

Building young people's capabilities: participatory action research

Process Evaluation Report

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1 Summary

The *Capabilities Approach* advocates that young people live lives they have reason to value and that public services enable this. Participatory action research, involving 47 young people, aged 13-16 and 6 practitioners, was carried out in Doncaster to develop a local capabilities framework and recommendations for service design. A process evaluation was undertaken alongside the research to:

- document the implementation of the project
- capture learning points
- collect information and critical reflections about the experience of taking part and
- make recommendations for similar research projects.

The process evaluation was informed by guidance for evaluating complex public health approaches⁽¹⁻⁸⁾ to identify how and why our processes allowed us to meet the project objectives (or not) and the contexts that supported or inhibited this.

Data for the process evaluation was captured through reflections, observations and field notes from the researchers during the project. The young people also completed short questionnaires at the start and end of each session, designed for easy completion and to inform responsive, ongoing planning of subsequent sessions. These data were supplemented by semi-structured interviews with the lead commissioner and the lead researcher.

The research comprised three phases, all of which were found to be important. The first phase involved XXXX, which enabled the building of capability and trust. The second phase involved the young people undertaking peer research. This broadened reach, generated ownership and confidence in the young people and developed a 'citizen mindset'. The third phase included a successful co-design day, although we needed longer for the analysis and next steps. Across the three phases, three interlinked processes were identified which allowed us to meet our objectives: *investment in time, allowing for flexibility, and active partnership*. We identified two main limitations to the project: insufficient time for the third phase, and translating the design principles into feasible sustainable services.

This report is structured as followed:

- Aims and research questions for the process evaluation
- Relevant background to the original proposal
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion

2 Aims and research questions for the process evaluation

The aims of the process evaluation were:

- To document the implementation of the capabilities project
- To describe and compare planned and actual implementation
- To capture learning points in relation to research questions
- To collect information from study participants (schools and students) about the experience of taking part
- To make recommendations for any similar research projects

The research questions were:

- Was it possible to undertake the capabilities work in the way planned?
- Did our theories about the approach lead to the expected outcomes? In this case, the expected outcomes were the [aims and objectives](#) from the original research proposal.
- What contextual factors (including barriers and enablers) were important for participation, implementation and outcomes?

3 Background and original proposal

This section summarises key points of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) project being evaluated. Further details can be found in our peer review journal article “Participatory Action Research to inform Participatory Action Research to inform young peoples’ services, in the North of England” published in the Journal Children & Society (DOI not available at time of writing).

3.1 Background

It has been recognised that school nursing and young people's wellbeing services in Doncaster primarily react to the acute needs of a few young people, and that services could do more to prevent ill-health, support and promote health and wellbeing.

A presentation from the lead researcher about young people's services and the capabilities approach resonated with the lead commissioner who felt services were increasingly providing information to young people on a whole range of issues (using a health promotion style approach) but that this created a lot of ‘noise.’ The commissioner was interested in the potential for a capabilities approach to help young people make their own informed decisions. It was considered that public services could perhaps focus on developing those skills, capacities and conditions to support this, rather than dealing with different health issues such as drugs or sexual health as individual items:

‘...we’d been we been talking about the fact that we try and sort of cover so much er in our services, our 5-19 services, that’s our school nursing and project 3, our health wellbeing service for young people and where it’s just impossible really to try and give all the information you can to young people....so my thinking was actually if you could focus on supporting young people to make good decisions themselves obviously the knowledge element and service element goes with that but would you be more successful in in behaviour change essentially or erm young people making er safe choices for themselves.’ (lead commissioner)

The lead researcher talked about this being the right thing to do and the opportunity to try that out:

‘I really felt at that point that I have an opportunity here to write a proposal that’s not completely, that’s not ridiculous in terms of its scale or its scope but that is as closely aligned to the values of capabilities approach as I could.’ (lead researcher)

3.2 Participatory Action Research aims and objectives

The primary aim of the PAR study was to ensure that 5-19 services would be designed to contribute in the most effective way possible to support young people to develop the freedom and capability to live lives they have reason to value.

The research objectives were:

- To engage and build the capacity of young people to contribute meaningfully to the project
- To ascertain what young people in Doncaster have reason to value
- To learn about what/who young people in Doncaster consider to be assets and support them to become capable, responsible and provide them with opportunities; in doing so, learn what can be built upon and what further role public services can play in their development
- To work collaboratively with young people, community members, frontline practitioners and commissioners to develop a feasible and sustainable 5-19 services in Doncaster.

4 Methodology

4.1 Process evaluation

A process evaluation was planned to explore the research questions listed in section 2 of this report. Process evaluations are recommended by the Medical Research Council for complex public health approaches⁽⁹⁾ to understand how and why programmes do or do not work in a real world setting. They are also useful for understanding the contextual factors that may influence success and for learning through doing⁽¹⁰⁾. Whilst many frameworks recommended for use in process evaluations are more suited to understanding the effect of 'interventions,' they provide a useful checklist nonetheless.

4.2 Process evaluation design and methods

Various process evaluation frameworks were reviewed (RE:AIM⁽¹¹⁾, MRC guidance on evaluation for complex projects⁽⁹⁾, and Steckler & Linnan's guide to process evaluation for public health⁽¹²⁾). The aspects suitable for exploring our research questions were combined in a table and compared with our research questions to plan appropriate investigation approaches. This can be found in the [appendix](#).

4.2.1 Data collection

Reflections, observations and field notes are considered an appropriate method for process evaluation, allowing for detailed notes and reflections to be made about what happened and how⁽¹³⁾. Reflections, observations and field notes kept by the researchers for 5 out of the 8 sessions were included.

Semi-structured questionnaires were also used at the start and end of each session with the young people. These were designed to inform ongoing iteration of the planned sessions, to be responsive to young people and quick to complete⁽¹²⁾. Finally, the use of multi-media methods for eliciting views from young people is well-established⁽¹⁴⁾ and suitable for process evaluation⁽¹³⁾ so the contribution of the content produced by young people during the research (which included drawing, modelling, discussion, mind-mapping and storytelling) was considered for inclusion.

