“All you need is your opinion”

ALPHA Member
INTRODUCTION

ALPHA stands for Advice Leading to Public Health Advancement. ALPHA is a research advisory group of young people aged 14-24 who live in the South Wales or Bristol areas. Currently we have 20 young people on ALPHA and are always looking to take on new members when funding allows.

This pack has been produced with ALPHA to provide more information to young people who may be interested in becoming a member. After reading this pack if you have more questions please feel free to contact Peter Gee, on the e-mail, telephone or freepost address given opposite.

All ALPHA members need to have a signed consent form, either signed by themselves (if 16 or over) or a parent or guardian (under 16). This lets us know of any dietary or other needs we must meet to make the meetings as accessible as possible for young people.
DECIPHer is a Research Centre that spans Cardiff, Bristol and Swansea Universities. We focus our research on children and young people’s public health including topics such as smoking, obesity and physical activity. The Centre believes that the research it undertakes should be undertaken *with* young people rather than *to* or *on* them. Young people should be involved in the research process as:

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

DECIPHer employs two staff to run ALPHA, who are Peter and Ed (above).

ALPHA members have been involved in a range of projects with various universities and the Welsh Government, and have been reviewers for research funders. Projects include:
- peer-led interventions aimed at preventing substance misuse
- sexual health promotion through digital media
- social media and self harm
- the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey

The group have produced a film on their work and been part of two conferences where they have worked with other young people to produce media outputs.
**TRAINING**

Many new members don’t think they know much about public health and research but training is delivered to help young people understand what topics we cover. Young people soon realise they have many opinions on the topics.

The key areas of training includes:
- What is public health
- The cycle of a research project
- Ethics - making sure that participants are safe
- Research Methods e.g. focus groups, questionnaires and interviews

**MEETINGS**

We have a yearly timetable of ALPHA meetings and a residential usually in August. The meetings are 3 hours long with a 30 minute lunch break.

Researchers attend meetings to ask the group for advice on the research they want to do /are doing.

The meetings are held in a Cardiff University office (A on the map) – 1-3 Museum Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BD. Young people are asked to travel to the meetings without support from a worker however costs will be covered.
What have we worked on?
• Underage drinking
• Stress
• Wellbeing in Schools
• Sexual Health
• Smoking
• Obesity Prevention

The residential is a few days away as a group. It involves sessions with researchers, team building games and outdoor pursuits.

The residential is also a chance for ALPHA members to relax and get to know each other better.

The date for the August residential will be negotiated with the young people closer to the time.

MEETINGS IN 2018

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 27th January</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
<td>12:00 - 3:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 17th February</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
<td>12:00 - 3:00pm</td>
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<td>Wednesday 28th March</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
<td>10:00 – 4:00pm</td>
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<td>Saturday 21st April</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
<td>12:00 - 3:00pm</td>
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<td>Saturday 30th June</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
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<td>July/August</td>
<td>Residential</td>
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<td>Saturday 22nd September</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
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<td>Wednesday 24th October</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
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<td>Saturday 17th November</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
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<td>Saturday 15th December</td>
<td>ALPHA meeting</td>
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No young person should be out of pocket for their involvement in advising the researchers. Therefore the workers will contact young people before and book transport or alternatively young people can be reimbursed travel costs at the meeting. Food is always provided at the meetings so we need all young people to advise of any dietary requirements or allergies.

Your involvement is free

You will receive High Street Vouchers

Young people receive shopping vouchers for each monthly meeting. Shopping vouchers are given to young people as a thank you for their hard work at the meetings. It is young people’s responsibility to declare they are receiving these vouchers if they are in receipt of benefits.

You will gain different experiences

As well as gaining an insight into research from the training programme, young people will gain:
• experience of work in a research centre
• knowledge about the public health topics we cover
• skills such as public speaking and how to give a good presentation

You will enhance your CV and/or Personal Statement

Young people are always trying to stand out from the crowd with their knowledge and experience when they apply for a job or a place at college/university. ALPHA can add to a young person’s CV or personal statement as the time given can be accredited through the Millennium Volunteers Schemes and workers can act as references.
Simply contact Peter on the information below. If you decide to join, Peter will send a consent form to you in the post which needs to be completed before you attend your first ALPHA meeting.

Peter Gee
Public Involvement Officer

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