

Case Study: Educational Research

Client: Local Authorities

Project: Launch of RPA Legislation

Through a scheme known as 'Raising the Participation Age' (RPA), by 2013 all young people will be expected to take part in education, training, or employment with training until the age of 17. In 2015, this will be extended to the age of 18



Project goals:

To find out how students and their parents/carers react to the new legislation including their understanding of its requirements and observations of how their experiences and views change throughout the launch period. To identify how to present RPA in the clearest way possible, through the most relevant media, and with the most encouraging messages to raise the aspirations of key target groups and their parents/carers.

What we did:

We worked for two of the Local Authorities selected as 'pilot areas' for the launch and who were responsible for the introduction of RPA in their schools. Half-day workshops were run with groups of learners in Years 8 and 9 (the first to be affected by the scheme) to understand how they obtain information, how and when they make decisions affecting their career and who most influences their choices. We devised games and activities to help participants to express their feelings about staying on in education beyond the age of 16, and they finished by working in pairs to design posters promoting the benefits of the scheme. In the evenings, groups of parents or carers were convened to discuss their reactions to RPA and how it would affect their children's education and opportunities.

How the research helped:

The Local Authorities were able to engage with students and their parents more effectively as a result of their understanding of their reactions to the new scheme. Appropriate posters and leaflets could be designed to spread the message, and some of the students and their families have been recruited as ambassadors to encourage their peers.