These data were supplemented by semi-structured interviews with the lead commissioner and the lead researcher. The topics to guide the discussion are shown in the [appendix](#).

All young people involved in the research were invited to complete pre- and post-questionnaires. Between 6-12 young people filled in questionnaires for each session. Because the sessions were designed to be flexible to young peoples' needs and preferences, some young people did not stay for whole sessions and thus may not have completed both questionnaires on each occasion. Therefore in total, 90 out of a possible 126 questionnaires were completed.

Note: for discussion on sampling, recruitment and consent for the main research project, please see the main research report.

4.3 Reflexivity and limitations of this process evaluation

The lead author of this process evaluation (AB) was involved in the delivery of this research. Also, although not involved in the original proposal and design, AB did contribute to the iteration of the design along the way. Therefore, it is particularly important to reflect throughout on how this may have affected interpretations of what happened and why. This is fairly common in process evaluations⁽⁹⁾ and can be mitigated to an extent by including reflections on what went well and badly with another researcher.

Limitations identified were:

- The process evaluation was started at the same time as the research project and would have benefited from more thorough planning in advance of the sessions.
- The data collection was incomplete – we did not record formal field notes of the post-research discussions for every session.
- Capacity was limited but interviews with a broader range of people about how well the research met its aims could have added other perspectives.

4.4 Approach to analysis

Limited quantitative data is included. This has been subject to descriptive analysis.

Qualitative data was thematically analysed, broadly following Braun & Clarke's guidance on thematic analysis^(15,16). There is no standard for analysis in process evaluations, but thematic analysis is flexible, suitable for many approaches and has been used in other process evaluations^(17,18). Flexible, deductive coding was used, using the research questions and aims of the original project as an overarching framework. The process was as follows:

1. Familiarisation: reading and immersion and data
2. Generating initial codes: jotting down notes to create open codes
3. Searching for themes: grouping open codes, whilst keeping research questions in mind and used to group codes to develop themes
4. Reviewing themes: discussed themes with other researchers, checked them against primary data sources to ensure balance of completeness / synthesis, reviewed against research questions to ensure coverage as far as possible, thematic map explaining interrelationships where possible / appropriate
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Writing the report

5 Findings

Findings are reported under the following headings:

1. Was it possible to undertake the capabilities work in the way planned?
2. Key process learnings
3. Limitations to the approach.

5.1 Was it possible to undertake the capabilities work in the way planned?

People's participation is a core feature of the Capabilities Approach. We planned a series of 18 x 1hr participant workshops, rolled out in a staged approach, but one which appeared seamless to young people participating. The plan was to use tools and techniques from a range of person-centred methods to help achieve the project objectives and satisfy both moral and methodological imperatives for participation. The sessions were intended to be iterative and flexible and adjusted to the needs and capabilities of the group participating.

Part of the purpose of the process evaluation is to document the implementation and describe and compare planned and actual implementation, more detail on these aspects can be found in the appendices:

- Appendix 3 describes the partners and their values
- Appendix 4 summarises comparisons between planned and actual delivery across different aspects
- Appendix 5 summarises the sessions, people attending and data collected.

A summary comparing planned with actual delivery follows.

Research stages

We originally planned 6 hours in stage 1 (capacity building), 6 in stage 2 (developing insight) and 6 in stage 3 (co-design). It was envisaged that these would run in blocks of 2 hours per day.

All three stages were delivered. Delivery was mostly in 90 minute sessions to fit with the school day. An extra session was added to support the young people undertake the peer research during school time, one session was extended to 3 hours because the young people were so engaged and wished to continue discussions and stage 3 was delivered through a whole day session, followed by a preparation session and presentation to disseminate findings.

Recruitment

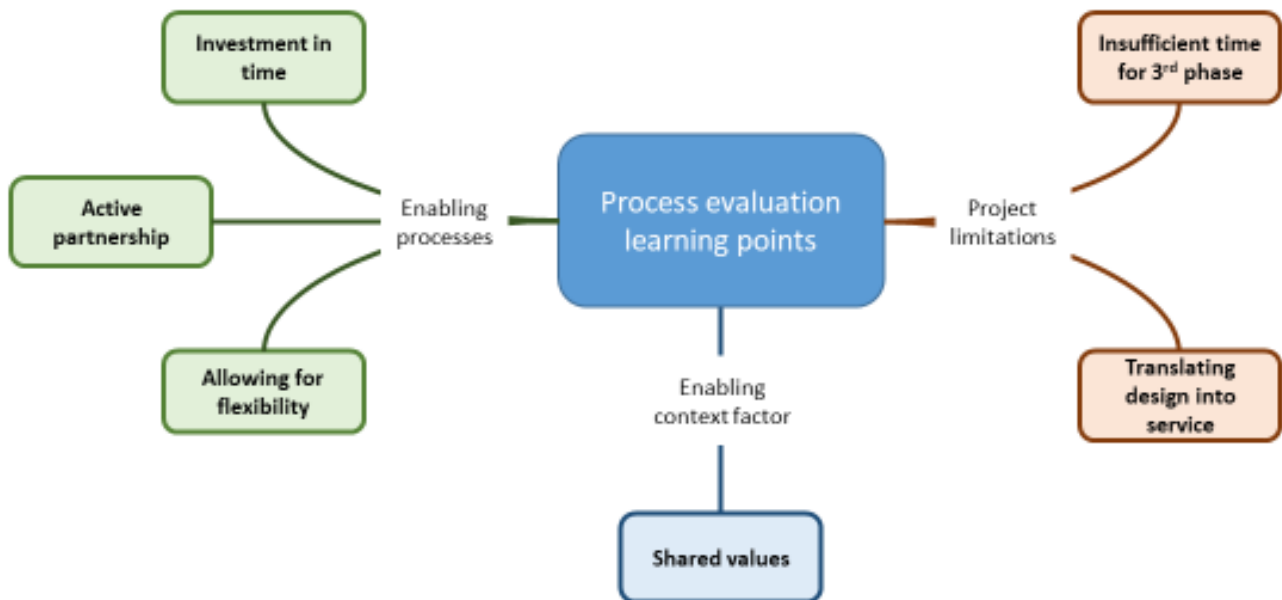
We planned to work with a single school and a single group of 12-16 young people over the duration of the project. These young people would ideally be recruited from years 8, 9 and 10. Between 8 and 16 young people, from a cohort of 17, aged between 13-16 participated in each session.

