

Network

Network is member-led by design: this forum turns ideas into owned projects, budgets and representation.

Ages 18-25

Network

Network Forum

No YouShape Award - member-led by design

Run the session

Total: 1 hour 30 minutes

0:00	Open and review Chair opens. Quick review of what has happened since the last meeting.	LEAD
0:10	Word Play Round the circle, one word each, a few rounds. Notice the words that keep coming back.	REPRESENT
0:25	Shape the projects - Brainstorm Box Objects and lateral thinking. Six ideas per object, no filtering yet.	PLAN
0:45	Prioritise - Diamond Formation Rank the ideas to consensus. Be honest about capacity.	REPRESENT
1:05	Own it Each project gets a name against it, a date and a budget line.	LEAD
1:20	Youth voice slot Who is representing Network where? Trustee Boards, County youth forum, Youth Lead vacancies.	REPRESENT
1:30	Close Confirm actions and the date of the next meeting.	CLOSE THE LOOP

Volunteer cue: the point of the night is not just to collect opinions. Finish with a real decision, a clear next step and a date for when the section will hear back.

How to run each activity

Use this page alongside the timeline. The steps explain the practical set-up, what the facilitator says or does, and what must be recorded before moving on.

Open and review

0:00

1. The member chair opens with the previous action list visible. Work through it quickly: done, in progress, blocked or dropped.
2. Use the "You said / We did / We could not yet / Next update" headings where useful so members can see what changed after the last discussion.
3. Move unresolved actions into tonight's list only if they still matter. Avoid spending the whole forum reporting backwards.

Record: Record what has moved since the last meeting and which actions remain live.

Own it

1:05

1. Take each chosen project and complete four fields before moving on: owner, next milestone/date, budget or spending limit, and the first practical action.
2. The owner is accountable for moving the project, not necessarily doing every task themselves. More members can join the project team.
3. If nobody will own an idea, it is not yet a live project. Park it rather than pretending it is agreed.

Record: Record owner, date, budget and first action for every live project.

Word Play

0:10

1. Stand or sit in a circle. Give one prompt at a time and ask for exactly one word from each person. Useful prompts include: "What do we need more of?", "What is missing?" and "What should Network feel like this term?"
2. Run two or three quick rounds without discussion. A scribe writes the words where everyone can see them.
3. Circle repeated or closely related words. These recurring themes become the test for which project ideas are worth developing.

Record: Record repeated words and the themes they suggest.

Youth voice slot

1:20

1. Put current representation opportunities on the table: Trustee Boards, County youth forum, Youth Lead vacancies or other forums where Network members can influence decisions.
2. Ask three questions: Who already represents Network? What message needs taking from this meeting? What feedback needs bringing back next time?
3. Fill vacancies where members are interested, or name who will follow up. Treat representation as real programme ownership, not an admin item at the end.

Record: Record each opportunity, representative and the message or follow-up they own.

Shape the projects - Brainstorm Box

0:25

1. Put several random objects in a box or bag. In small groups, take one object and generate six project ideas inspired by it - directly, indirectly or completely absurdly.
2. Set a fast time limit and ban filtering during this stage. The aim is volume and lateral thinking, not feasibility.
3. Swap objects or groups and repeat. Put each idea on a separate card ready for ranking.

Record: Record every project idea before any are removed.

Close

1:30

1. Read back the live projects and representation actions in one final sweep.
2. Confirm the next meeting date and the date members will receive any earlier updates. Share the action list immediately after the forum.
3. End with a clear statement of what was actually decided tonight - not just what was discussed.

Record: Record the next meeting date and the update point for each open action.

Prioritise - Diamond Formation

0:45

1. Choose nine ideas to take forward and arrange them in a diamond: 1 top, then 2, 3, 2 and 1 bottom.
2. Discuss until the group can accept the order. Do not default to a quick majority vote; the point is to surface objections and build a workable consensus.
3. Before confirming the top projects, test them against real capacity: people, time, budget, transport, permissions and other commitments. An exciting idea can move down if nobody can deliver it.

Record: Record the final ranked list and the reason any high-interest idea was deferred.

Prep, record, close the loop

Before they arrive

- ✓ Chair / facilitator and a short agenda
- ✓ Notes from the previous meeting
- ✓ Random objects for Brainstorm Box
- ✓ Cards/sticky notes for Diamond Formation
- ✓ Current budget position
- ✓ Calendar / key dates
- ✓ Action list with owners and deadlines
- ✓ Known representation opportunities or vacancies

What to record

- ✓ What has moved since the last meeting
- ✓ Repeated themes from Word Play
- ✓ Project ideas
- ✓ Prioritised projects
- ✓ Owner, date and budget for each project
- ✓ Representation opportunities and who will follow them up
- ✓ Date of next meeting

Facilitation notes

- Network is run by its members; the meeting should not depend on an adult volunteer chairing it.
- Prioritise against real capacity, not just enthusiasm.
- Every chosen project gets an owner, date and budget line.
- Treat representation as part of the programme, not an optional extra.

End-of-night check

- ✓ Did young people make at least one genuine decision?
- ✓ Did somebody young lead part of the session?
- ✓ Have you named what happens next?
- ✓ Have you said when you will update them?

Keep it going next meeting

Ask who wants the Youth Lead role

Name any Youth Lead vacancy at the next Network meeting and explain what the role actually involves.

Run a forum for a younger section

Offer to facilitate a youth forum for another section: Network gets delivery experience and the younger section gets an outside facilitator.

Close the loop

YOU SAID

WE DID

WE COULD NOT YET

NEXT UPDATE

Use these four headings at the next meeting, on a noticeboard or in your parent/carer update. Showing what happened after young people spoke is what makes the next forum worth taking seriously.