

Children and Families Partnership

Participation Strategy



May 2014

Who is the strategy for?

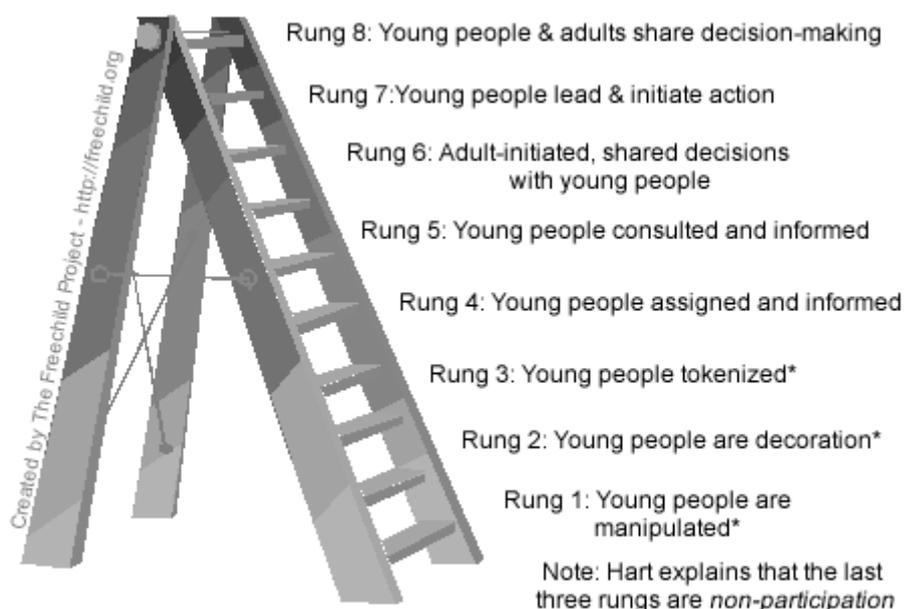
This strategy is for all involved in the Children and Family Partnership. Its aim is to ensure that all partners are involving the views of children, young people in the planning and delivery of services, and that this participation work is of a high quality.

It is also hoped that other departments and organisations that work with the Children and Family Partnership will adopt the strategy and work with us to develop and maintain quality participation work.

What is Participation?

A participatory attitude and organisational culture is one that finds ways to include children and young people in decision making opportunities that can influence the strategy, delivery and evaluation of a service or organisation. Children and young people's participation refers to these groups being involved directly or indirectly in informing the working practice of services that affect them. This requires departments and organisations to identify specific areas for including children, young people in decisions so that they have a genuine role and there is purpose for their involvement. The picture below based on Roger Harts theories of young peoples participation shows that there are a range of ways and levels at which children and young people can be involved.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

A key aspect of all genuine participation work is that children and young people are informed of what the work is about and how much power/scope for making decisions they have as part of the work. It is also vitally important that the results of their participation are feed back to children and young people so that they can see the impact they have had. The ladder is designed to demonstrate that there are different levels of participation which are valid, it is only where children and young people are not informed about the impact their participation will have that will mean the activity falls below the forth rung of the ladder in to tokenization and manipulation.

Examples of participation from different rungs of the ladder;

Rung 4: Young people are assigned and informed: The 2014 School survey on health and wellbeing

The schools survey was offered to all schools in Croydon for their pupils to take part in. 80 schools took part with pupils answering questions about their health and wellbeing. Once the results have been collated the information and what will happen as a result will be feedback to the pupils.

Rung 5: Young people are consulted and informed: Council Scrutiny

Once a year the Youth Council puts forward questions to the council scrutiny process. A council officer from the Chief Executives Department meets with the youth council, explains the process, what will happen with their questions and gives an update from what happened with the previous years. Where a youth council question is taken forward by the scrutiny process the youth council are invited to give their views in more detail as part of the process.

Rung 6: Adult initiated, shared decisions with young people: Community Grants Panel (small grants)

Two young people from the youth council or UK Youth Parliament take part in the small grants panel, they are given an opportunity to see the funding applications in advance and then sit on the panel with adults to decide which organisations get the funding. This is led by the communities section of the Chief Executives Department

Rung 7: Young People lead and initiate action: Youth Council and UKYP campaigns

Young people involved in the youth council and youth parliament identify issues that are important to young people and then consult other young people for their views. They use the information from the consultation to decide their priorities for the year and develop a project or campaign plan showing how they will tackle them. The young people are supported by workers from the Community Voice team who make sure they have the information they need to make decisions and an understanding of the resources and systems available to support them.

Rung 8: Young people and adults share decision making: Involvement in Early Help Assessment (CAF Framework)

We are working towards a model where young people having been part of an Early Help Assessment (CAF) share the decision making with their named lead professional as to what actions will result from the EHA being completed. We hope to have this in process by April 2015

What are the benefits of effective participation?