It was felt to be crucial that the school were fully committed to supporting the project and provide space for the meetings to be held. Two planning meetings were intended to be held with the school in question prior to the start of the project, including discussion about the best method for recruiting participants. It was considered important that this opportunity was not automatically given to the best behaved or highest achievers, but to young people reflecting the range of behaviours and abilities that attend the school. There was a desire for young people to demonstrate a commitment to the project, for example, by applying to take part, but not if that excluded those with less confidence or other access issues.

5.2 Key process learnings

All phases of the research design were found to be important: the first phase built capability and trust, the peer research phase broadened reach, generated ownership and confidence in young people and developed a 'citizen mindset,' the third phase included a successful co-design day, although we needed longer for the analysis and next steps. Across the three phases, three interlinked processes were identified which allowed us to meet our objectives: *investment in time, allowing for flexibility, and active partnership.*

Mind-maps were used to explore and analyse the data and create themes. A summary of the key process learnings and limitations is shown below with more detailed versions in the appendix.



5.2.1 Investment in time

The project length and three phases of research supported relationship and capacity building and depth of insights.

Investing time and effort in relationships was suggested as a contributing factor towards i) ensuring people engaged effectively and ii) the feasibility of doing this kind of research. The lead researcher spent time building relationships with the school, commissioner and providers before, during and after the research project. The commissioner and providers also had good working relationships. During the project, the researchers were able to develop trust with the young people. In discussion with one of the teachers we understood that this was partly because some of the young people do not have consistent adults in their lives and once they knew the researchers were returning time and again, they felt able to open up. They also developed closer relationships with their peers, which led to richer insights into some of their lives, such as caring for parents, struggles with mental ill-health and complex family living situations.

Time also supported capacity building. At the start of the project the young people were overall more confident than the researchers had expected. This was likely due to the school setting which takes an 'expedition' approach to learning with a focus on the young people interpreting and speaking about their own learning. There was, however, a real range in the group with a few members less comfortable to engage in the exercises verbally. Whilst they were confident, few had any fully formed views on what it meant to thrive or flourish – as they put it, to live their best lives. By the end of the project they were contributing to in-depth discussions and actively listening to each other, their feedback forms highlighted that they appreciated the 'deep stuff', and 'talking about important things'.

The range of methods and the length of time were both important for engaging different young people:

'...reinforced for me the idea that, you know, almost with every question that you ask, you need multiple ways of being able to respond to that and that you need to be able to come back to questions later on... either in that session or the programme overall...' (lead researcher)

Through this process, young people who had begun the process silent were comfortable talking about their ideas and opinions with practitioners by the end.

For the practitioners, the protected time seems to have been important:

‘...the professionals were saying how great it was to sort of have that space to sort of sit down and talk actually talk to young people which you, they just wouldn’t usually get in their kind of day to day obviously they have a sort of limited time with the young person and its usually addressing a specific issue that the young person’s come in with.’ (lead commissioner)

These closer relationships, range of methods and the length of the project led to a ‘layering’ of knowledge and generated richness and depth in findings. For example, moving beyond past concepts of ‘young-person friendly’ to really exploring what it would mean to create spaces and environments in which young people feel safe. The commissioner and researchers reported that this would not have been possible in a typical consultation process limited to a single event or survey.

5.2.2 Planning for flexibility

The researchers planned to be flexible to adjust to the needs and interests of the group, but also found that they needed to be flexible to respond to unforeseen challenges. Choice and flexibility were identified as potential contributing factors for extremely high levels of engagement in the young people.

The researchers were able to implement the planned element of flexibility. People could participate in a variety of ways – through discussion, written or drawn responses, or modelling. The tool kits of modelling aids were available for every session. This meant that if people did not feel able to voice an opinion, they had another way to provide input. In addition, the researcher team were able to change the agenda and range of techniques deployed throughout the project, according to feedback and their own reflections. This can be seen through the comparison between the planned sessions and the delivered sessions as well as the detailed reflections (available, redacted of names, on request). One example of this was introducing a walking storytelling session which had not previously been planned but was in response to young people’s feedback for more physical movement and being outside, and the researchers’ perceptions that smaller groups would help people share more personal stories.

In addition, the young people were given the choice to participate each week. The young people were encouraged by the school to come and explain why they wanted to miss any of the sessions and the research team respected those choices. On one session three of the young people opted not to come. The researchers considered that they might not return to the programme, but made it clear they were always welcome. In fact, these three did not miss any more sessions and engaged in more depth on each subsequent session. The researchers concluded that by giving the young people choice, they felt they had control, and this led to genuine engagement.

Implementing this planned element of flexibility was challenging and required a great deal of investment from the team between sessions.

‘We were designing that week to week based on feedback that was coming back from people and our growing understanding...I probably found it more challenging than expected to be constantly changing between weeks – although I felt that was a really positive part of the process – we did change an awful lot, we did challenge ourselves, we did do some really interesting exercises that weren’t planned at the beginning that were successful for some.’ (Lead Researcher)

The research team also had to manage uncertainty and change in how they worked with the school. Conflicting work schedules meant that when the researchers arrived each week, they had often not had responses to calls or emails, which meant they were uncertain about whether communication had been passed on to young people – it always had – but there was a degree of uncertainty throughout. The researchers had to trust that turning up would enable them to work through the issues. Mostly this meant the sessions went ahead but one had to be cancelled due to unforeseen and tragic circumstances and a few others had to be re-thought and rearranged on arrival at school. The young people did not seem to find this difficult (this was not mentioned in any of their feedback and the

researchers reflected that this was their perception). Having two people at each session was important for dealing with this and remaining calm, flexible and adaptable. Their reflection on this was that the young people and the school cared about the project and so they would find ways to work around them.

