

# **YOUNG PEOPLES ACCESS TO TOBACCO via SOCIAL SOURCES**



**A Junction Tobacco Peer Research Project**  
in conjunction with Edinburgh University and NHS Lothian

2015

# Tobacco Peer Research Project - Background

**The Junction – Young People, Health & Wellbeing**, were one of four youth groups commissioned by Edinburgh University and NHS Lothian, to undertake research using a Social Action Model approach to explore Young People's Access To Tobacco via Social Sources.

Our Tobacco Peer Research Project (TPRP) involved many different young people at different stages, all contributing their insights and unique talents. There were two main phases of the project: Phase one which ran Oct-Dec 2014 and Phase Two which ran Jan-Aug 2015, each phase had its own distinct core group of participants; during both phases participants met weekly.

**THE JUNCTION PEER RESEARCHERS**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO TOBACCO VIA SOCIAL SOURCES**

The Junction - Young People Health & Wellbeing, in conjunction with Edinburgh University and NHS Lothian are one of four youth projects using Peer Research to explore young people's access to tobacco via social sources.

And we are looking to build a team of young people aged 14 – 21, who will work together to develop this research project.

Who, How, Where...?

We reckon the best way to get started is to meet as a group and discuss our ideas, learn more about tobacco and its impact on young people; as we move forward developing our skills as researchers. We are looking for smokers and non-smokers.

**Wednesdays, 5.30pm – 7.30pm**  
**8<sup>th</sup> October – 17<sup>th</sup> December**  
at The Junction, snacks & bus fare provided

What will you get out of it...

**Develop New Skills**  
**Build Your Confidence**  
**Learn About Research**  
**Add To Your C.V. & Get A Reference**

and up to a **£30** completion voucher

Interested? What More Information? Contact:  
**aprilwendy@the-junction.org**  
**or call 0131 553 0570**

82 – 86 Great Junction Street, Edinburgh, EH5 5LL, www.the-junction.org  
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**the junction\***  
young people, health & wellbeing

*“This project has been great at helping me and others in the group to understand more about the harms of smoking tobacco”*

During Phase One many of those involved believed that underage smokers gaining access to tobacco was a ‘good or ok’ thing. As a group they spent much of their time exploring health and socio-economic impacts of tobacco.

This led to growing curiosity to check out their assumptions and opinions with other young people; which in turn led to the design of their TPRP questionnaire.

It was the Phase Two participants who took forward the questionnaire findings and evolved a health change media campaign concept; which led to the eventual production and local distribution of a poster.

## The Social Action Model

In many ways the Social Action Model was an easy fit for The Junction as it closely reflected much of the groupwork practise already used by the team and its ‘Principles of Practice’ (see right) sat well alongside the organisations values.

Using the model as the ‘process’ to engage, whilst providing a ‘set topic’ initially created tension, however it worked well in Phase Two, where participants built on the previous work and their own belief that they wanted to impact positive health change in their communities.

## Social Action: Principles for Practice

- **All people** have skills, experience and understanding that they can draw on to tackle the problems they face.
- People **have rights**, including the right to be heard, the right to define the issues facing them and the right to take action on their own behalf.
- Problems are complex with substantial roots in social policy, the environment and the economy, **not personal inadequacy**.
- People working **collectively** can be **powerful**.
- Workers are not leaders but facilitators. Their role is to enable people to make decisions for themselves and take **ownership** of whatever outcome ensues
- Workers are committed to **social justice**.

Early in the project the Peer Researchers set out exactly what type of team they wanted to be part of.

