Easy Read

Amazing Futures website focus group

Session one: what do you like from a website?

We are making a new Amaze website just for young people with additional needs in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex.

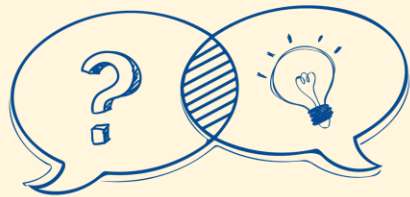We want to know what young people **want and need** from this website.

We met with young people from our **Amazing Futures groups** in Brighton and East Sussex to ask them about:

- How they like to use the internet

- What websites and apps they like to use

- What they like and dislike about the websites they use

This document shares what we found out at these sessions.

We will meet with young people at the groups again to ask them about their **ideas** for the new website.

We will also share the **design** for the website when it's ready, and ask for their feedback.
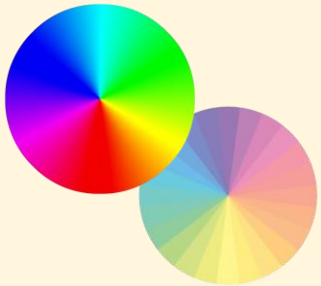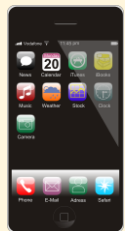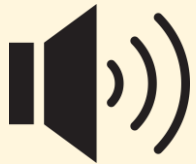
Summary of what we learned

The website needs to work for young people with a wide range of different needs and preferences.

We need to use much less text

Keep the design simple, bold and colourful, but use muted/pastel colours.

There are lots of ways we can make the website more accessible to our young people, including:

- Easy Read
- videos
- infographics
- buttons to read out text
- large text
- text size controls
- toggle for vivid or relaxed colour schemes

The website should be designed to work well on phones as a priority, as that's how it will be accessed most of the time.

They would like lots more videos, but the videos we have made so far do not meet their needs.
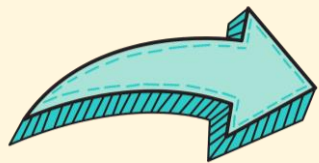
We need to continue to improve the diversity of our images, considering race and ethnicity, LGBTQ+, a range of disabilities, showing alternative looking young people.

We need to reduce our reliance on stock images where possible, and involve young people in the process of choosing stock images to use.
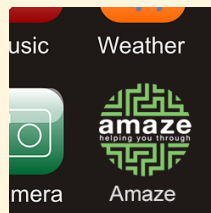
We should look into the possibility of creating an Amaze app for young people in the future as well.

Contents

Phone or computer?

The young people in our East Sussex group all just use **phones** to access the internet, only using a computer sometimes to watch Netflix.

The young people in our Brighton group all use **both**.

"If there's a time limit I would use my phone, but for something more in-depth I would use my computer, as it's got a bigger screen."

Websites or apps?

The young people in our East Sussex group **only use apps**. They don't use websites at all.

The young people in our Brighton group **use both** websites and apps.

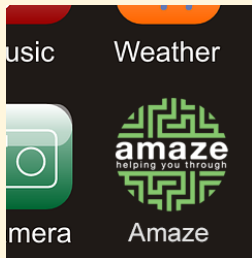Young people in the East Sussex group said they would prefer an **Amaze app** if that was an option.

The Brighton group would use an Amaze app if there was one, but wanted a website as well.

Which websites do you like to use?

(Results from Brighton group)

compasscard
brightonandhovewellbeing
boardgamearena
bbc
youtube
arsenal
facebook
communitybase
graceeyre
sky
mind
disneyplus
lego
healthylifestylesactiveforlife
stanmer
carousel
wordle
stayuplate
wix
odeon
abba
manchesterunited
dukeofyork
dominiongames
applestore
spotify
cherishyouthgroup
netflix
gbmetcollege
amazon
cineworld
bha
bitesize

Which apps do you like to use?
(Combined results from Brighton and Eastbourne groups)

twitter · geteyr · skype · amazon · googlechat · disneyplus

spotify · gameoflife · ebay · whatsapp

tinder · premierleague · adidas

firefox · youtubemusic · reddit · wallet · tonu

costacoffee · applemusic · facebook · snapchat

instagram · tumblr · tiktok

monopoly · games · youtube

facebookmessenger · netflix · kahoot

google · drive · fitbit

zara · justeat

minecraft · pinterest · applewatch

amongus

What do you like about using apps?

(Answers from Eastbourne group.)

You don't have to speak **face to face**. This was a popular reason, but some had mixed feelings about whether this was healthy.
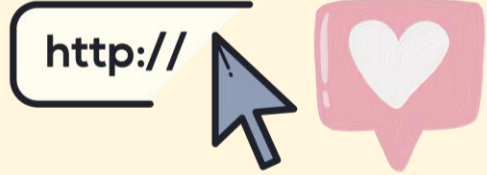
There aren't many **adverts**, and they are interested in the ones that are there.

There are people that **share their experiences**, and they can relate to them.

You can search and **easily find more** people talking about the things you're interested in.

What do you like in a website?