Although not explicitly mentioned, it is likely the young people also had to deal with a great deal of uncertainty about how the project would work and what they would be expected to do. Their ability to be flexible and try things out was highlighted in the reflections:

‘The young people were completely open to going off and finding someone to interview - very confident and prepared to try things without much preparation.’ (extract from reflection 17.4.19)

5.2.3 Active partnership

The research team strove, in keeping with the principles of the *Capabilities Approach* to engage with the young people as equals. They did this by supporting them to act as co-researchers and have control over many elements of the process.

The phased approach had always included a phase where the young people themselves would develop research materials and undertake research with their peers on what it means and how they might be supported ‘to live their best life’. The research team were able to support the young people to develop a rudimentary questionnaire which could either be used as a static series of questions, or the basis of a discussion guide. The research team gave the young people mini researcher toolkits – including some of the modelling tools – for them to use.

“...we created mini ones for them to have and whether they used them or not it sort of bought them into the process of...they’re researchers now too and they’ve got a little kit and can go around with it and it...I think that helped to level the playing field a little bit.” (lead researcher)

Responses were captured through an online survey and feedback session.

All the young people took part in data collection and this had two key impacts. They successfully broadened the reach of the work, strengthened our understanding of some topics and captured novel insights, for example those related to troubled friendship groups. Unexpectedly, the peer research also led to greater ownership of the project and confidence in young people. The research team reported that they developed a ‘citizen mindset,’ and perhaps felt a greater responsibility to present the views of their peers, than they might have done with just their own views. This mindset produced a tangible shift in leadership from the researchers to the young people.

‘[the research team]...shifted from leading from the front to sitting on the floor taking notes / checking in on people to support participation...’ (research lead).

This shift in turn led to deeper conversations, with the agenda and topics set according to the pressing issues the peer research revealed.

This, combined with the process of having analysed the findings from their peers, appeared to contribute to the success of the co-design day. The young people began the day with confidence in their contributions, trust built, a depth of understanding and this led to genuinely user-led, collaborative work on an equal playing field:

‘...I felt we were quite quickly able to get over the well what are we all doing here, and into some sort of really in depth conversations and discussions...’

5.3 Limitations to the approach.

The process evaluation identified two main limitations to the project:

- Insufficient time for the third phase
- Translating the design principles into feasible sustainable services.

5.3.1 Insufficient time for the third phase

The lack of time for the third phase was partly due to factors outside the research team's control. This resulted in young people not being fully involved in the final analysis which appears to have limited their ongoing ownership of the project.

A combination of delays in ethical approval, a tragic event at the school and exams and summer holidays being a hard stop meant that the last phase of the research had to be carried out on a single day. This was then followed up with a smaller group in the autumn. Whilst they were keen and engaged, they needed reminding of the findings and the ownership did not appear to have outlived the research project.

This also links to the second limitation. There was insufficient time for reflection and further work to connect the insights with next steps.

5.3.2 Translating design principles into services

Some of the people who have potential to influence decisions about services, such as those working in procurement and the broader senior management of the partner organisations, have not yet been sufficiently involved. There is a risk that they are less engaged and this may be a limiting factor for the breadth of influence for this work. Alternatively, it may be possible to develop a proof of concept in some areas and generate further interest and involvement over a longer time-period.

The project concluded by reporting insights, principles and a framework. However, the details of how these are translated into commissioning, practice or design are still to be worked through:

'...what we probably arrived at is some areas of potential public service intervention... and some general principles...but not as far ...[as] the nuts and bolts of what they might look like...' (Lead researcher)

'There's a sort of, a blend of all the evidence and insight that somehow needs to happen in order to be able to inform [service design]...the bit that I don't think we've cracked yet is the blend bit...' (lead researcher)

We recommend a further piece of work to consider which different methods of commissioning (or alternatives to commissioning such as shared planning and budgeting) may be needed to support a capabilities approach:

'I suppose my only anxiety would be doing the research justice and doing what...and sort of incorporating what the young people have told us into practice...and it's interesting because how do you... how do you sort of translate that into a service specification...I mean the whole idea is that this will feed into an eventual tender exercise so we might be dealing with providers who've had nothing to do with this and how do we kind of... how do we talk to them about the importance of this and what we've done and what sort of led to us ...that's definitely something I'm going to have to think about' (lead commissioner)

5.4 Additional factors

One additional contextual factor was identified as an important enabler through the process evaluation: the shared values of the partners. This is not listed as a process learning since it can't necessarily be engineered, but is reported in brief below.

Partners had shared values around:

- the importance of civic responsibility

- relationships and connections
- the value of different types of evidence coming together
- the importance of young people's involvement.

All partners had expectations of, and comfort with, uncertainty. The values and beliefs of the research team and other key people were congruent with the theoretical approach. These key people made the project happen and they had sufficient support across senior management and the wider system.

6 Discussion

The research questions for this process evaluation were:

- Was it possible to undertake the capabilities work in the way planned?
- Did our theories about the approach lead to the expected outcomes? In this case, the expected outcomes were the [aims and objectives](#) from the original research proposal.
- What contextual factors (including barriers and enablers) were important for participation, implementation and outcomes?

Was it possible to undertake the capabilities work in the way planned?

It was possible to deliver a PAR programme with the planned number of young people from diverse backgrounds in a way that was acceptable to them and the partners within the timescales and resources agreed.

This project demonstrated the potential for this type of approach and research design to achieve the first three aims of the research project. The phases of the research design were all important: the first phase did build capability and trust, the peer research phase broadened reach, generated ownership and confidence in young people and developed a 'citizen mindset,' the third phase included a successful co-design day but we perhaps needed longer for the analysis and next steps.

Did our theories about the approach lead to the expected outcomes?