### What sort of team do we want...

- ...a team that is welcoming
- ...a team that is successful
- ...a team that embraces teamwork
- ...a team that listens and is sensible
- ...a team that uses respectful language
- ...a team that wears respectful clothing
- ...a team that doesn't judge people or each other
- ...a team that is respectful of people and of each other



## The Research Process...

Having decided to undertake a questionnaire with young people, Phase One participants spent much of their time designing and debating its contents. Questions were tested out, adapted, added to and in some cases rejected from the final version. (see right)

Alongside this they considered how they might get the most out of each interview, eventually adapting a Top Tips sheet created by a group of previous Junction Peer Researchers. (see below)

### PEER RESEARCHER TOP TIPS for Interviews



- Be Prepared! It might sound obvious, but being well prepared can make a huge difference, and remember we are looking to speak to young people aged 12 – 18 who live in North East Edinburgh (e.g. Leith, Muirhouse, Granton, Pillon, Trinity)
- Make sure there is enough time to do an interview.
- If people are rude to you or 'not interested' don't take it personally. Remember it's their choice.
- Whenever possible do the interviews 1-to-1.
- Be aware of your body language and of making the young person feel comfortable.
- Always give yourself time after an interview to check or to add to your notes.
- Remember a young person can chose not to answer a question. (Just record it as 'chose not to answer')
- Remember how important it is to respect the young persons anonymity and to take care of your notes. (Don't put their name/or anyone else's on the sheet)
- Remember if the interview prompts the young person to want to talk about tobacco or health issues further, you can always refer them to The Junction.
- Remember you don't have to wait until you've done all your interviews to get in touch. Keep us updated on how your research is going or if you'd like support.
- Make sure to thank each young person and to give them a Junction leaflet.

The TPRP was given a brilliant boost, when a group of Edinburgh College Students (supported by their tutor Brian Robertson and his colleagues) decided to undertake the questionnaire with their peers, capturing 94 responses.

PEER RESEARCH PROJECT		2014/2015	
"YOUNG PEOPLES ACCESS TO TOBACCO via SOCIAL SOURCES"			
Have you shown the young person our research information leaflet: _____			
INTERVIEWER: _____	TIME/DATE: _____		
YOUNG PERSONS INITIALS: _____	AGE OF YOUNG PERSON: _____		
AREA YOUNG PERSON LIVES IN: _____			MALE / FEMALE / OTHER (circle)
Have you offered them a Junction Leaflet: _____			
1. Do you smoke?			
<input type="button" value="Yes"/> OR <input type="button" value="No"/>			
<small>if "No" go to question 3</small>			
2. On average, how many do you smoke a day? <small>(smokers only)</small>			
3. Can you tell us some of the effects smoking tobacco has on the body?			
Have you experienced any of these? If yes which ones?			
PEER RESEARCH PROJECT			
"YOUNG PEOPLES ACCESS TO TOBACCO via SOCIAL SOURCES"			
4. Does anyone in your family smoke cigarettes? If yes who?			
5. What do you think about shop owners who sell cigarettes to 'under-agers'?			
PEER RESEARCH PROJECT			
"YOUNG PEOPLES ACCESS TO TOBACCO via SOCIAL SOURCES"			
6. Have you ever been sold cigarettes as an 'under-ager'? <small>(smokers only)</small>			
<input type="button" value="Yes"/> OR <input type="button" value="No"/>			
7. Where do you get your cigarettes? <small>(smokers only)</small>			
(list all sources and tick the most common)			
8. Is there anything else you would like to say about young people and their access to tobacco?			
<small>Remember to THANK the young person and to offer them a Junction leaflet.</small>			

