

Participate: Involving young people Tips for library makeovers

When you are planning to involve young people in planning library spaces, there are several issues you should consider. Why not create a HeadSpace, in which case you can find out more from the www.readingagency.org.uk. Use the suggestions below to help you to think about and plan how you will involve young people.

- **Consider working with partners from youth services, schools and colleges. They already have contact with groups of young people and can assist you in working with the group.**
- **Involve young people as early in the process as possible so that they have real ownership of the project.**
- **Involve and consult with young people who don't currently use the library service so that the new space is a space for everyone.**
- **Be clear about what young people will gain from the opportunity. Can they use the project towards qualifications and awards, to develop their skills or to meet other young people? Have you got a budget to reward them with a trip out or a voucher?**
- **Source ideas from magazines and from visiting other well-designed spaces**
- **Give young people as much control of the process as possible. Young people respond well to being empowered and take their responsibility seriously.**
- **Consider taking your young people to buy new stock for the new area.**

- **Set up a focus group of young people to begin the process of developing spaces. Be clear about budgets and boundaries and make sure that young people know what the limits are – maybe there are corporate image constraints that need to be taken into account.**
- **Where possible, involve professional designers to work alongside the young people. This will ensure a high-quality product and a quality learning opportunity for the young people.**
- **Make the space as high quality as possible. This gives the signal that young people are important.**
- **Think about the branding, marketing and launch of the new area as well as the design. Consider asking young people to design posters, flyers or new library cards and have a large vibrant launch event with performers and refreshments.**
- **Think about whether the new area also needs a new name. Ask the young people to control this element of the process.**
- **Make sure that all library staff understand that the space belongs to young people and that this may involve them using the space for non-standard purposes**
- **Think about how the space links with other areas of the library. You may need to inform other library users about the development of the new space and consider ways to introduce young people to other aspects of the library service.**
- **Design your space with sufficient floor space or flexibility to deliver a range of programmes and activities. These activities will be the key to attracting young people into the new space.**
- **Think about involving your young designers to programme activities that use the new space. Encourage them to use the programming to showcase their own creativity and talent.**
- **Remember that work of this kind takes time. Spend plenty of time building up trusting partnerships with young people and your investment will pay off.**

For more detailed advice, download the Youth Involvement Methods document from the Participate Involving Young People web pages.