The project also demonstrated how this research design enabled the exploration of how theoretical models can lead to service design and principles. The findings report shows that it was possible for young people to develop their own capabilities framework and covers the detail of this. The co-design day indicated the potential to inform service design and delivery.

'...do I think it's got the kernels of a different way of working, yeah I genuinely do...' (lead researcher)

The work to undertake re-design and embed principles is only just starting so it is not yet possible to report on whether a 'feasible and sustainable' service will be developed as a result of the project. To date, there are areas to consider, principles and a framework, but the details of how this is translated into commissioning or practice or design are still to be worked through.

What contextual factors (including barriers and enablers) were important for participation, implementation and outcomes?

The project enabled in-depth, genuinely user-led, collaborative work on an equal playing field. Time and resources and energy and effort were all important. The length of project was important for 'layering' knowledge, generating richness and depth – although in hindsight a longer third phase was needed.

Crucially, all partners had shared values and beliefs that were congruent with the *Capabilities Approach*. They also accepted uncertainty which enabled a flexible approach to managing the project. Sufficient support across senior management and the wider system enabled key people to successfully deliver the project and broadly meet the aims and objectives of the original proposal.

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Appendix 1: Frameworks and questions and plan of investigation

Research questions	Questions to ask / dimensions to explore	Frameworks / references	Plan of investigation
Was it possible to undertake the capabilities work in the way planned?	Was it implemented according to plan (fidelity / adaptation)? If not why not?	Adaptation ^(3,4) Steckler and Linnan ⁽¹²⁾	Review differences between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Original timetable and approach - Final timetable and approach Review theory and plan about adaptation / fidelity Review reflections between sessions Thematic analysis to identify potential themes / reasons
	Context factors (describe context factors to enable analysis of which elements may affect delivery and outcomes)	Realistic evaluation ⁽⁵⁾ Diffusion of innovations ⁽⁶⁾ Normalisation process and General Theory of Implementation ^(7,8)	Description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School - Researchers - Young people - Commissioning organisation - Commissioners / Practitioners Review for factors that may be important, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intentions - Beliefs / values - Experiences
	Dose (quantity of delivery)	Steckler and Linnan ⁽¹²⁾	Description of planned and actual delivery
	Reach	Steckler and Linnan ⁽¹²⁾	Description of planned and actual numbers participating across sessions
	Feasibility and acceptability of the approach (cost, resources and time)	MRC guidance ⁽⁹⁾	Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre- and post- questionnaires

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflections on sessions <p>Possibly conduct interviews with practitioners, commissioners, teachers and researchers</p>
<p>Did our theories about the approach lead to the expected outcomes? In this case, the expected outcomes were the aims and objectives from the original research proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To engage and build the capacity of young people to contribute meaningfully to the project ● To ascertain what young people in Doncaster have reason to value ● To learn about what/who young people in Doncaster consider to be assets and support them to become capable, responsible and provide them with opportunities; in doing so, learn what can be built upon and what further role public services can play in their development ● To work collaboratively with young people, community members, frontline practitioners and commissioners to develop a feasible and sustainable 5-19 services in Doncaster. 	Feasibility and acceptability of the approach	MRC guidance ⁽⁹⁾	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre- and post- questionnaires - Reflections on sessions <p>Possibly conduct interviews with practitioners, commissioners, teachers and researchers</p>
	Efficacy: why the intervention works for some population groups, and/or in some contexts, but not others (or which aspects of our approach worked in which contexts for whom)	Taxonomy of behaviour change techniques (Michie et al. 2013) RE:AIM ⁽²⁾	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre- and post- questionnaires - Reflections on sessions <p>Possibly conduct interviews with practitioners, commissioners, teachers and researchers</p>
	Mechanisms / theories of change - how an intervention has an effect on participants, organisations, and communities, including their response to the intervention and its influence on determinants of outcomes	Realistic evaluation ⁽⁵⁾ MRC guidance ⁽⁹⁾	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Original plans and theory - Pre- and post- questionnaires - Reflections on sessions <p>Possibly conduct interviews with practitioners, commissioners, teachers and researchers</p>
	Unintended consequences?	MRC guidance ⁽⁹⁾	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre- and post- questionnaires - Reflections on sessions <p>Possibly conduct interviews with practitioners, commissioners, teachers and researchers</p>

<p>Why did people participate / not? / what contextual factors were important for implementation and for outcomes in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barriers ● Enablers 	<p>Feasibility and acceptability of the approach</p>	<p>MRC guidance⁽⁹⁾</p>	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre- and post- questionnaires - Reflections on sessions
	<p>Efficacy: why the intervention works for some population groups, and/or in some contexts, but not others (or which aspects of our approach worked in which contexts for whom)</p>	<p>RE:AIM⁽²⁾ Realistic evaluation⁽⁵⁾ Diffusion of innovations⁽⁶⁾ Normalisation process & General Theory of Implementation^(7,8)</p>	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Original plans and theory - Pre- and post- questionnaires - Reflections on sessions <p>Possibly conduct interviews with practitioners, commissioners, teachers and researchers</p>
	<p>Mechanisms / theories of change - how an intervention has an effect on participants, organisations, and communities, including their response to the intervention and its influence on determinants of outcomes.</p>	<p>Realistic evaluation⁽⁵⁾ MRC guidance⁽⁹⁾ Diffusion of innovations⁽⁶⁾ Normalisation process⁽⁸⁾ General Theory of Implementation⁽⁷⁾</p>	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Original plans and theory - Pre- and post- questionnaires - Reflections on sessions <p>Possibly conduct interviews with practitioners, commissioners, teachers and researchers</p>

Appendix 2: topic guide for semi-structured interviews

- Gain consent to record and use interview
- Can you start by telling me about the background to the research?
- Was it possible to conduct the project in the way you had planned to?
 - If to some extent, what made it possible? / what was helpful?
 - If not to some extent, what got in the way?
- What are your reflections on how it was implemented compared with how it was planned?
- You've talked about the capabilities approach and your theory was that using these participatory methods and the capabilities approach would engage young people, that it would be possible for them to undertake peer research and through this project we could gain an understanding about what young people have reason to value, that the outputs of this could be used to understand how it might be possible for services to use a capabilities approach. Did your theories about how it would work lead to the expected outcomes?
 - How did it work / not work
 - Were there other things about how it worked that were unexpected?
- Did some things work better for some people? (if appropriate)
- Were there unexpected findings / anything surprising / unintended outcomes / consequences?
- Any reflections on why people did or didn't participate? (if appropriate)
- Final thoughts / anything else to say

Appendix 3: Description of the project and partners

Public Health Team Doncaster

The Public Health Team in Doncaster is a single function with five teams covering different themes. The Children & Young People's theme was the lead for this piece of work. The theme lead was the main contact and involved in commissioning the work and took part in the co-design day.

