



Children and Young People’s Participation Network Participation Standards

1. Introduction

1.1. The active participation of children, young people and families in service planning and decision making is an accepted part of local authority and broader partnership working. These standards have been developed by the Derby Children and Young People’s Participation Network in conjunction with young people to provide a consistent best practice approach. To achieve this we must make sure the standards are firmly embedded in local partnership working arrangements.

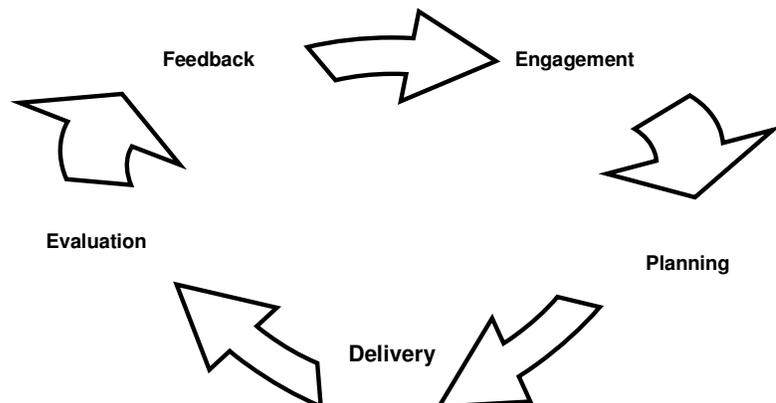
1.2. The benefits of effective participation in decision making and service configuration are as follows

Children, Young People and Families	Organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a deep insight into the management and operation of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding service users’ needs to inform/improve service planning and delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sense of ownership of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost effective service delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring services meet users’ needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstration of commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the building of confidence and self esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence for inspectorates and funding applications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learning of new skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fresh perspectives and new ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteering opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sense and belief that opinions and experiences matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service user led organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • influence over service design 	

2. Standards

Children, young people and their families should be involved during each stage of the commissioning cycle.

For each stage there are a set of standards.



2.1 Engagement

2.21 Time...

- Children, young people and their families must be engaged at the appropriate time to ensure that participation is not prohibitive – for example, not during the school day or exam periods.
- Activities should be planned to avoid the need for childcare, and when this is not possible, childcare costs should be reimbursed.
- Consider and support those who may need more time or to respond.
- Provide adequate breaks.

2.22 Place...

- Ensure venues reflect the location of participants and are within a maximum of one bus journey from home.
- Ensure venues are a safe and friendly environment for children, young people and their families to participate in.
- Provide information and space so children, young people and their families can learn from each other.

2.23 Resources...

- Ensure there is a budget available to cover the costs of participation, including venue hire and travel expenses.
- Reimburse travel expenses and provide appropriate transport for disabled children, young people and their families.
- Provide appropriate training and team building to enable people to participate.

2.24 Involvement...

- Only involve children, young people and their families if they can influence change - if they can't, just provide them with information.
- Using the most appropriate methodology (quantitative/qualitative).
- Provide children, young people and their families with enough information to participate fully.
- Involve a variety of children, young people and families; all ages, cultures, abilities, different types of families, and from a variety of places such as community groups, support groups.
- Contact by text, internet and by phone, those channels appropriate to the children, young people and their families.
- Keep their information safe by adhering to the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Use plain English so the information is clear and understandable.
- Provide interactive and fun engagement activities so that it's enjoyable as well as focused.

- Support and guide children, young people and families who have additional needs.
- Use appropriate advocacy for those children, young people and families who are not able to speak for themselves.
- Record the number of children, young people and their families getting involved in each stage of the decision making cycle

2.25 Feedback...

- Keep children, young people and their families up to date by feeding back from every meeting.
- Feed back within 12 weeks from their involvement any changes that have been made.
- Use appropriate method to feedback such as ‘You said... We did...‘

2.3 Planning

- Children, young people and their families should be involved in planning services at the earliest stage.
- A participation plan should be formulated.
- All those affected by potential service change should be given the opportunity to participate.

2.4 Delivery

- Children, young people and their families should have the opportunity to voice and influence the services they receive.
- Use a range of appropriate, safe and ethical engagement methods so all children, young people and their families can inform service delivery.
- Ensure access to information and training that allows children, young people and their families to participate fully.
- Inform children, young people and their families what can and cannot be changed and any limitations within the organisation.
- Record in each stage of the cycle what activities children, young people and their families have been involved in.

2.5 Evaluation

- Children, young people and their families should be able to evaluate services, knowing that their views will be taken seriously and will inform service improvement.
- There should be a range of appropriate evaluation methods that enable children, young people and families from varying ages, abilities, ethnicities and backgrounds to feedback on the service they have received.

- Evaluation methods need to be systematic, equitable, open without the use of leading questions, collated and analysed.
- This information should be used to inform improvements to service delivery.
- Undertake a satisfaction survey with service users at both the start and end of the year using appropriate methods.
- Use the information from the survey to inform service improvement.

2.6 Feedback

The standards for feeding back are to:

- value children, young people and their families involvement through feedback which should always be given. This should also happen even if no change has resulted, with the reasons why
- ensure that their evaluation has been acknowledged when feeding back so that they feel that they have made some difference and not ignored because of their age
- feedback on change / improvement should be clear, concise and easy for children, young people and their families to understand and at a time and in a format that is suitable for them
- record how the service has improved and feedback to service users such as 'You Said We Did'.

3. Evidencing Involvement

3.1 As a partnership when collecting evidence we need to ensure that it is consistent, systematic and timely to enable effective and unbiased analysis.

When measuring outcomes with a start and end point, the start point will measure the evidence of need and the end point will evidence what you've achieved. Comparing the start and end of your evidence will show what change or improvement has taken place or has been maintained.

There are two main uses for this information...

1. Reporting to your stakeholders/funders about progress towards achieving your outcomes
2. For you and your project to learn and improve from your findings.

It is essential to focus on service improvement by doing more of what works or doing less of what does not work, rather than simply recording the number of children, young people and families that took part. A mixture of both qualitative and quantitative data produces the most effective evidence base.