# Research results...

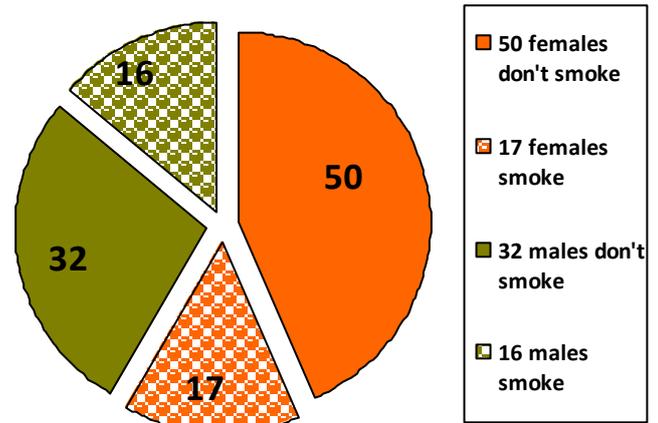
124 young people agreed to be interviewed for our research, 68 young women and 48 young men, in addition to this there were 8 surveys undertaken with young people where gender information was not recorded. When asked their gender, respondents could select "male/female/other", in an effort to recognise non-binary gender identities.

When asked if they smoked **71%** of young people said 'NO'. **74%** of young women and **67%** of young men said 'No'.

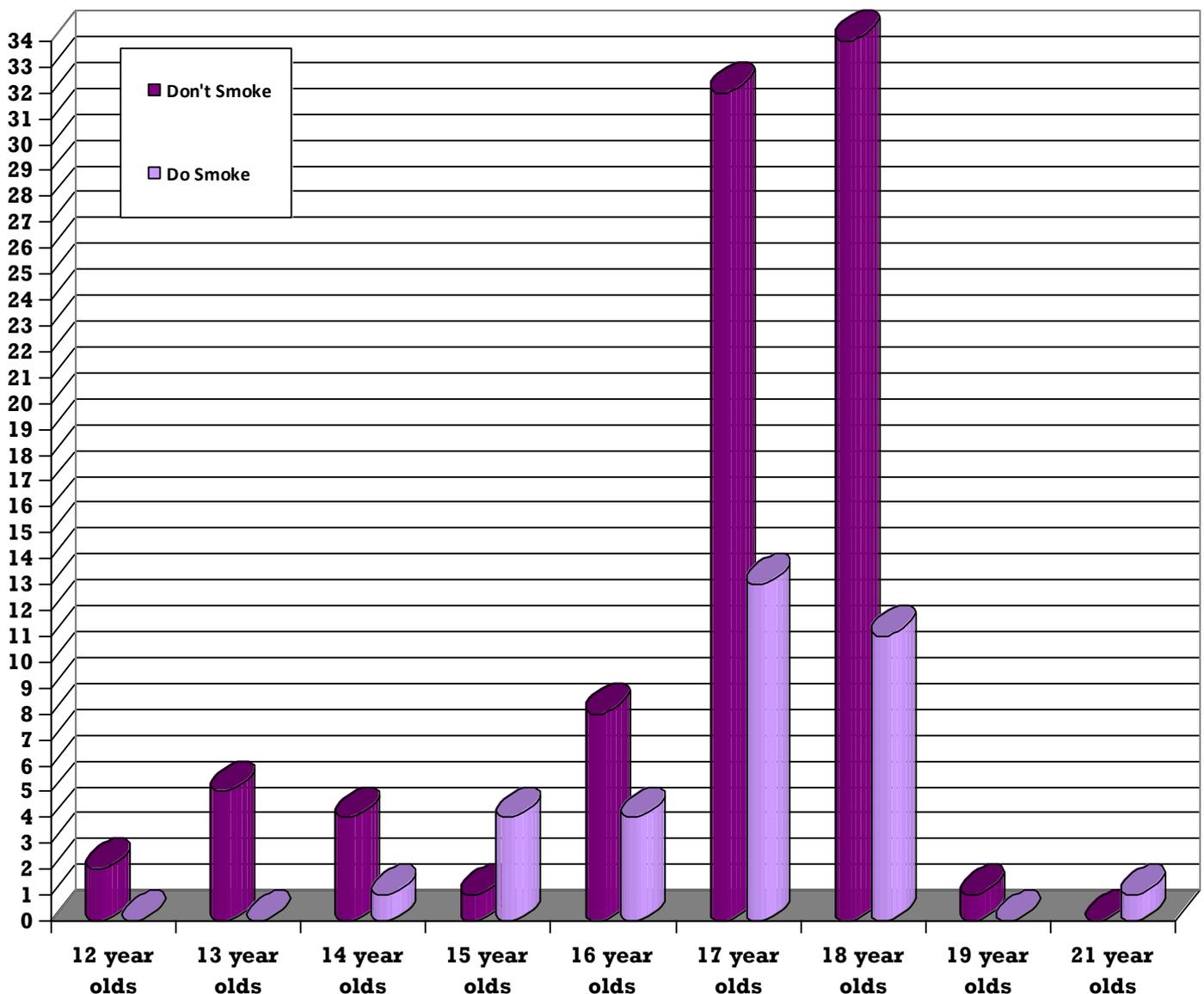
The participant group was relatively small in terms of generating trend analysis, it was however interesting to note that, proportionally 8% more young men smoked than young women.

