

"Make sure we feel like we matter."



INCLUDE US

Children and young people want to be involved in decisions, whether about their individual healthcare, changes to services or the improvement of health and wellbeing policy. They ask that NHS staff listen respectfully to them and take their views seriously. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable or difficult for them to speak up, but it helps if NHS staff are patient and ready to pay attention.

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

Children and young people want to develop relationships with health professionals. When possible, they would like to see the same doctor, dentist or nurse, and to take their time during appointments and treatments. They want to feel as though they are understood and that someone cares.

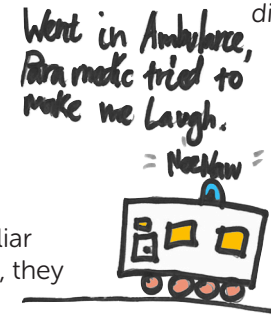


DON'T JUDGE US

Children and young people can easily feel labelled by adults, as members of specific groups (e.g. LGBT young people, asylum seekers, children and young people in care, children and young people with mental health issues, etc.). They ask NHS staff to be non-judgemental and to not have any preconceptions.

GET TECH SAVVY

Children and young people recognise the role of technology in accessing health information. Some of them feel more comfortable with the anonymity of being able to search and ask questions online, while others are concerned about the quality of information available. They ask for a reliable, easy-to-access resource online for children and young people. "It needs to be appropriate information because some websites are dodgy. I don't think I'd ever trust it on advice and diagnosis."



TALK TO EACH OTHER AND SEE US IN THE ROUND

Children and young people discuss the experience of accessing services holistically. Each element – driving in the car/taxi/ambulance, waiting in reception, interactions with reception, assessment and treatment – is recalled in detail and is just a part of an overall experience. This is a reminder that all staff need to think about how they engage with children and young people and the impact they have on the individual's experience.



Discover more about these messages in the "Make sure we feel like we matter" report available from: childrensparliament.org.uk/nhs-lothian-consultation/

These are the top 10 messages from **children** and **young people** about their health and wellbeing, and accessing health services.

GUIDE US

Children and young people value their health and wellbeing and they want to know how to and be able to look after themselves. In

order to do so, they recognise that they need support and guidance from the adults in their lives – parents and carers, teachers, health professionals and others.



TALK TO US

Children and young people want to be spoken to directly. NHS staff need to use their names, ask them questions and engage with them as the patient, rather than talking primarily to their parents/carers. Children and young people want to understand what is being done to them and why. "Think first – can children and young people answer questions themselves?"

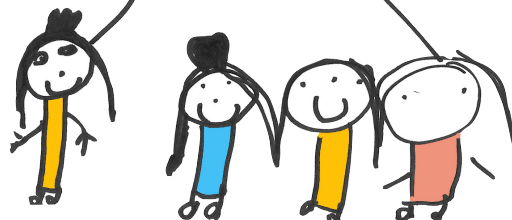
EMPATHISE

Many children and young people have no memory of ever being in a hospital or other NHS service before and they can feel worried or scared about being in such an unfamiliar environment. They ask that NHS staff acknowledge and empathise with this fear, and do what they can to alleviate it.

GIVE US A WELCOMING SPACE

Because health services can often be unfamiliar environments for children and young people, they ask that clinics, hospitals and waiting rooms be made more comfortable and child-friendly, including toys, books, posters and technology specifically for children and young people.

"When I went to the doctors, they had a really good Roald Dahl book that mummy read to me when we were waiting. It's good that they have good books to read because sometimes you wait for ages."



CONSIDER OUR FEELINGS

Children and young people repeatedly stress the importance of tone of voice and manner of speaking, especially when they may already be nervous or scared. "Don't speak in an angry voice as if I've done something wrong."