The team's values are:

- Learn by doing
- Make the invisible visible
- Relentless kindness

The 'Learn by doing' value reflects the team's approach to trying things out, research as part of all work and being comfortable with uncertainty. This is supported and encouraged by the Head of Service responsible for the CYP team and the Director of Public Health.

Sheffield Hallam Team

The Sheffield Hallam Team comprised two researchers with expertise in young people's wellbeing, capabilities approach and participatory research methods (KS) and user-led design (HH). The Sheffield Hallam Values are:

- Collaboration
- Ambition
- Inclusion
- Innovation
- Integrity

5-19 Services

Some of the core services are provided by School Nursing and Project 3(NHS Rotherham, Doncaster, and South Humber Foundation Trust). The school nursing team is a group of experienced qualified nurses and support workers who support young people aged 5-19 years and their families to stay healthy. They work in partnership with other health service and education providers, and other wider social care and voluntary services for children, young people and families. Project 3 works with young people aged 18 years and under who need advice information, help, support and intervention around: smoking cessation, sexual health and contraction, alcohol, drugs and legal highs, hidden harm and education early intervention and prevention.

XP School

XP School and XP East Schools are secondary schools in Doncaster. There are 50 pupils per year group in each school split into two groups of 25. The school's curriculum is based on:

- rigorous taught academic qualifications leading to Academic Success
- expeditions with Beautiful Work
- Character Growth through "crew" support

Its principles are:

- Personalisation
- Connect with the world
- A common mission
- Teachers are learners
- Language is our culture

<https://xpschool.org/>

This way of working meant the school was keen for students to engage in meaningful work and take responsibility for their own engagement in the process.

<https://smartfile.s3.amazonaws.com/8fcb5ef6413072ba30cbe25fbf839dfb/uploads/2018/01/1710-XP-Report-Final.pdf>

Appendix 4: Comparison of what was planned with actually happened

Aspect	Planned	Actual	Notes on reasons for change
Number of sessions	18 (in 9 days – so 2 sessions on each day)	20 sessions over 8 days, with a 9 th planned for autumn (dissemination)	<p>Extra sessions were provided to allow time for supported peer research: the young people had not had time to undertake this outside of the planned sessions</p> <p>The last 6 sessions were originally envisioned to be 3 x 90minutes over 3 weeks or possibly longer over 2 sessions. In practice, we had a full day to cover these sessions with young people, commissioners and practitioners.</p> <p>Because of the delay in starting, we had a big break (for exams) between the first sessions and the day when we covered the last 6. This also meant that we couldn't complete the last (dissemination) session before the summer holidays. However, we successfully applied to present findings at a national King's Fund conference in Leeds and returned to the school to prepare for this with the young people who wished to be involved. They then presented the project with our support. This also resulted in us being invited to submit a good practice example, which is now published: https://phe.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=62906</p>
School site	Single school	Single school	n/a
Participants	A single group of 12-16 young people	Between 8 and 16 young people, from a cohort of 17, aged between 13-16 participated in each session.	The fluidity of the cohort occurred because of following young people's lead. It seemed that allowing the dropping in and out of sessions meant we kept the majority of the cohort's involvement throughout the process: young people were involved because they wanted to be and because they felt that we wanted them to be, not because they were obliged to be there.
		These young people then undertook research with a further 30 peers, after seeking informed consent	
Pre- and post-questionnaires collected	All students every session	Most students completed these for most sessions but there were some gaps and we didn't get the post-questionnaire for	Students didn't always arrive at the start or stay for full sessions, we attempted to capture questionnaires regardless but there were some gaps.

