for all participants

METHODS

Using a qualitative, participatory approach, a workshop was held with KSS' Young People's Advisory Group (YPAG):

- n = 8 participants
- Prototypes presented: doll-sized surgical caps, cuddly toys, and sensory-weighted animals made from matching fabrics
- Data collected via thematic group discussions and hands-on usability testing of the items



RESULTS

♥ Preferred Items

Sensory-weighted toys were the most popular alternative. CYP loved the weight, sound of glass beads, and tactile quality — the weighted octopus was a firm favourite.

👥 Sense of Team Belonging

Pairing the clinician's cap with a child's own comfort item created a sense of "team belonging" — a key emotional outcome identified by participants.

🧠 Creative Alternatives

Matching scrunchies, bracelets, or socks as alternatives to caps. Requested themes: Marvel, Minecraft, Jellycat, dogs, flowers, and patterns for older patients.

👤 Surgical Caps & Comfort Items

CYP liked doll-sized caps for their cuddly toys. One patient loved matching caps with their own plushie — fostering a shared identity with the clinical team.

📄 Documentation Review

YPAG reviewed the welcome letter and evaluation tools. Key suggestions: separate questionnaires for CYP and parents, picture-based guides, and age-appropriate wording.

💬 CYP Voice

"I'd like a fidget toy with water and glitter... I'm sold!" · "It could make doctors more approachable" · "Let kids' creativity out"



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that co-production is a vital methodological tool for identifying hidden barriers and "blind spots" in clinical interventions:

- Shifting from a "one-size-fits-all" model to a co-designed, flexible approach enables nurses to provide more equitable, person-centred care
- These findings yield a scalable framework for other paediatric settings to support patient autonomy and reduce psychological distress through inclusive, nurse-led innovation
- Co-design with CYP provides insights that professionals alone cannot anticipate, making it ethically and practically indispensable
- Future work should embed this PPI approach into the design cycle of other nurse-led innovations across paediatric care settings



References: Velazquez-Ruta P, Plews E, Cockcroft J, Allen C. (2026) Matching Surgical Caps and Pediatric Perioperative Experience: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of the Little Platypus Initiative. Journal of Pediatric Surgical Nursing, 0(0). doi: 10.1177/23320249261441640

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