For children and young people;

- Children and young people can develop skills that will be useful for life and work
- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Children and young people influence and change the services they receive and therefore receive the services they want and need
- Children and young people feel more ownership of services, communities and groups and are more likely to commit to being involved
- Fosters greater understanding of the adult world/council and their interaction with it
- Fun, enjoyment, developing personal friendships as well as personal growth and improved resilience

For the Council and partner organisations;

- Fresh ideas and creativity providing a different perspective which can lead to simple and effective solutions to difficult problems
- More accessible services that reach those that services sometimes fail to reach
- Better informed service planning and delivery based on actual rather than presumed need
- Improved outcomes for service users involved which could provide an indirect benefit
- Developing sustainability – progression from service user to volunteer to young leader/staff

For the community;

- Empowers the community to find solutions to local problems and raises aspirations of children and young people and the wider community
- Community cohesion is fostered through the inclusion of children, young people and adult service users in local decision making
- Developing friendships and networks with in the community
- Recognises the work already going on with in the community such as the asset based community development project run through CVA
- Diversity, taking on the needs of the whole community and benefiting the disadvantaged as well as those with the loudest voice
- Encourages a more vibrant local democracy

Vision and aims

We want to embed a culture of participation in the Council, led through the department of children, family and learners and the organisations we work with. We want service users to feel they have a voice and a real impact on decisions that affect them and services they receive.

With the help of Croydon Youth Council we have developed a statement for Children, Family and Learners that will be applied to all work involving children and young people in decision making.

Children, Family and Learners participation statement;

To ensure children and young people are able to participate in decision making about the services that affect them we will

1. Involve children and young people in decision making in a planned and coordinated way.
2. Create simple and effective processes and systems for children and young people to participate in decision making, including quick and simple feedback mechanisms.
3. Make sure those who are seldom heard have opportunities and are supported in their participation

Actions for the participation strategy

To ensure that we can measure our success in meeting these aims, several key measures have been identified for each aim

1. Involve children and young people in decision making in a planned and coordinated way.
 - Children and family partnership sub groups identify areas of their work where children and young people can genuinely be involved in decision making
 - The Children and Family Partnership (or its sub groups) set a minimum of two dates a year to meet with the youth council.
 - Young people will be involved in the co construction of the youth offer and delivery, this will include specific support for targeted groups and young people supported through CVS organisations
 - Young people are included in recruitment of staff using the 'brilliant basics' guidance
 - Young people express an increased level of satisfaction with opportunities to participate
2. Create simple and effective processes and systems for children and young people to participate in decision making, including quick and simple feedback mechanisms.
 - Develop a system whereby sub groups can demonstrate where young people's views have made an impact on decisions made, this should include feeding back to young people.
 - Sub groups to include representatives from CVS groups to ensure representation for the groups of young people they work with.

3. Make sure those who are seldom heard have opportunities and are supported in their participation
 - Increase in young people from hard to reach groups taking part in participation opportunities, including the development of a robust children in care council and developing the ongoing involvement of young people's views in early intervention, including early help assessment (CAF) processes.
 - Children and family partnership sub groups agree to have their documents youth proofed by the youth council or other groups so they can be published in an easily accessible format
 - Develop effective links with electoral services to ensure young people's democratic participation in UKYP elections is supported and young people join the electoral register.

Youth Participation: Annual Action Plan

Priorities;

1. Involve children and young people in decision making in a planned and coordinated way.
2. Create simple and effective processes and systems for children and young people to participate in decision making, including quick and simple feedback mechanisms.
3. Make sure those who are seldom heard have opportunities and are supported in their participation

Action points for the Children and Family Partnership and its Subgroups

No	Priority	Start and end date	How	Who	Milestones	RAG + evidence
The Children and Family Partnership (or its sub groups) commit to						
1.	Identify areas of their work where children and young people can genuinely be involved in decision making	Aug 2014 – Feb 2015 To be reviewed yearly	Partnership or sub group chairs to meet with the Community Voice Lead	Children and Family Partnership or Sub group chairs Community Voice Practice and Development Officer	Topics/areas of work where the youth council can make an impact are identified and outlined in time for the start of the next youth councils term in office (Feb 2015)	
2.	Meet with the Youth Council a minimum of twice a year.	Aug 2014 – Feb 2015 and yearly there after	Partnership or sub group chairs to meet with the Community Voice Lead to identify suitable dates in the Youth Council and Partnership timetable.	Children and Family Partnership or Sub group chairs Community Voice Practice and Development Officer	One meeting set with the current youth council before the end of its terms in Office. Dates for meeting the new youth council set before it begins in Feb 2015	