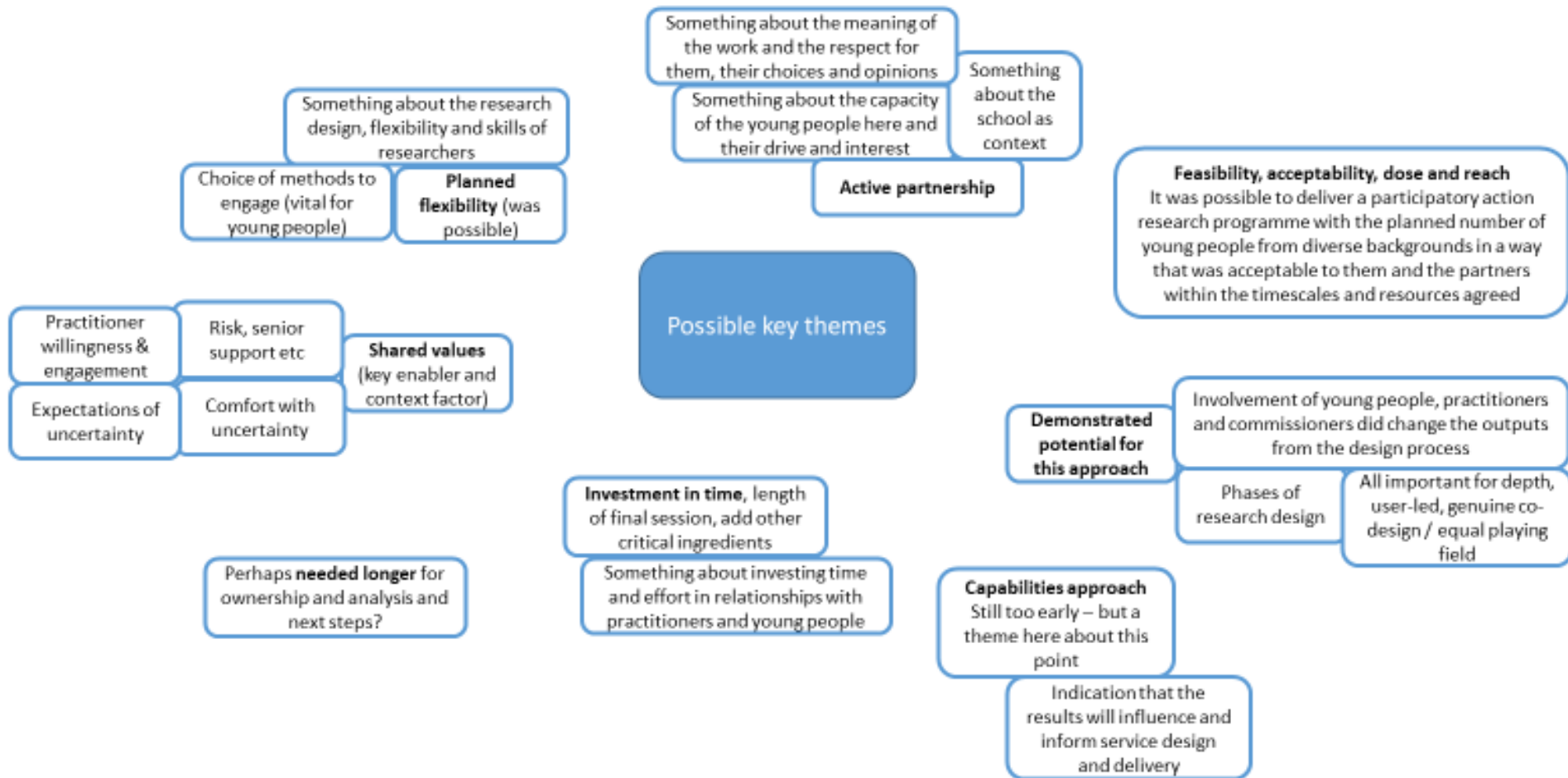
		the last session (school is supposed to be sending for collection) See separate table showing numbers collected for detail	One session was very disrupted and didn't get questionnaires.
Reflections / field notes collected	All sessions	Reflections occurred after all sessions but not all were written up immediately The reflections were written and shared for most sessions	There were no formal written reflections for the first session or the 7 th May. A project manager / administrator some more formal checklists for data collection may have helped with ensuring these did not get missed.
Details of sessions	See separate comparison of planned and actual sessions		Changes were made based on being young-person-led and ongoing reflection after each session about what was working / not

Appendix 5: a summary of sessions, participants and data collected

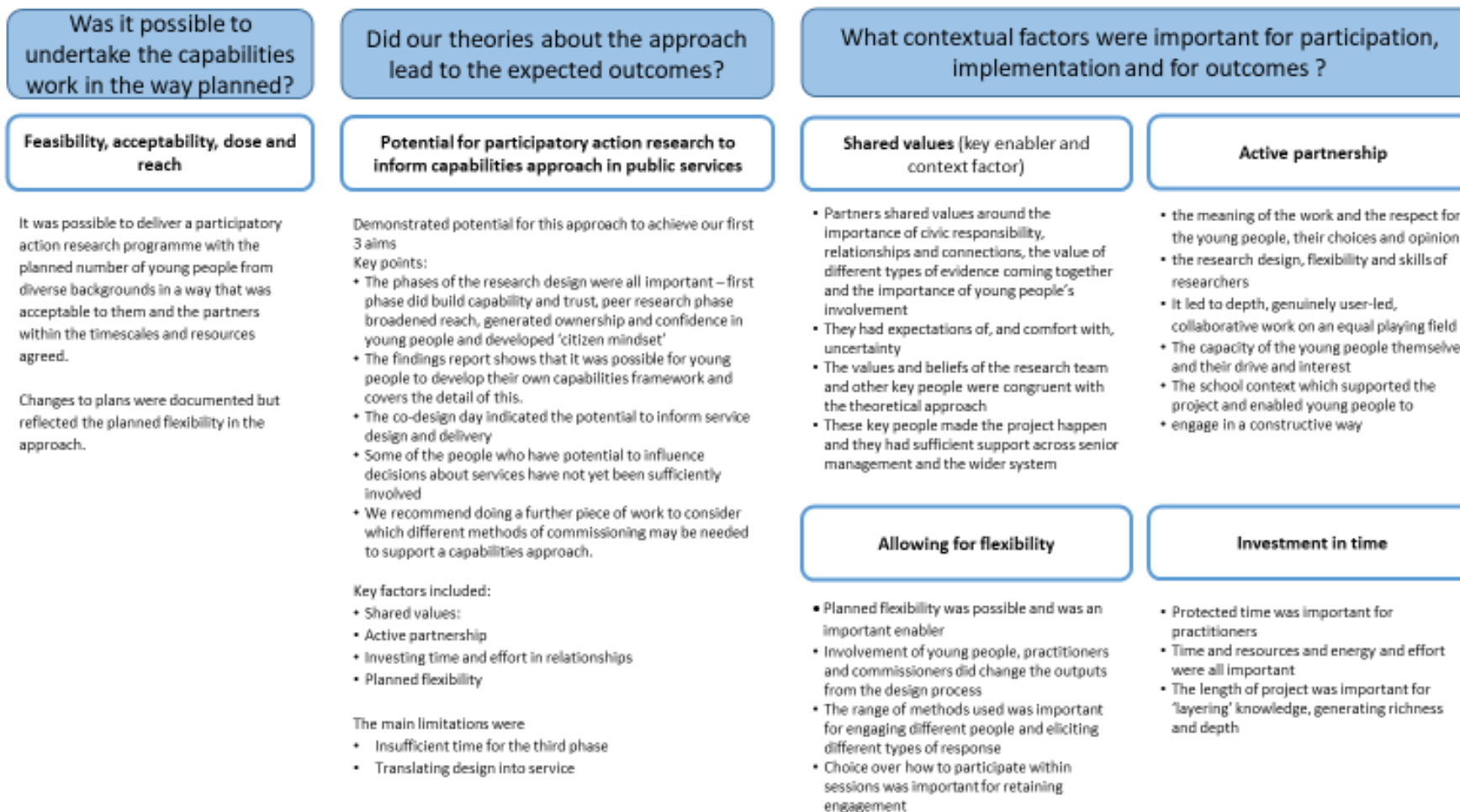
Session (new numbering)	Date (time)	Researchers	How many young people?	How many practitioners / commissioners	Sessions covered (original numbering)	Observations and field notes?	Pre and post Qs available?
1	21 st March (90 mins)	KS & HS	11	0	1 & 2	no	yes
2	25 th March (90 mins)	KS & AB	?	0	3 & 4	yes	no
3	2 nd April (90 mins)	KS & HS	8 started, finished with 6	0	5 & 6	yes	Yes: included in reflection
4	11 th April (90 mins)	KS & AB	10	0	7 & 8	yes	yes
5	17 th April (90 mins)	KS & AB	Started with 4, 6 more joined, some left, so 10 at some point	0	9 & 10	yes	Yes
6	30 th April (3 hours)	KS & AB	12	0	extra session to undertake research – stayed til midday	yes	Yes
7	7 th May (90 mins)	KS & AB	12	0	11 & 12	no	Yes
8	27 th June (full day)	KS, AB & Ursula	12	6 practitioners 1 commissioner	13-17	no	Waiting for school to help us collect
9	6 th November (full day) plus other dates potentially tbc	AB	tbc	CW, SN, VS, others	18		

