

# Youth Advisory Group

## Terms of Reference

### Vision of the group

For Teenage Cancer Trust to put young people at the heart of our work and help to make sure we are providing the best possible support to young people affected by cancer.

### Our Mission - What's the purpose of the group?

Teenage Cancer Trusts exists to support young people in the UK who are diagnosed with cancer between the ages of 13-24 during and after treatment. So it's important that we can learn from young people to continue to develop as a charity.

The Youth Advisory Group (YAG) is a group of enthusiastic young people who have been affected by cancer and supported by Teenage Cancer Trust. They help to shape the purpose and direction of the charity both now, and in the future.

It's a key part of how we involve young people in the charity. It enables us to understand what they need from us and helps ensure that our work with young people is of the highest quality.

The Group provides its members with a great opportunity to actively contribute to the work of the charity by giving insight, advice, ideas, inspiration, knowledge, feedback and experience. This is hugely beneficial in how Teenage Cancer Trust can support other young people.

The Group aims to give members the chance to develop skills and experiences, participate in ongoing consultations and make a positive contribution to other young people across UK.

### Membership

- Recruitment to each Youth Advisory Group cohort is open to all eligible young people from across the UK. They must have:
  - been **diagnosed** with cancer between the ages of 13-24
  - been **supported** by Teenage Cancer Trust in the last 2 years (i.e., since August 2020)
  - **finished treatment** (this doesn't include maintenance treatment)
- The YAG can have up to 30 young people from across the UK, who bring a range of experiences, backgrounds and skills to the Group. We work to make sure that this is a representative cross section of the diverse geographies, backgrounds, socio-economic factors, clinical factors and experiences of cancer.

- Members should be well enough to engage with periodic meetings, which are a mix of online and in-person.
- Length of membership is usually 2 years. At the end of the term, young people will be given clear information about exiting membership of the Group and there may be opportunity for some overlap with the new cohort of YAG to help hand over responsibilities and learnings. It is possible to extend membership in some exceptional circumstances e.g. where a young person's health has impacted on how they can take part.

The first YAG ran from 2018-2020, the second YAG from 2020- 2022 and this third YAG cohort is due to run from November 2022- 2024.

YAG is designed to be representative of the diverse nature of young people across the UK who are diagnosed and treated for cancer. We don't expect YAG members to speak on behalf of others and we only ask that members bring their own experiences of being a young person who has been diagnosed and treated for cancer to help the group to inform our work.

## **Accountability and support**

The YAG will be supported by the Youth Engagement and Participation (YEP) Team at Teenage Cancer Trust. The YEP Team will strive to ensure that membership is a positive, fulfilling and appropriate experience for its members set within a clear framework of expectation. This includes appropriate safeguarding and stewardship of YAG when representing Teenage Cancer Trust.

There should also be clear expectations of what the Youth Advisory Group can expect of Teenage Cancer Trust which includes the purpose of their involvement, how their feedback will be taken into account, and any practical limitations to participation.

Members under the age of 18 will need to be accompanied/ supported with travel to meetings by a parent/ carer. Appropriate levels of consent to participate in the wider project will also need to be given by a parent/ carer or appropriate adult.

To ensure that meetings and the group environment are suitable and positive for YAG, there will be an induction and a code of conduct for both online meetings and for participating in YAG activities.

The designated Youth Engagement and Participation Manager will be responsible for organising, arranging and setting up meetings, and for monitoring online engagement through the approved channels including email, MS teams and other approved platforms.

Teenage Cancer Trust will cover all travel, accommodation and reasonable expenses associated with the Youth Advisory Group. We are keen that there are no financial

barriers to people participating in YAG so members should inform us if there is anything additional required e.g. access to technology.

## Review of membership

Membership of the YAG does not exclude its members from being involved in other work with Teenage Cancer Trust. However, the charity's Oversight Group will monitor how much any young person is taking on, to make sure they're not overloaded at any one time.

The ongoing success of the YAG depends on the contribution of its members. Therefore, wherever possible the project will be led by young people.

Each meeting of the YAG should allow young people to offer ideas for ways the group can continue to represent young people with cancer within the organisation. Members will champion inclusion and diversity and hold the charity accountable for making sure that voices of young people are well represented.

## Ways of working

- The YAG aims to have **at least** three “dynamic meetings” per year to bring members together. Some of these will be online and some will be meetings in person. For in person meetings, there will be a requirement to travel and YAG members will need to assist with the booking process by providing basic details which enable the YEP Team to plan.
- Some in person meetups may be held over two days to make the most of the time we have together, when appropriate and safe for the group to do so
- The Youth Advisory Group allows young people to use their own unique experiences and skills as part of a formalised group from across the UK. Aside from meeting in person, there is opportunity to feed into projects from home, using digital platforms and email.
- Feedback will be given to the group regularly about how their input has made a difference.
- The Youth Engagement and Participation Team will also seek feedback from YAG about how the group can be run more efficiently and effectively
- The Youth Engagement and Participation Manager will work with YAG members to prepare the agenda, taking notes and sharing with the whole team as soon as possible
- The YAG operates within the framework and policies of Teenage Cancer Trust and YAG
- Members are representatives of Teenage Cancer Trust.