



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2023-2026



Derby City Council

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FOREWORD

One of our most important jobs is listening to the voice of children and young people. Children and young people are leaders that are unique and have different ways of thinking. Even if a child or young person is non-verbal they still have something to say.

They will:

- bring a fresh pair of eyes that are naturally evolving
- work with you
- challenge you
- be creative in how they solve problems and be adaptive in how they approach them

As a partnership we deliver many services to children and young people and must continue to work together with them. Children and young people must be treated as equal partners and given the same rights as adults when making decisions.

Practitioners will develop new ways of thinking and working driven by today's children and young people's voices, which keeps improvements relevant.

This strategy has been co-produced with children and young people and the Children and Young People's Participation Network.

WHAT ARE WE AIMING TO ACHIEVE

WHAT IS A PARTICIPATION STRATEGY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

In Derby City and Neighbourhood Partnerships every child and young person's voice matters:

We will:

- be proactive in seeking out children and young people's views
- actively listening to children and young people as part of everyday practice in all of our work
- take action to improve our service and when it is not possible give the reasons why
- where possible use engagement models and co-produce all materials with children and young people

Our plan is to embed co-production both with the individual and collective voice of children and young people in decision making across all areas of the partnership.

It has to become part of everyday practice in all aspects from policies and strategies,

recruitment, service development, evaluation through to supporting individual children and young people.

What does the law say?

Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals and any services they contract out to others to have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including: culture of listening to children, taking account of their wishes and feeling both in individual decisions and development of services (Working Together March 2015).

All Local Authorities have a duty to consult under section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 before deciding how to fulfil its best value duty to ensure continuous improvements that economic, efficient and effective. Local Authorities are under a duty to consult representatives of a wide range of local people this includes children and young people.

There is a wide range of research, guidance and legislation which highlights the need to actively seek the views of children and young people please see appendix 1.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

OUR PARTICIPATION STANDARDS

There are steps involved it takes time and effort. Below is the Lundy Model of Participation the standards for engaging children and young people in decision making.



TYPES OF PARTICIPATION

INDIVIDUAL VOICE, COLLECTIVE VOICE AND SURVEYS

It is important to ask children and young people for their views before making any decisions that may affect them.

There are three key areas to engaging children and young people in decisions:

Individual voice: this means communicating with individual children and young people where services are provided, related to age and understanding, before decisions which affect them are made, and then to explain how and why decisions are made.

Collective voice: this means targeting and engaging with children and young people those affected by any possible development or changes before any decisions are made. For example: if you were looking at services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) then you would approach those organisations/services that work with and support children and young people with SEND including the voluntary/community sector.

Surveys: this means a paper or online questionnaire. Care needs to be taken to design forms which are short and simple, easy to complete and accessible this might mean providing different versions of the same survey such as for early years, easy read, communicate in print. The survey should be design with children and young peple to ensure all questions are necessary, avoid using leading, biased and double questions and pilot it before it is officially launched.



MY LIFE MY JOURNEY

MY LIFE MY JOURNEY (MYMJ) IS A NEW APPROACH DEVISED AND ADOPTED BY DERBY CITY COUNCIL

This approach has been created and developed by practitioners, co-produced by children and young people, and agreed by our Leadership Team. My Life, My Journey is written to support Social Workers/ Practitioners (any staff who work directly with children) in ensuring the child's voice is placed at the heart of any planning, decision making, and service delivery.

My Life, My Journey is to ensure all children and young people we work with know and contribute to their life stories with their chosen method of communication, even if a child is non-verbal/ pre-verbal, they still have something to say either through their preferred communication tools, observation or advocated by someone that knows them well.

This approach is intended to celebrate their best achievements as well as sensitively and age-appropriately allow them to understand their maybe not-so-happy memories.

The direct work will include children and young people's wishes and feelings, as well as ensuring they understand their own stories.

My Life, My Journey will contribute, feed into, and support Life Story Work or for some children and young people to make sure they have a record of their story of that moment in time.

My Life, My Journey tools can be found on Derby City Council website: www.derby.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/your-voice-children-young-people/your-voice/



WHAT IS PARTICIPATION?

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

Participation is a two way communication, working together with children and young people to achieve better outcomes. This means co-production of:

- policies and strategies
- developing and evaluating of services
- involvement in recruitment
- improving processes
- publicity

Here is a demonstration showing the difference between consultation and participation.

Consultation

Here is a mug for a health service, children and young people would be typically asked:

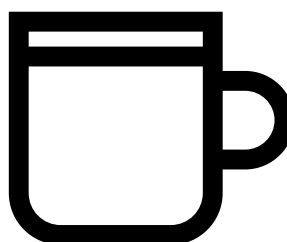


- what do you like about the mug?
- What do you dislike?
- How would you improve it?

