

Kent Youth Research Network



University of Kent

Young Researchers: Pilot

Global Sustainability Goals Research.
April-July 2023 9 Young Researchers trained

6 out of 9 still involved

Young Researcher Quotes

"what I like about being a young researcher is you make a lot of friends and you also learn a lot of skills that come in handy not only at school, but when you leave school and are useful in the workplace."

"As a young researcher I enjoyed being able to work with not only my peers, but also some professionals from the University of Kent"

"I enjoyed being able to see the results that my research produced"

"I've learned the skills and how to research as a young person and develop a questionnaire and to be able to use this knowledge into my future career"

"I enjoyed being able to interact with the people that they sent over from the University of Kent because you get to ask them questions, they get to ask you questions."

"it's just a really fun experience."

NIHR Application

We wanted to make sure that young people were involved right from the beginning so that the KYRN was the best it could be for young people. We held 2 workshops to talk to young people (some Cohort 1 YR and some Kent Youth Voice members) to explain the funding available and to start thinking about what a Youth Research Network for Kent could/should look like, what ideas young people had for research topics and went through the draft application.

Young People worked on some key questions to help complete the application: How will we promote the KYRN? How will we know it is successful? Why young people might want to get involved.



Kent Youth Research Network's 3 elements are:

1. Young Researchers
2. Participant Register
3. Organisations and Practitioner Network

Young Researchers Cohort 2

During the February 2024 half term a Young Researchers Residential was held. Overall 28 young people attended. While 5 of these were returning from cohort 1, 23 were new recruits and undertook their training on the residential. As part of this training the second cohort of Young Researchers practiced their presentation skills, met the University of Kent researchers, and decided upon their areas of study. They split into two groups to develop the survey for their chosen research project. Both were around the topic of social media, one choosing to focus on its influence on attitudes and beliefs, the other its impact on mental health.

"Training the young researchers was amazing. They presented wonderful ideas which we developed collaboratively when going through the ins and outs of conducting research!"
Ollie Rutt, University of Kent

Ethos

The KYRN is to provide young people with opportunities to get involved in research activities with a range of different ways that best suits their needs and interests:

- Consultative participation – e-network of young people for surveys/one off opportunities
- Collaborative consultation – young people engaged and offered opportunities to get involved in focus groups, interviews, one-off opportunities as well as more in-depth/ long term research collaborating with researchers and services.
- Child led – young people trained as young researchers & research projects on themes developed.

All our work follows the Lundy Model of Participation which is a rights based model ensuring young people have space, voice, influence and audience.

Research Projects

- Effect of Social media on individuals' self-esteem
- Effect of Social media on Political attitudes/behaviour

3 Young Researchers have been elected to be Youth Parliament members

Young Researcher Demographics
60% female 40% male
36.66% are White British
20% are Black African
13.33% are Indian
10% are Any Other White Background
6.66% are Any other Mixed Background
3.33% are any other Asian background
3.33% are White Irish
6.66% Unknown

Developing the Network & Successes

- Organisation/Practitioner Network
- Support researchers to access young participants
- Opportunities for groups, schools and services to develop and improve youth research

Youth Vaping Survey

"Kent Youth Research Network input into the questionnaire KCC used for the 2024 Vaping Survey with Kent secondary school pupils was invaluable. They both challenged the need/relevance of some proposed questions and helped develop the language to make the survey appropriate for all children aged 11-18. Their input helped ensure a good response to the survey that has produced findings that have elicited the desired understanding and insight into vaping attitudes and influences."

Jason Hickson, Analyst Manager, Kent Analytics

Parish Council Survey

45 Parish Councils responded to survey asking about provision for children and young people in the parish, activities that support residence with the cost of living and intergenerational projects.

ELSA

29 Schools recruited for ELSA type 1 diabetes screening

36

Research Projects supported by the Network so far

Celebrating Youth Research

"Not only young people have rights to be involved in the decisions that are made about them and their lives, but their engagement and involvement in research projects enhances relevance and accuracy of the generated insights. KYRN facilitates that through professional, committed, friendly and approachable team. Thanks to the KYRN young people are given voice in study designs, how projects are run, and keep researchers accountable to see projects through to the end. In addition, services offered by the KYRN enable young people to learn new topics, skills, develop confidence or build collaborations that might be of use in their future careers. I am very proud to be working with the KYRN and I look forward to continuing to grow our partnership."

Dr Edyta McCallum (PhD), Research Co-ordination Lead, Research and Innovation Unit, KCC

Young Researcher Quotes

"... It was filled with lots of information and knowledge as well as really good resources. It was better than what I expected."

"We were able to discuss and get work done efficiently therefore producing a survey in the time given to us"

"we got to talk about stuff that we've never had to talk about"

"I was apprehensive about meeting new people, but everyone was lovely, the training course was amazing, I felt very included, and I felt like I could contribute"

"...The safe and supportive environment of the second day meant we could have really productive discussion before researching the topics which mattered most to us."

"Well today in the training we've had from the University of Kent, some of the people there are really interesting to talk to especially about their certain subjects which they know a lot about and picking their brains has just been fantastic"

Next Steps

- Survey results and next steps at University of Kent
- Presentation Skills training
- How to run focus groups and qualitative data
- Making graphs and presenting data
- Celebration Event
- Securing further funding to continue the KYRN and have further Young Researcher cohorts

Participant Register Coming Soon!

Young Researchers have developed the publicity materials and tested the registration process for the Participant Register.

It was an interesting challenge to make the consent process secure and streamlined through automation.