Appendix 6: sample mind maps

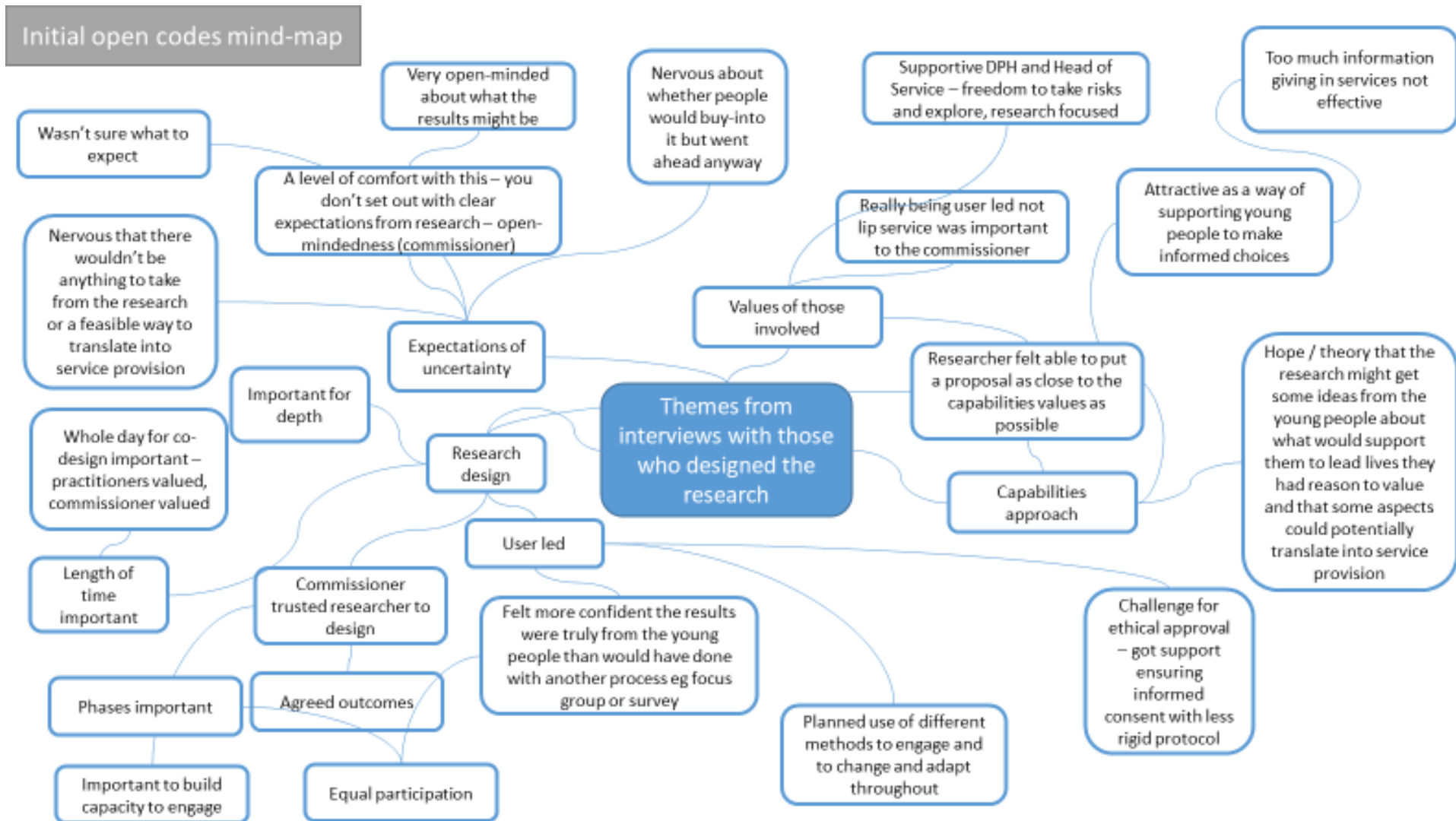
Initial groupings of key findings into possible themes



Summarised key findings under research questions:



Example of detailed mind-map from data
 More detailed mind-maps available on request.



Sheffield Hallam University

Building young people's capabilities: participatory action research

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