3.	Develop a system whereby they can demonstrate where young people's views have made an impact on decision making	Aug 2014 – Feb 2015 To be reviewed yearly	Partnership or sub group chairs to meet with the Community Voice Lead When the partnership plans to consult young people it should include clear information on why it is seeking young peoples views, what will happen to them and when they will feedback to young people.	Children and Family Partnership or Sub group chairs Community Voice Practice and Development Officer	Young people's views are sought in a clear and consistent way across the partnership Young people are regularly fed back to about progress Young people can articulate examples of where their views have made an impact	
4.	Include representatives from CVS groups to ensure representation for the groups of young people they work with.	In line with subgroup action plans	Identify organisations working with vulnerable groups and invite to subgroup meetings, this could be as members or to address specific priorities or pieces of work.	Children and Family Partnership sub group chairs	More representatives from CVS organisations on sub groups	
5.	Agree to have their documents 'youth proofed' by the youth council or other groups so they can be published in an easily accessible format	As and when documents are published	Partnership or sub group chairs to identify documents that are relevant to young people and should be	Children and Family Partnership or Sub group chairs Community Voice	Documents identified Documents made accessible to young people in terms of	

			accessible to them	Practice and Development Officer	format and availability	
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Action points for Children Family and Learners/EISS

No	Priority	Start and end date	How	Who	Milestones	RAG + evidence
1.	Young people will be involved in the co construction of the youth offer and delivery, this will include specific support for targeted groups and young people supported through CVS organisations	Aug 2014 – on going	<p>Youth council restructured to align with youth offer structure</p> <p>Identification of targeted groups and CVS organisations to work with</p>	<p>Community Voice Practice and Development Officer</p> <p>Youth and Play Sufficiency Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Feb 2014 newly restructured youth council starts</p> <p>Targeted group work programme developed and delivered</p>	
2.	Young people are included in the recruitment of identified staff roles using the 'brilliant basics' guidelines	Aug 2014 – April 2015	<p>Brilliant basic principles agreed across the partnership</p> <p>Appropriate staff roles identified</p> <p>Yong people identified and trained to take part in interviewing</p>	<p>Community Voice Practice and Development Officer</p> <p>Head of Partnerships and Children's Integrated Commissioning (Amanda Tuke)</p>	<p>All partners aware of the guidelines and are using them to recruit</p> <p>Young people are trained and taking part in the interviewing process</p>	

3	Young people express an increased level of satisfaction with opportunities to participate	Reviewed yearly	<p>Youth Council six month review and annual report</p> <p>Develop methods for reviewing other participation opportunities e.g Children in Care Council and involvement in Early help</p>	<p>Community Voice Practice and Development Officer</p> <p>Youth and Play Sufficiency Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Youth Council annual report 2014</p> <p>Mechanisms for reviewing other participation opportunities developed and included in the participation annual report 2015?</p> <p>Young people can articulate examples of where their views have been listened to and made a difference</p>	
4	Develop effective links with electoral services to ensure young peoples democratic participation in UKYP elections is supported and young people join the electoral register.	<p>Aug 2014 – Feb 2015</p> <p>Reviewed yearly</p>	Community Voice Practice and Development Officer to meet with Democratic and electoral services to develop ways to work together for the next UKYP elections in Feb 2015. In addition to providing equipment and vote counting	<p>Community Voice Practice and Development Officer</p> <p>Democratic and Legal services</p>	<p>Next UKYP elections used as a way to promote voter registration.</p> <p>Democratic and electoral services work with community voice team when visiting schools before and during the election period</p>	

			support to look at ways the elections can be used as tool for wider democratic engagement			
5	Increase in young people from hard to reach groups taking part in participation opportunities, including the development of a robust children in care council and developing the on going involvement of young peoples views in early intervention, including early help assessment (CAF) processes	Aug 2014 – April 2015 Reviewed yearly	<p>Community Voice team to work with existing Children in Care Council to support with training and development Youth and Play Sufficiency team to develop targeted group work with 10 – 14 year olds in care.</p> <p>Identify other hard to reach groups that would benefit from targeted group work</p> <p>Senior managers support recruitment to the youth council by encouraging all council services for young people to promote it to their young people.</p>	<p>Community Voice Practice and Development Officer</p> <p>Youth and Play Sufficiency Co-ordinator</p> <p>Head of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Quality Assurance and Quality Assurance Manager</p>	<p>Work with the Children in Care Council and targeted group work begins</p> <p>Additional hard to reach groups identified and group work planned and delivery begins</p> <p>Yearly youth council membership data looked at to identify initial improvements</p>	

			Meeting between Prevention through Partnership and Quality assurance team to begin work on involving young people in early help assessment			
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