## Do you smoke?

### *GENDER breakdown*



## Do you smoke? *AGE breakdown*



# Participants knowledge of the effects of smoking tobacco...

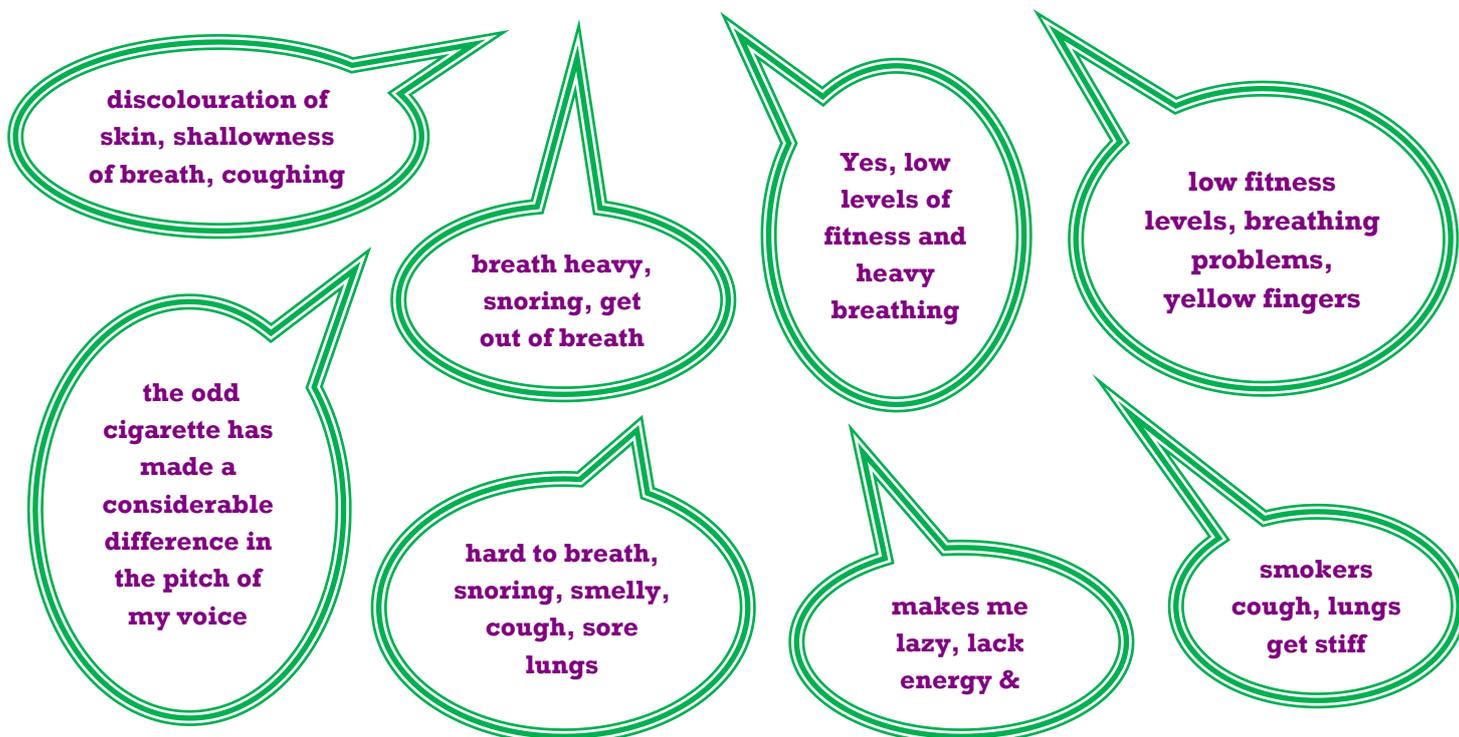
The Peer Researchers felt it important to get an understanding of other young peoples knowledge of the health impacts of smoking tobacco. After lots of discussion they settled on the question "Can you tell us some of the effects smoking has on the body?"