As the mug is already designed there will be reluctance to make great changes, so the children and young people's voices are not fully valued. The mug may or may not be successful and it may not get used by children and young people.

Participation

Here is a blank mug for a health service, this can now be produced together with children and young people. The design boundaries are set at the beginning:



- Health logo must remain
- Only 6 colours can be used
- Not all ideas can be used but a reason will be given why not

This mug will now be a more effective, successful and impactful product.

Whether it is programme planning, service design, evaluation, research, recruiting a new member of staff, writing a policy or strategy or supporting an individual child or young person it should be co-produced.

Co-production brings about significant improvement in performance, quality to services and organisations as well as healthier, safer children and young people as active citizens.

YOU SAID, WE DID

SO WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE LISTENING TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

It is important to evidence the impact on the:

Individual voice - what difference this has made to their outcomes.

Collective voice - how this has improved or changed the service or organisation.

Surveys - how the findings have improved current services or to plan future services.

Here is an example of best practice to show how you could evidence the voice of children and young people.

Step 1. What did you ask children and young people?

- Record specific questions you asked for example: What support do you need? How could this service be improved?
-

Step 2. What did they say?

- Individual - I need support with...It could be better if there was...
 - Group - We would need support with... We would like...
-

Step 3. What did you do about what they said?

- Record specifically what difference it has made for example: We provided... We changed...
 - Sometimes change doesn't happen straight away in these cases record what you plan to do and it must match what children and young people have said
 - If change cannot happen, record and explain why
-

Step 4. How did you feedback to them?

- This could be on a one to one or group setting, given a copy of the action plan, recorded in a letter
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APPENDIX 1

KEY STATUTORY AREAS OF PARTICIPATION FOCUS

Children in Need

'The voice of the child: learning lessons from serious case reviews' (Sept, 2010) thematic report of Ofsted's evaluation of serious case reviews, highlights five main messages with respect to the voice of the child:

1. The child was not seen often enough by the professionals involved, or was never asked their views and feelings
2. Agencies did not listen to adults (such as advocates or teachers) who tried to speak up on behalf of the child and who had important information to give
3. Parents (or carers) stopped professionals from seeing and listening to the child
4. Workers paid too much attention to the needs of the parents, and not enough on the needs of the child
5. Agencies did not understand well enough what was going on to protect the child

The Munro Report (2011) makes it clear that in order to maintain focus on the quality of help being given to children and young people, professionals need to pay close attention to the views and experiences of those receiving services and the professionals who help them.

Munro recommends that the new inspection framework should examine the child's journey from needing to receiving help, explore how the rights, wishes, feelings and experiences of children and young people inform and shape the provision of services, and look at the effectiveness of the help provided to children, young people and their families.

It also tells us that the child protection system should be child-centred, recognising children and young people as individuals with rights, including their right to participate in major decisions about them in line with their age and maturity.

Services involved with helping children and families need to monitor what impact they are having. They can only improve if they have a good understanding (through, for example, collecting feedback from children and families) of what contribution, if any, they are making to children's safety and welfare. This is particularly important in terms of checking whether services are having a negative impact on children and families.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) guidance recommends the development of local protocols to actively involve children in the child protection system. In order to keep the child in focus during the child protection process, professionals should:

- develop a direct relationship with the child
- gather information from the child about his or her needs or situation
- elicit the child's wishes and feelings
- Make sure that young people are not forced out of care before they are ready, by giving them a greater say over moves to independent living and ensuring they retain support and guidance as long as they need it.

Working Together (2013) states that effective safeguarding arrangements in every local area should be underpinned by a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

Children in Care

The Children Act 1975 required a LA to ascertain and give due consideration to the wishes and feelings of the child, having regard to his age and understanding, in reaching any decision relating to a child in their care, (Section 59.1). The Children Act 1989 reiterated this, and applied it to decision-making before a child was looked after (Section 22.4), as well as requiring the courts to have regard to the wishes and feelings of the child (Section 1.3). It also added a duty to consider complaints and representations from children in care and children in need (Section 26.3).

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 added a duty to provide assistance by way of advocacy services to those making representations (Section 119). At a policy level, the Children and Young People's Plan (England) Regulations 2005, made under the Children Act 2004 s.17, requires local authorities to prepare children and young people's plans, and to consult children, relevant young persons and bodies representing them in the process (Regulation 7.1).

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 states that LAs must:

- Increase the focus on the transparency and quality of care planning, to ensure that the child's voice is heard when important decisions that affect their future are taken

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 legislation promotes the Corporate Parenting Principles that include ensuring the voice and views of children in care are heard and acted upon. The legislation also requires engagement and consultation with care leavers and other stakeholder for the development of the Care Leaver Local Offer.