We looked at several websites together, and talked about what we liked and disliked about them.

Here are some of the websites we looked at:

calm

dimensions

amaze

oxfam

graceeyre

nationalcitizenservice

boardgamearena

nationalautisticsociety

maggie's

mencap

manchesterunited

Accessibility

We asked about what made a website easy or hard for them to use, as someone with additional needs. This is what we learned:

A lot of text is overwhelming - most websites have **far too much text**, including the current Amaze website.

Around 50 words under a title was the most some young people were comfortable with. This is around two or three sentences.
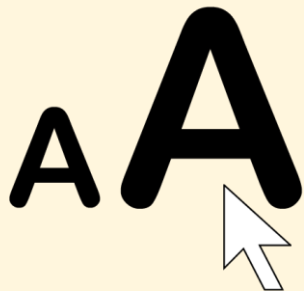
They prefer **large text**, like on Mencap's website. Some would like to be able to make text bigger or smaller.

Some ways they prefer to get information:

- **Videos** – must be good quality though, not boring, or feel "like school videos". They want to see current people from the groups in the videos. They don't like the current Amazing Futures videos.

- **Easy Read** - they really liked this click-through Easy Read gallery. "It's enough information without scaring your brain"
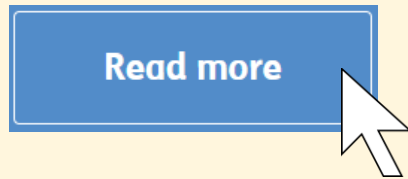
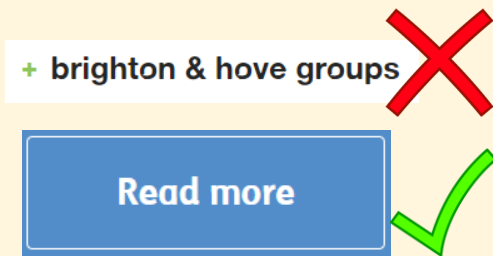- **Buttons you can click that read out text** – like on the East Sussex Local Offer

- **Infographics**

We asked how they felt about having Easy Read information at the top of the page and **more detailed information** underneath for those who want to read more.

They liked this idea, but suggested hiding the text under a **"read more"** button so it's not overwhelming to see.
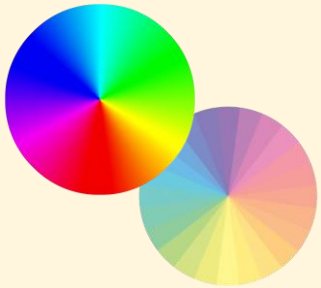
They like buttons and links you can click to see more text, but it must **be very obvious** that's what they do. They did not recognise these links on the current Amaze website.

Look and feel

We asked about what they liked about how websites looked and their general "feel". This is what we learned:

Colour is very important, and has a big impact on their first impression of a website.

They like websites to be very colourful, but many strongly preferred more **muted or pastel** shades.

Both groups loved the **calm/vivid colour switch** on Grace Eyre and National Autistic Society websites. This lets you make all the colours on the website less bright if you want to.

They like there to be lots of **photos and graphics**.

It's important to them that these are very **inclusive**. They want photos and graphics that are:

- **racially** diverse

- **LGBTQ+** inclusive

- show a wide range of **disabilities**

- show **"alternative"** looking young people

- show young people from both **Brighton & Hove and East Sussex**

They dislike a lot of **stock photos**, and would like some input into which stock photos are used.

They like **simple designs** that aren't [too busy](#).

Some have a strong preference for light writing against a **dark background**, rather than the other way around.

Some use **light mode** on their phones and some use **dark mode**, so they would prefer a design that works with both.
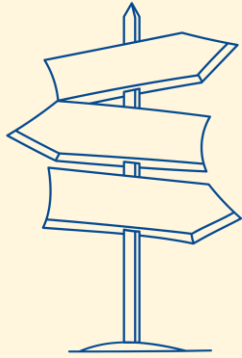
They like wording that feels **empowering**, like on the National Autistic Society website.

They want to feel like the website is **speaking to young people**, not to parents.

It's important it's very clear that Amazing Futures is for young people in both **East Sussex and Brighton & Hove**. Young people in East Sussex don't want to feel like an after-thought.

Navigation

We asked about what makes it easy to get around on a website, and find what you're looking for. This is what we learned:

A lot of young people use search rather than menus most of the time, so a really good search function is important.

When they do use menus, they like them to be simple, bold, and clear. Most preferred menus not to have too many options, though some liked a lot.
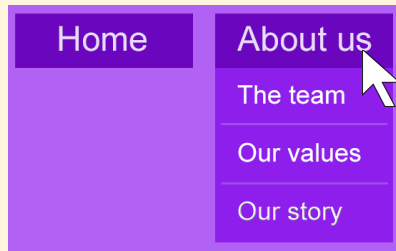
Most strongly preferred menus that display when you click on them, rather than menus that display when you hover your mouse over them. They found them much easier to use.

They wouldn't bother scrolling down far to look for things, so anything important needs to be near the top of the website.

Home

They prefer when buttons have words as well as symbols, so it's clear what they do.