



# Rewarding, recognising and incentivising young people's volunteering

Children and young people's participation in programmes, projects and activities is central to their rights as a child to have their voice heard, listened to and acted upon. They also need to feel valued and respected to know that their contribution is appreciated and encourage them to continue participating! This document outlines the differences in incentives, rewards and recognition to help guide team members when designing their #YouthVoice activities.

## What is an incentive?

**Definition:** a thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something.

E.g. a small payment/ voucher, work experience placement, goody bag, small gift, skill development, making new friends, developing professional contacts, fun!

## What is a reward?

**Definition:** a thing given in recognition of service, effort, or achievement.

E.g. formal accreditation; group celebration activity; reference for a job or education; small thank you payment/ voucher; a positive activity of a young person's choice e.g. driving lesson/ gym membership; meal out; access to other developmental opportunities; time banking.

## What is recognition?

**Definition:** appreciation or acclaim for an achievement, service, or ability. E.g. public acknowledgement; nominations to local or national awards; formal accreditation; thank you letters, testimonials!

## Should not be confused with...

**Overcoming barriers to volunteering** - where young people need extra help to participate e.g. disability, stigma and social exclusion. To overcome this you can: pay expenses in advance, offer childcare, pay for phone credit, offer a support worker etc.

## #YouthVoice - the "norm"

Supporting young people to have their say in decisions that affect them, should have the following "norms":

- Prompt feedback from decision makers on what is / isn't possible and timescales for change.
- Visible changes as a result of young people being listened to and heard.
- Acknowledgement of young people's input, time and contribution.
- Fun and courageous programmes!

## Process

There should be procedures put in place, for recognising the involvement of children and young people and the valuable contribution they have made before a programme or activity starts. **Don't forget** to involve young people in designing their incentive, reward and recognition too!



# Incentive, Reward & Recognition Activity Planning Help

Use the following questions to help you design your activity, project and programme incentive, reward, recognition programme with young people. NB: acknowledge the budget and staffing resources available from the get go!

**What's the name of your activity/ project / programme?**

**How many hours will young people participate?**

**What are the 3 aims of your activity/ project / programme?**

**What's in it for young people?**

**What's in it for the service young people are influencing?**

**What's the rationale?**

What's the rationale to rewarding, incentivising and recognising young people's contribution and involvement to this activity?

**What volunteering barriers need to be overcome to help young people participate?**

**Decision Time!**

Budget:

Reward/ Incentive / Recognition - the plan:



# To remunerate or not to remunerate - that is the question!

At Participation People, we think children and young people should be paid when asked to undertake a task beyond the expectation of a volunteer role. There are **MANY** differences of opinion on whether children and young people should be remunerated for their participation projects... here are a few for context:

## Free time

Remuneration can act as an added incentive and or sign of appreciation to children and young people. They are giving up their time to help you / service improve. Why should their time be considered less valuable than yours?

## Active citizens?

Payments can undermine the spirit of voluntarism and active citizenship.

Young people can quickly become accustomed to receiving money for their time and will not engage unless this is offered. Payments can also be seen as a form of manipulation or coercion to participate.

## Experts by Experience

Young people are experts by experience. Involving them as experts, as you would professional consultants, should be a paid role.

## What do you want to hear?

Young people may feel more under pressure to say what the adult facilitating the project wants to hear leading to activity bias.

## Removing inequality

Paying young people for their time as an expert by experience, shows that:

- You value their time
- They are being taken seriously
- You are treating them like adults

Payments can remove inequalities between ages and social exclusion.

## Genuine participation?

Young people may take part just to get the payment.

They may not be interested in the topic or have any lived experience of it.

## Where do you land?

Where do you land when reading the above arguments for and against remunerating young people's participation for "above and beyond" activities, projects and programmes?



# Blockers to remuneration to consider

A number of blockers need to be considered when remunerating young people for above and beyond #YouthVoice projects. You will need to consider this when designing your activity, project and programmes...

## Tax and benefits

Complex regulations govern young people's earnings when they access universal credit. All earnings must be accounted for and reported to their universal credit nominated officer. The impact on young people's benefits needs to be assessed on an individual basis.

## Time pressure

Young people have considerable time pressures in their lives already. They may prioritise remuneration opportunities over their academics or wellbeing. Consider this when designing your programme.

## Out of pocket expenses

Any out of pocket expenses must be reimbursed as quickly as possible when young people are volunteering. This could relate to travel, postage, accommodation, phone credit, food and refreshments etc. Even better, pay for them in advance. **These expenses do not relate to young people being remunerated for their time.**

## Employment law

- Children and young people should be given a job description, job specification and contract when employed.
- Records of all payments must be kept up to date and accurate.
- Participation People have a commitment to paying living wage for all of our team, including young people.

## Value of rewards in kind

Consider the value of any incentive, reward and recognition offered to young people, future employers or higher education opportunities.

## Age

There are restrictions on the employment of young people under the age of 13 and for those aged 14-16. They must not be taken out of school or have their education negatively affected by any employment opportunities.

## Volunteer or employee?

Regular payments to a young person as a reward for a specific activity could be seen as constituting a legal contract. If you are making regular payments (cash or vouchers) to the same individual over a period of time, you might want to consider making the young person a part-time employee/consultant.



## Checklist - recognition of children and young people's participation

# Have you?



- Discussed with children and young people how their participation will be recognised before your programme starts?
- Ensured that all children and young people will be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses i.e. travel expenses quickly?
- Put budgetary provisions in place to allow for expenditure on recognition and know how much you have to spend?
- Negotiated with children and young people if they will be reimbursed expenses on the same day and how?
- Chosen appropriate forms of reward, incentive and recognition, considering the social and cultural context?
- Checked whether the participation should be employment?

### More info

#### Overcoming barriers to volunteering |

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/app/uploads/2017/03/Barriers-to-Volunteering.pdf>

**Employing young people** | <https://www.gov.uk/contract-types-and-employer-responsibilities/employing-family-young-people-and-volunteers>

**Universal credit** | <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>