



PEAR (Young People's Public Health Group): Research Specification

1. Background

There is a lot of research being done on public health and young people, but often young people have not been involved in the planning or process of this research. The PEAR project is a group of 22 young people who, with support from NCB (the National Children's Bureau) and funding from the Wellcome Trust, are contributing to the UK public health agenda. The PEAR project:

- Helps young people to learn about public health research and policy (policy is what the government is saying and doing about public health issues)
- Supports young people to share their views and priorities about public health research and policy
- Supports young people to explain and publicise research findings to other young people
- Helps young people to explain to other young people what research is saying and how things might affect them.

Our website has more information about the group and what we do:

www.ncb.org.uk/PEAR.

As part of our work, the group would like to commission a small public health research project on a topic we are interested in: **the impact of cyber-bullying¹ on young people's mental health**. We have looked at the research evidence on bullying and mental health and found that there is not much research on these new forms of bullying, which may still be relatively invisible or inaccessible to adult researchers. As most of the research on bullying and mental health, and indeed most research on public health and young people, starts from an adult perspective, we want to commission our own research project where we have control and are involved throughout the process as much as possible - from commissioning the project to telling people about the findings, and everything in between. We are therefore inviting individual, or teams of, researchers to send us a short proposal (no more than 8 pages) by **Wednesday 6th January 2010**.

2. Aims and objectives

Aim: To understand the impact of cyber-bullying on the mental health of young people aged 12-18, from a public health perspective.

We are interested in exploring some or all of the following:

- The differences between the experiences of boys and girls
- The differences between young people of different ages and backgrounds (eg race, religion, disability)

¹ The US National Crime Prevention Council's definition of cyber-bullying is "when the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person". <http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying>

- The differences between young people who live in different areas (eg rural and urban), or go to different types of school (eg state or private)
- The links between cyber and other forms of bullying
- How aware parents are about cyber-bullying
- What schools do to monitor and deal with cyber-bullying
- Whether cyber-bullying affects the way in which young people use technology (eg do they stop using email addresses or social networking sites, or use them differently?)
- Does increasing use of technology, and new technology, make cyber-bullying worse
- How young people have been involved in work organisations are doing to combat cyber-bullying (eg helping them to convey their messages to other young people)
- Whether 'cyber-bullies' consider themselves to be bullies
- Why bullies might chose cyber-bullying as opposed to other methods

3. Methods

We would like to invite applicants to suggest methods they think would be appropriate to the topic, and are realistic within the budget and timetable below. We would like these methods to be creative and flexible, so that the research is accessible to a wide range of children and young people. Our ideas for possible methods included:

- Anonymous surveys or questionnaires (in schools or online)
- Interviews
- Using social networking sites to get young people's views
- Using helplines and other services that support young people (eg Childline, Samaritans, Anti-bullying Alliance (based at NCB))

Please tell us about any ethical issues you think your proposed methods would raise, and how you would deal with these.

Our groups meet 3-4 times a year, and we would want the researcher(s) doing the project to come to our meetings in Leeds and London and involve us in the different stages of the research. So please tell us how you would plan the research so this could happen (see timetable below). Some of us may also want to be more involved in the research (eg as co-researchers), and we would like applicants to let us know if and how they might be able to do this and at what stages of the project. As most of us live in Leeds and London we would suggest that one option is to base the research in these two cities.

4. Outputs (see 'timescale' below)

- Research report
- Accessible research summary (produced with input from group members)
- Presentation and/or workshop at our conference in October 2010
- Flyers and poster to send to schools and young people's organisations (produced with input from group members)
- Page on our website (www.ncb.org.uk/PEAR)

5. Timescale

We would like applicants to tell us how they would be able to organize a project around the milestones below:

- Deadline for proposals: **Wednesday 6th January 2010**
- Shortlisting and selection: By 15/01/10
- Contract awarded: By end January 2010
- The successful applicant needs to be able to come to our February meetings (15/2/10 in London and 19/2 in Leeds) to discuss their proposal and plan the research with us
- Researcher(s) to come to our Easter meetings(7/4 in London and 9/4 in Leeds) to update us on the project and get our input
- Draft report to be completed by 16/7/10.
- Researcher(s) to come to our summer residential (date and venue tbc – likely to be 24-25 July) to present findings and discuss outputs (including final report and summary) and dissemination
- Findings to be presented at our conference in London (w/c 25th October 2010)

6. Budget

The total available budget for this project is £11,000 (not including travel costs to attend PEAR group meetings and events, which would be reimbursed separately).

7. Project management

The NCB project manager (Louca-Mai Brady) will be responsible for managing the project on behalf of PEAR, working with a project steering group which will include 2-3 young people from each of the two PEAR groups. Researchers would also need to report back to, and get input from, both groups at their meetings (see timetable above), and communicate with group members in between meetings via email or web discussion groups. Young steering group members can also pass information onto, and consult, other group members.

8. What we want in your proposals

In no more than **8** pages, using Arial 12 font and language which would be accessible to young people, please include information on:

(a) **Introduction and background.** Show that you understand what the group is about and demonstrate your interest in young people's involvement in research. We also need to see that you have relevant experience in young people's public health research, understand the issues around cyber-bullying, and know about other related research.

(b) **Methods.** Please tell us what methods you would use, how they are relevant to our objectives and how you would address any ethical issues raised. (c)

Involvement of young people: How could young people (group members) be involved in the project? How could this happen at different stages (eg designing tools, collecting data, analysis)?

(d) **Diversity:** How would you make sure the views of a wide range of children and young people are included in the research? How would you address issues in respect of disability, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion and age?

(e) **Timetable:** How would you do the project around the milestones above?

(f) **Project team:** Background and relevant experience

(g) **Budget:** Please tell us how you would use the money, within the budget limit above (travel costs to attend PEAR group meetings would be reimbursed separately so do not need to be included).

9. Contact information

Please submit your application by **Wednesday 6th January 2010** to:

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