

Constitution for DECIPHer's research advisory group - ALPHA

1. Name

The name of the group shall be ALPHA:

Advice Leading to Public Health Advancement.

DECIPHer is a Research Centre that spans Cardiff, Bristol and Swansea Universities. The research is focussed on the public health of children and young people, topics such as smoking, obesity and physical activity. The Centre believes research should be undertaken *with* the young people rather than *to* or *on* them.

Therefore ALPHA is a core part of DECIPHer's work to involve the public. ALPHA is a research advisory group of young people aged 14 plus who live in the South Wales or Bristol areas. The ALPHA group is managed and supported by the Involving Young People Research Officer (IYPRO) and a part-time youth worker.

2. Aims and Objectives

The key objectives of the Public Involvement work are to:

1. Involve the public in the strategic development of DECIPHer;
2. Involve the public in the research process within individual projects;
3. Increase awareness and opportunities for public involvement in DECIPHer research;
4. Develop the capacity within DECIPHer to involve the public in its work.

Young people should be involved in the research process as:

1. They have a right to be involved in decisions and processes, including research that has the potential to affect them.
2. They are experts in their lives, with experience, knowledge, insights and capacities that differ from those of adult researchers.
3. They can make the research more relevant, understandable and acceptable to their peers which can lead to better outcomes.

3. ALPHA Membership

Membership will begin as soon as the ALPHA consent form is completed and returned. There will be no annual membership but a list of all members will be kept by the IYPRO and a yearly updated list of active members will be supplied to the group via email or at the first yearly meeting.

It is the responsibility of the IYPRO to provide an annual list of meetings for ALPHA to attend. *See section 3.3 Ceasing to be a member and 6. Meetings.*

3.1 Who can become an ALPHA member?

Membership is open to anyone who:

1. Is aged 14 – 24 years old
2. Lives in the South Wales or Bristol area
3. Has an interest in voicing their views on public health research

3.2 What is expected of you as an ALPHA member?

1. To attend meetings regularly
2. To be honest
3. To be punctual
4. To provide an opinion on discussions, when you feel able to
5. To respect other young people and staff within ALPHA
6. To keep discussions confidential

3.3 Ceasing to be a member

Members may resign at any time in writing to the staff. All members who want to resign from the group will be offered an exit interview. The information from the exit interviews will be used to continually develop and improve the group.

Any member who **has not attended three ALPHA meetings** in a row without sending apologies can be asked to leave the group. If they wish to rejoin the group they have to commit to the next three meetings with ALPHA. The IYPRO or youth worker will notify young people in writing when they have missed three meetings. If there is **no response** it will be presumed the ALPHA member no longer wishes to be part of the group.

Any offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy (set by Cardiff University) will receive a verbal warning (yellow card) for their behaviour. If an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated within three months (three meetings) they will be asked not to attend further meetings via letter (red card).

The individual concerned will have the right to appeal to staff, who will communicate this to ALPHA, to discuss the young person returning to the group.

4. Equal Opportunities

ALPHA will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age (however young people need to be in the age range 14 to 24).

ALPHA work should not be tokenistic and it is the responsibility of staff to ensure that researchers and staff who engage with ALPHA understand the value of their input.

5. Researchers and ALPHA

The IYPRO will ensure that all researchers request to become involved in ALPHA via a *Public Involvement Support Request Form*. This form will clearly set out what involvement the researcher wants with ALPHA and the purpose for their involvement. The IYPRO will, where possible, meet and communicate with the researcher about ALPHA and gain an understanding of their project. Researchers, where possible, should attend the meetings as the young people feel this leads to a more meaningful involvement process.

After ALPHA engagement with researchers the IYPRO will also seek feedback from both ALPHA and the researcher. Feedback from ALPHA will be conducted through a Quality

Assessment at the ALPHA Meeting. Feedback from the researcher will be through a Reflections Questionnaire.

6. Meetings

6.1 ALPHA Monthly Meetings

The IYPRO will ensure that 10 meetings a year and opportunities to team build outside the meeting such as the residential, are provided for ALPHA as a minimum and that all dates are negotiated with ALPHA members. ALPHA meetings are three hours long with a thirty minute lunch break. A yearly timetable of ALPHA meetings and residential weekends will then be produced and distributed via post at the start of the New Year. If an ALPHA meeting is cancelled then the IYPRO will attempt to reschedule when possible.