Leaving Care

Children (Leaving Care) 2000 sets out duties local authorities have to support young people leaving care from 16 to 21 years of age. It is the duty of the LA to take reasonable steps to continue to keep pathway plans under regular review.

The principles to consider when drawing up a Pathway Plan are:

- young people will be involved in drawing up their plans
- plans will be reviewed every 6 months and include reports from all professionals/agencies involved in providing services to the young person, although they may not all attend the review, depending on the wishes of the young person
- they should be developed by the young person, any agreed family member, the carers and any other appropriate parties.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

SEND Reform is a part of the Children and Families Act 2014 which aims to improve the system by giving more importance to the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families. The principles in the code of practice SEND January 2015 states LA must:

- ensure that children, their parents and young people are involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support and about local provision
- ensure the child's parents or the young person are fully included in the EHC needs assessment process from the start, are fully aware of their opportunities to offer views and information, and are consulted about the content of the EHC plan
- consult with children with SEN and disabilities, and their parents and young people with SEN or disabilities when reviewing local SEN and social care provision
- consult them in developing and reviewing their Local Offer
- when carrying out an EHC needs assessment seek views and information from the child using appropriate methods, which might include observation for a very young child, or use different methods of communication such as the Picture Exchange Communication System.

Youth Council and other youth leadership

Along with the Duty to Consult there is also the Representation of the People Act 1983 which looks at ways of promoting high levels of registration to support democracy and engagement in civic life.

The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on each Electoral Registration Officer to maintain a complete and accurate register and promote registration within under-represented groups to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to take part and support democracy in civic life. In 2013 the Cabinet Office identified students and young people (under 35) as one of the groups that are least likely to be registered to vote.

Youth Councils provide an established and proven method for bringing young people together for discussion and co-production around issues that affect their lives, while other youth leadership programmes, such

as UK Youth Parliament, Youth Mayors and young inspector schemes enable LAs to respond to locality-specific demand for further engagement opportunities and involvement in democratic culture.

Primary/Secondary Schools

Effective citizenship education is an important part of becoming an engaged voter, and should continue to be a part of the national curriculum. Schools' citizenship education courses specifically include discussion of the political and governmental structures of the UK and the electoral systems that operate in the UK, and also the practicalities of registering to vote and actually participating at an election.

'Pupil Voice' in schools is the term often used to describe the influence of students in the provision of services, ensuring that their views are included when schools make key decisions. The Education Act 2002 required schools to have regard to any guidance given by the National Assembly relating to consultations with pupils about issues which directly affected them, extended further in the Education and Skills Act 2008. In the 2008 Act the governing body should consider any relevant views expressed by students when making certain decisions, according to the age and understanding of the students.

The OFSTED assessment criteria for schools clearly take into account how seriously the school takes account of the views of students. Inspectors look for evidence of 'Pupil Voice' in the school's self-evaluation documentation.

Enabling student voice to influence decisions is one of the eight principles for the Whole School approach with key areas identified for their involvement.

These key areas are:

- Greater input to the curriculum
- Learning and teaching
- The whole school environment
- Personal development and well-being
- Systems and processes
- Responding to the needs of students
- Consulting on school policies
- Opportunities to develop confidence, self-esteem and resilience

It contributes to achievement and attainment – young people involved in participation work benefit in a range of different ways. Increased confidence, self-respect, competence and an improved sense of responsibility have all been reported by young people who contribute in school. Schools also report increased motivation and engagement with learning.

Health and Social Care Act 2012

Local Healthwatch are semi-autonomous, governed by Health Watch England.

Their main statutory functions are to:

- Obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services. Local Healthwatch make these views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services.
- Make reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
- Promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.
- Provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them.

- Make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping us to carry out our role as national champion.
- Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the CQC to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern.

Public Sector Equality Duties

A duty under section 149 of the 2010 act to have due regard to specified equality matters for children and young people in the exercise of respective functions (PSED – public sector equality duty) also – a duty under section 7 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 to promote the wellbeing of children in England (Wales and Northern Ireland).



We can give you this information in any other way, style or language that will help you access it. Please contact us on **01332 640000** or **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ: **01332 640000** ਜਾਂ **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Polish

Aby ułatwić Państwu dostęp do tych informacji, możemy je Państwu przekazać w innym formacie, stylu lub języku. Prosimy o kontakt: **01332 640000** lub **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Slovak

Túto informáciu vám môžeme poskytnúť iným spôsobom, štýlom alebo v inom jazyku, ktorý vám pomôže k jej sprístupneniu. Prosim, kontaktujte nás na tel. č.: **01332 640000** alebo na stránke **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Urdu

یہ معلومات ہم آپ کو کسی دیگر ایسے طریقے، انداز اور زبان میں مہیا کر سکتے ہیں جو اس تک رسائی میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔ براہ کرم **01332 640000** یا **derby.gov.uk/signing-service** پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں

