

## Introduction and aims

The aim of this poster is to demonstrate the value of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and the work they do for Teenage Cancer Trust.

This is the second iteration of YAG and there are currently 23 'active' members aged 16-28 years from across various regions of the UK.

The aim of the Youth Advisory Group project is to provide a small group of young people (who have been supported by Teenage Cancer Trust in the previous two years) with detail, insight and context of Teenage Cancer Trust's work to enable their meaningful participation in the development of the charity.

Whilst not primarily a peer support project, effective group working is required to ensure that young people have a positive experience and are able to share their knowledge, skills and experiences for the mutual benefit of themselves and the organisation. The project environment draws on Carl Rogers' core conditions of **Empathy, Congruence and Unconditional Positive Regard** and this work is an exploration of how the Youth Advisory Group project draws on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to show the continuing development of the project, its participants and the organisation.



## Methodology

Members of YAG were asked to complete an online survey about how they had been involved in the Charity's work, how they felt Teenage Cancer Trust had learnt from their involvement, and their own learning or development at the midway point of their Youth Advisory Group experience.

This survey was followed by three online meetings with different members of YAG to explore the theoretical elements of Kolb's Learning Cycle and reflect on what this looked like for them as young people. These facilitated discussions were recorded and then reviewed at one final meeting to ensure that they provided a comprehensive and accurate reflection of learning. These findings will support continued development of youth engagement and participation within the charity in the future.

## Results

Extremely positive feedback for the value and methods of youth participation were evident from the respondents and from discussions at meetings. Figure 1 shows the range of topics and breadth of work that YAG members have had opportunity to be involved in. Figure 2 shows their own reflections on personal development and Figure 3 depicts what they felt that Teenage Cancer Trust had gained from the Youth Advisory Group.

The images below, created by a graphic facilitator, are a representation of the qualitative data and reflective discussions which took place to analyse how the Experiential Learning Cycle had underpinned this process and can help to ensure continued development for the charity and particularly the role of youth participation within this.

## Quotes from Young People

"YAG has allowed me to gain confidence with speaking to new people and making connections I never would have had the opportunity to have. It has provided me with the opportunity to discuss subjects which I view as important and helped come up with solutions in places where holes may be. I have also gained an understanding on how organisations such as TCT work."

"As someone who has been directly impacted by the devastation of cancer I have actively tried to understand and work with people to understand and support those that will go through it in the future."

"In me telling my story, helping to change the narrative it helps the next person who looks like me have a less lonely experience. Being a part of YAG means that a charity for young people has young minds behind it to help make important decisions. It helps to be a part of the change you wish to see."

## Discussion and Conclusion

The interactive process and results indicate two clear themes which can inform next steps.

- The main area for development with YAG would come from increased interaction between young people on the project.
- Post-treatment support is an area which this cohort of YAG are keen to play a key role in.

YAG represents a mutually beneficial arrangement offering the opportunity for young people to share their experiences, feel valued and more connected. This is balanced against the benefits the organisation gathers from their insight, challenge and inspiration. As YAG are not expected to be representative of all AYA (Adults and Young Adolescents) with cancer, there is an opportunity to expand the methodology used within YAG to all youth participation events on a smaller scale. This enables Teenage Cancer Trust to extend these benefits to a larger cohort and increase the impact of young peoples' opinions into the organisation.

Figure.1

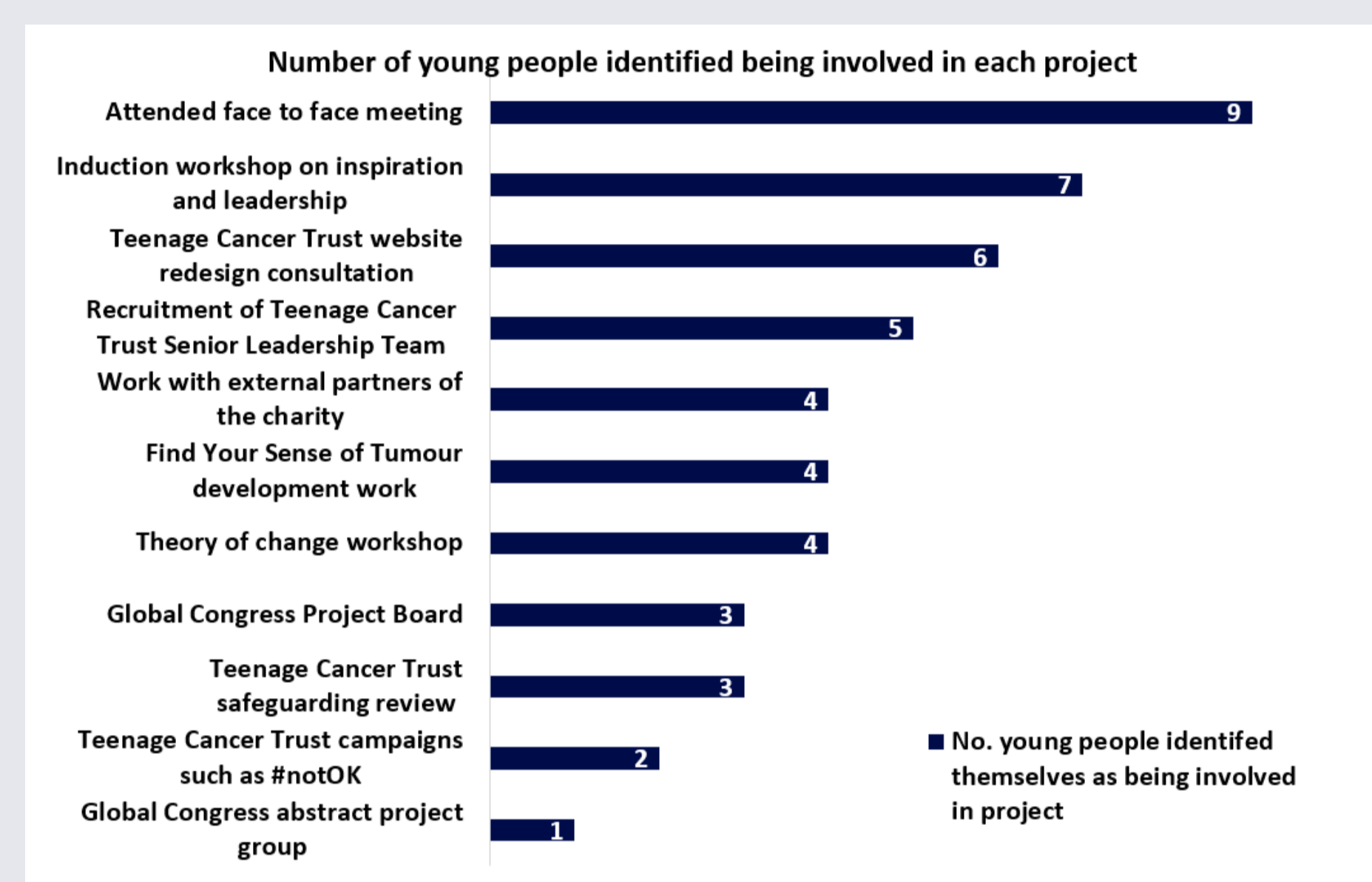


Figure.2

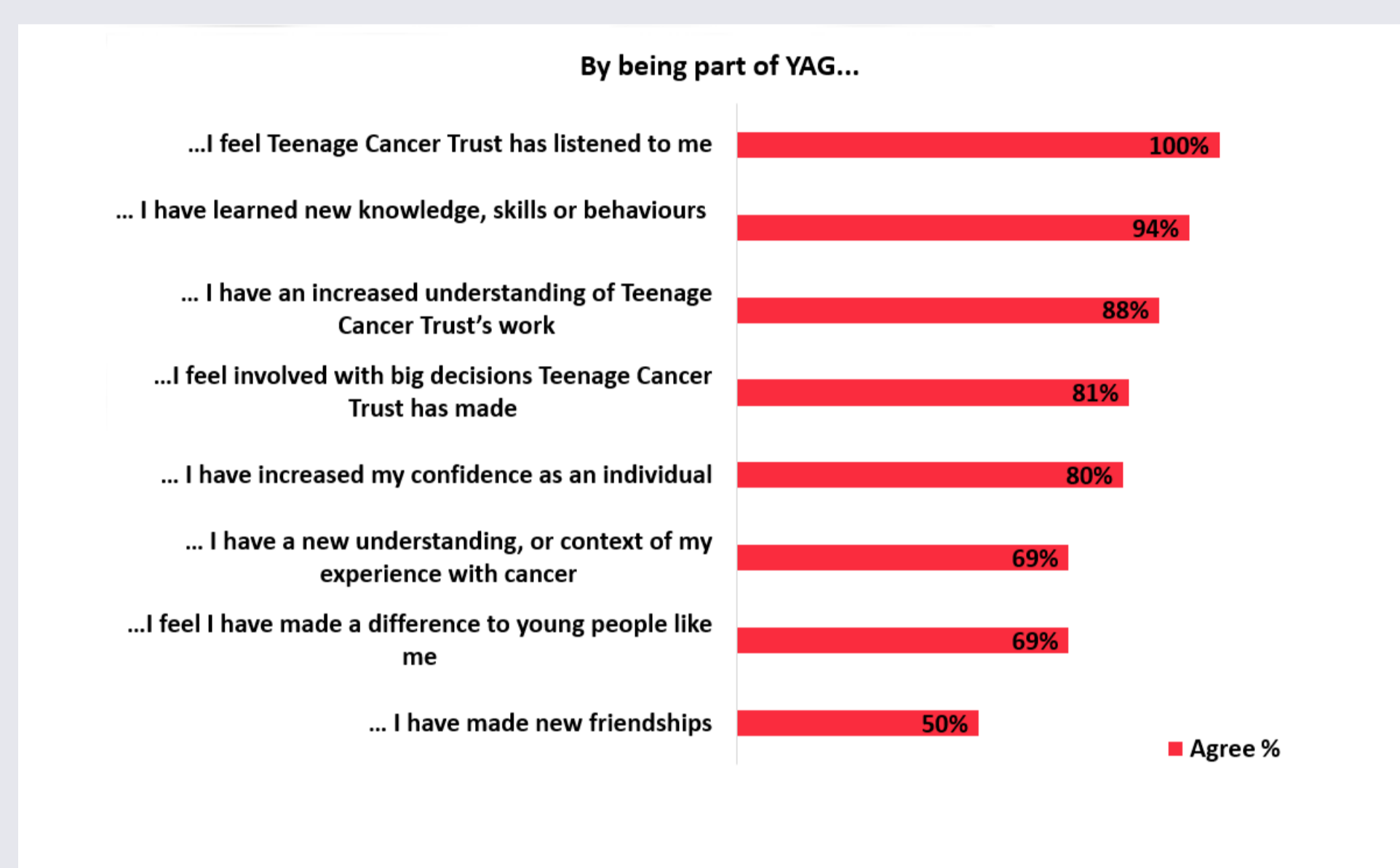


Figure.3

