

Project AEGIS briefing: engagement with children and young people seeking asylum and refugees

Background

- Co-production is increasingly recognised as fundamental to high quality research, service design and policy development.
- Co-production requires meaningful engagement with individuals who have lived experience. Systemic barriers mean that some groups have less opportunity to contribute to research and service development, such as children and young people seeking asylum and refugees (CYPSAR).

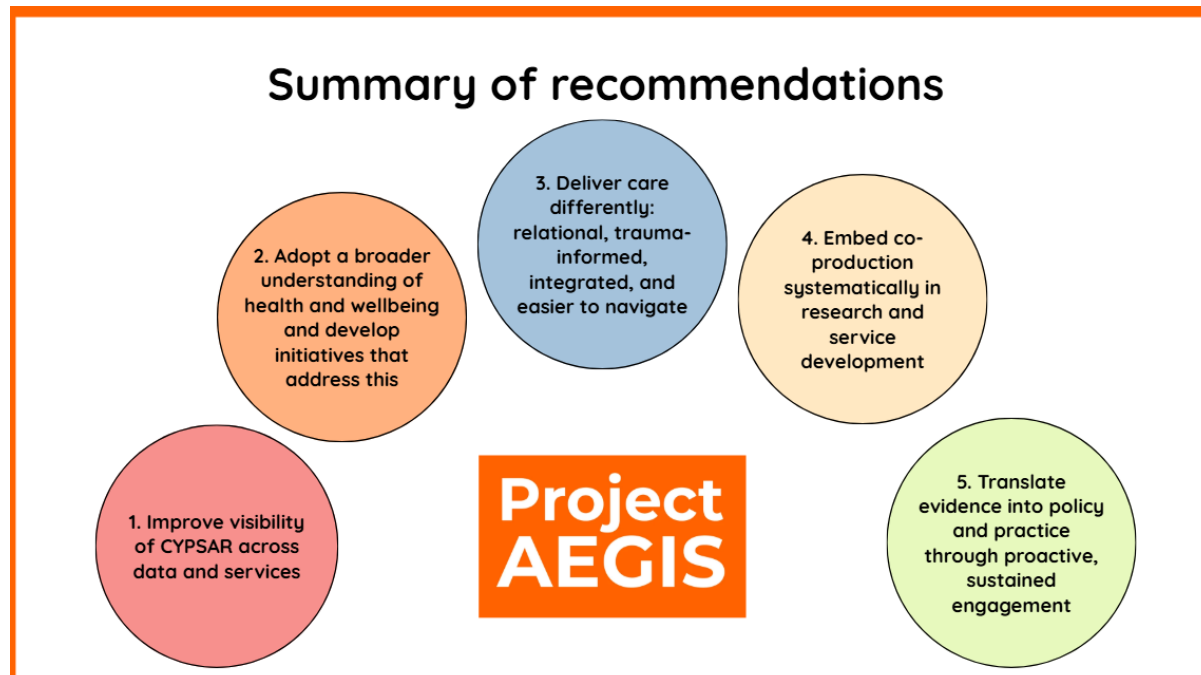
Our findings

- Engagement with CYPSAR and people who have lived experience of the asylum system was central to the work of Project AEGIS. This was embedded at every stage of the project, including conception, development, delivery, analysis, dissemination and strategy. Those with lived experience participated as co-investigators and co-authors.
- Practical and ethical barriers to engagement included language barriers and the multiple pressures which CYPSAR were typically managing outside of the project. This made flexibility in terms of time and location very important.
- Exploring what meaningful engagement meant from CYPSARs' perspectives was a key part of Project AEGIS. Effective techniques for working with CYPSAR included regular check-ins, reciprocity and collaboration with trusted organisations. It was also important to "meet CYPSAR where they are", conducting activities at a location of their choosing, often at their accommodations.
- CYPSAR reflected that they were enthusiastic to contribute to shaping the project. Their input directly refined our findings, shaped our approach to sensitive projects and informed future co-production and dissemination strategies.
- Offering developmental and mentorship opportunities for CYPSAR was key, including creation of a future co-investigator role within the team

Recommendations

- Co-production of services with CYPSAR must become standard practice. This will only be possible via a coordinated approach that offers CYPSAR meaningful and reciprocal involvement in research and service design, with a level of commitment that suits each individual. It will also require dedicated resources, training and accountability mechanisms.
- This way of working is likely to apply to co-production and engagement with other marginalised groups.

Project AEGIS: overall recommendations



We have found that: CYP SAR are often invisible in data; “health” is broader than “healthcare”; good care for CYP SAR needs to be delivered differently; what good care looks like in practice is able to be described; CYP must shape services; and it is essential that research findings are translated into policy and practice.

Find out more:

Website: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/project-aegis>

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Suggested citation: Project AEGIS (June 2026). Policy briefing: engagement with children and young people seeking asylum and refugees. London (UK): Project AEGIS