**Other effects young people mentioned, included:** addiction, angina, bad hygiene, blood clots, bronchitis, croaky throat, dehydration, diabetes, hypertension, liver disease, reduces oxygen levels, smelly, snoring, stress, weight gain...

only one person mentioned **FERTILITY PROBLEMS**

Those who smoked, were also asked if they had experience any negative effects. 69% said they hadn't, whilst 31% said they had, with these effects including...



# What do you think of shop owners/workers who sell cigarettes to 'under-agers'?

Sometimes it is hard to tell people's ages. Shop workers can get in to trouble for selling to under agers, but young people can lie or use fake ID. Shop owners who sell to under agers knowingly are wrong however.

I think they should be shut down. I buy cigarettes illegally, but the thought of younger siblings buying cigarettes underage appals me. Children should not, in any circumstances be able to buy tobacco, as it will only encourage them.

Shifty! \*\*\*\*ing future generations and only fuelling the vicious cycle of poverty

disgusting, terrible, unbelievably wrong

Legends

Prats

It's illegal so they shouldn't do it

Irresponsible, but probably need the money as they are mostly local small shops trying to compete with bigger companies. Also a lot of younger people have fake ID's and so shop owners may think they are over 18

they should ask for i.d. even if they have the slightest doubt that they are under-age

They should be stopped

They don't care about their customers

Don't like that they do it but I can't judge

It's wrong. Things should be stricter.

They need to stop. Firstly it's illegal and they are also encouraging people underage to smoke. They help them to get addicted knowing that it's a dangerous addiction that causes cancer etc..

should have harder controls put on them

reasonable

Great. Don't have to stand about shops

idiots, greedy

Top Lads

they're twats

don't have a problem with it

should be arrested

I don't mind it's their job at risk

They're not that bad

They shouldn't do it, but if they do it's better than asking a random

Good

Proud

I think they should lose their jobs

They are terrible people and should get a fine every time they sell cigarettes to 'under-agers'.

I think they are irresponsible, but

They're sound

They are harming young people, but they are trying to maximise sales.

selling fags to people you know are underage or if you are unsure of their age is wrong

it's bad, but they think it's ok 'cause they are making money

I believe that they should be fined and have their business forcibly closed.

Horrible but it won't stop because people lie about their age

They should not have a license to own a shop or sell tobacco/alcohol. They should be thinking of under-agers health and trying to prevent more & more young people smoking

I think that it is a bad idea because people are starting to smoke younger and so this is very unhealthy for them. It also can be difficult to stop if you start at a lower age. Shop owners should be banned fro selling cigarettes

# Phase Two

With the hard work of the questionnaires done the next team of young people began to consider the findings and how they could work towards a positive health change in their communities.

They thought about the people who were supplying under-agers with access to tobacco and the three groups that stood out were... 'parents and family members', 'older young people' and 'randoms' (strangers young people would meet outside shops and ask to buy cigarettes for them).