ALPHA monthly meetings and the residential are open to all members and young people will be given **at least two weeks'** notice via a phone call, text, social media and/or post. It is then the responsibility of the member to communicate back if they can attend.

It is the responsibility of the staff to inform ALPHA members the venue, date and time, the agenda of the meeting and what researcher/s will be attending. The staff will also:

1. Communicate the meeting details with young people via a number of formats i.e. telephone, text, post and/or social media
2. Organise appropriate travel for young people attending the meeting
3. Have the agenda visible throughout the meetings

The IYPRO will ensure that the venue is safe for ALPHA members, a risk assessment is completed and an emergency contact from the DECIPHer management team is on call. The emergency contact will have details of all those attending, including staff and young people, and their emergency contact details.

6.2 ALPHA Annual Residential

All active ALPHA members are encouraged and invited to attend, but it is not mandatory. The residential is a fully funded, weekend away hosted externally in South Wales. The residential involves work-based sessions to respond to requests for advice from researchers as well as time for fun activities, which include team building games, outdoor pursuit activities or free time to chill.

It is the responsibility of the staff to inform the young people of all the details via a residential information pack. This should advise the residential location, date and times of arrival and departure and an itinerary for the weekend. The staff will:

1. Organise appropriate travel for young people
2. Obtain the venues risk assessments or carry out a risk assessment for the venue and the residential
3. Obtain any additional information from the young people with regards to allergies and medications etc.
4. Collect consent from young people and/or parent/guardian.

6.3 Additional ALPHA activities

On some occasions ALPHA members will be invited to participate in extra activities to further and promote the work of DECIPHer. Additional activities will go through the IYPRO, who will communicate this to ALPHA. ALPHA members will have the opportunity to discuss the activity and identify members who will be willing to participate in these additional activities.

7. Finances

ALPHA finances will be obtained from DECIPHer and where possible their work will be costed into research projects bids.

7.1 Out of Pocket Expenses

ALPHA members can be reimbursed out of pocket expenses for their attendance at any ALPHA meetings and events when valid receipts are presented. The IYPRO will also ensure the reimbursement is justified and reasonable so that those young people claiming benefits will not have their benefits affected.

To ensure that appropriate expenses are reimbursed all members will sign in and out of the meetings and identify when they have received a reimbursement. In many cases travel would already have been identified and paid for by the IYPRO prior to the meeting taking place. The IYPRO will organise food and refreshments for both the meetings and residential.

8. Amendments to the Constitution

The ALPHA Constitution will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is kept up to date and relevant for the members. This review will be at the ALPHA residential and can only be agreed by a majority of active ALPHA members. If this is not possible reviewing and signing will occur at the next ALPHA meeting. Any changes will be feedback to the DECIPHer Executive.

Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the IYPRO in writing or via an ALPHA meeting discussion. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of meeting to all members to ensure that every member has an equal vote on the amendments. Once all members have had the opportunity to amend and agree changes it will be discussed at the next ALPHA meeting for approval and signature of members.

9. Dissolution

If the funding for ALPHA comes to an end the IYPRO will inform all current members. ALPHA members will be encouraged to use their skills in other activities and the staff will ensure time is given to each member to identify other projects in their area that they may be interested in attending. The staff will also allow time to create references for active members and support in updating CV's and personal statements to reflect their work and input into ALPHA.

10. Additional Information

Additional to this constitution ALPHA members and staff maybe interested in reading more about the following:



1. The United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child gives a list of all the rights that children and young people have across the world:
<http://www.childcomwales.org.uk/en/rights/>
2. Save the Children's briefing: Children and Participation: Research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people 2000
<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/children-and-participation-research-monitoring-and-evaluation-children-and>
3. The Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales 2007:
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/100302ywcen.pdf>
4. GwirForce Youth Volunteering Charter for Wales:
<http://www.gwirvol.org/en/volunteers/about-us-volunteers/gwirforce-yp/>
5. Participation Worker Wales support youth workers to promote participation of children and young people 0-25 years:
<http://participationworkerswales.org.uk/resources.aspx>
6. Blast Off Good Practice Guide to Children and Young People in Participation :
http://participationworkerswales.org.uk/userfiles/file/STC_E_blast_off_chart%5B1%5D.pdf

11. Approval of Constitution

This constitution was agreed at _____ . The number of members present was _____

Print Name	Date	Signature