They discussed the different motivations people have for supplying access to tobacco to under-ager's, things like... 'peer pressure or status in a group', 'making money or getting a share of the cigarettes', feeling like a hypocrite if they said no, because they also smoked' and genuinely believing that they were 'doing the young person a favour'.

The group pondered at length how they might attempt to change people's attitudes and perspectives; especially if those people didn't consider what they were doing as negative or harmful. They worked to create a 'key message' that could be at the heart of a campaign – recognising that people rarely see themselves as “the bad guy” in a situation, so chastising was unlikely to work.

They developed a question - **“Still Think You're Doing Them A Favour?”**. They hoped by showing a negative impact of smoking and asking this question they might create a positive health change.

Next the group decided how they might get that question over to their target audiences, they considered various options including making a short film, but ultimately decided to create a poster campaign – in keeping with the social action model they were the ones driving their project.

They devised three distinct poster ideas and as part of their planning process realised they would need, due to time constraints, to make a choice between attempting to make all three posters, which would leave us with no time to distribute and promote them OR work to complete one and then actively distribute it.

They decided to focus on one - and whilst they were enthusiastic about all three, they picked one that was practically achievable; they focused on the poster they had nicknamed 'The Parent' (see page 10).

In the questionnaire responses, only one person mentioned smoking negatively impacting fertility and the group decided this was something they could raise more awareness about, whilst targeting those parents who supply tobacco to their under-age children.

***“ It's been really interesting to think about why some people give cigarettes to under-agers, especially parents who provide them.”***



By asking “Don’t you want your children to have children one day?” and mixing this with a strong image of a cross, created by a cigarette and negative pregnancy test sat in a pram, the team hoped to create an impactful poster that would connect with people. They included “Some young people told us they get their cigarettes from parents or family members”, as they wanted to ground it in their research experience.

Having completed their poster the young people created a distribution plan, which included a physical mail out and a day of hand delivery in the local area; and saw their poster heading to a variety of venues including local schools, libraries and sport centres. They also created a webpage to share the story of their project and to allow others to download their poster for free.

***“It has been a really fantastic experience working with The Junction staff and the other young people.”***

## **Some Reflections...**

As part of the external evaluation of the project we were asked to consider if young people were ‘active agents’ in the process?

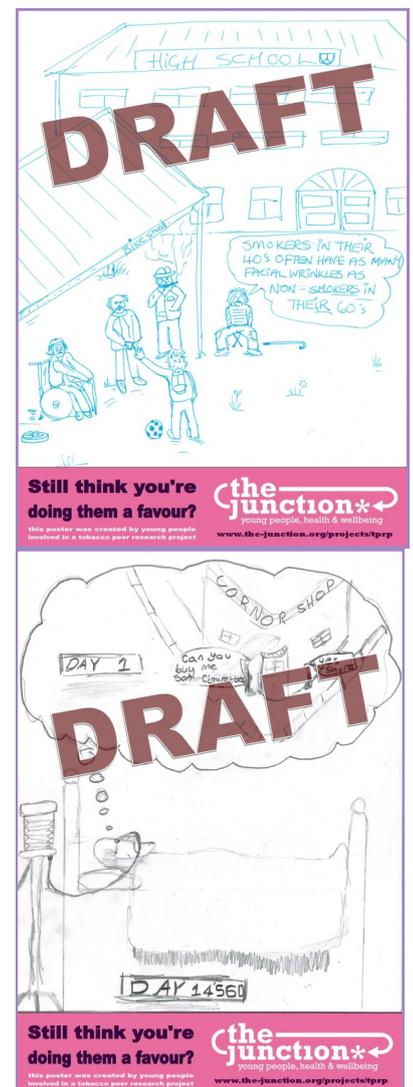
In terms of young people affecting the project and being affected by it, for the ‘core’ participants, the simple answer is yes – they were ‘active agents’; however for each individual this was experienced differently.

For some who engaged in phase one of the project there were small shifts in how they viewed the ‘smoking world’ e.g. small shifts in their beliefs that ‘everyone smokes’. This came partly from the responses to the questionnaire they had designed.

For some of the phase two participants the levels of leading on, and therefore affecting, the direction of the project were much higher e.g. their planning of the next week’s session, deciding who the target audience would be for their poster campaign, etc...

Phase two participants also expressed ‘light-bulb moments’ on things they were learning about and how, for some, there were the beginnings of attitudinal change; one young person decided they would never again facilitate an ‘under-age’ smokers access to tobacco.

This has been a fascinating piece of work for those involved and whilst there may have been initial struggles marrying a social action model with a predetermined theme - the process was ultimately rewarding; with unexpected knock on effects in the form of The Junction Youth Advisors moving to adopt a more formal social action model approach; following on from their consultation sessions with the TPRP.



***“It was at times confusing, seeing the projects from both sides, as a smoker I think the poster we completed, is the most effective out of the ideas we had. I would hate to think I was contributing to someone's infertility. I couldn’t think of anything worse for me.***

***However does the poster communicate that strong a message? I think it’s just the start!”***

# Don't you want your children to have children one day?

Research shows smoking tobacco negatively impacts both male & female fertility

Some young people told us they get their cigarettes from parents or family members

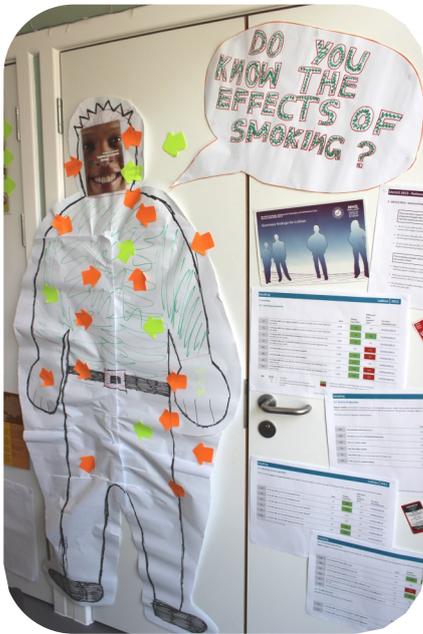
**Still think you're doing them a favour?**

this poster was created by young people involved in a tobacco peer research project

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[www.the-junction.org/projects/tprp](http://www.the-junction.org/projects/tprp)

## And another thing... Smoking Awareness Theme of The Month



Each month The Junction utilises an overarching 'theme of the month', in February 2015 a member of the TPRP and a young volunteer worked hard together to produce an excellent 'Smoking Awareness' thematic programme, which in turn supported the work of the TPRP.

Their theme ran throughout March, when the Junction drop-in was bedecked in related posters, leaflets and activities to help engage young people in discussion. The questionnaire created by the TPRP participants was prominently displayed alongside information about the project.

In addition to the drop-in resources they also scheduled a month of Facebook posts, which included interesting videos, websites, images and information on the theme.

They even tasked Junction Staff with activities to facilitate during street and school outreach; like the reduced breath test, which had participants pinching their noses and breathing through their mouths... through a straw.

*Project Worker Ian demonstrates below*





*Our thanks go to all those who supported The Junctions TPRP in particular the young people who agreed to be interviewed and the peer researchers who contributed their valuable time, passion, wisdom and energy to the success of this project.*

**to learn more about this piece of work  
or to download our poster for free visit:**

**[www.the-junction.org/projects/tprp](http://www.the-junction.org/projects/tprp)**

**The Junction was established in 2005.**

**Since then the Volunteers, Staff & Trustees have worked to positively impact the health & wellbeing of young people aged 12 - 21 and living in Leith & North East Edinburgh.**

**The Junction - Young People, Health & Wellbeing  
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