



**VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

**& YOUNG PEOPLE**

**CONSULTATION & PARTICIPATION**

**FRAMEWORK 2015**

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Northumberland County Council



# CONSULTATION & PARTICIPATION

## FRAMEWORK 2015

# VULNERABLE CHILDREN

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## PARTICIPATION

Participation is the process by which individuals and groups of individuals can influence decision making and bring about change. Participation literally means 'taking part'. The term is now used to describe many different relationships and degrees of participative activity. For children and young people this can range from them giving opinions on a particular issue, (consulted and informed) to choosing their own agenda and taking their own decisions, (child initiated and directed).

## TAKING ACCOUNT OF CHILDREN'S VIEWS

The Ofsted and the HMIP Inspection Framework's emphasise the importance of taking account of children's views. At present not all services demonstrate how feedback from individual children about their service is collated to inform service development.

## INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

Services need to be able to demonstrate that children and young people have been involved in decision making, and that services have changed as a result of that involvement. The aim is not to be prescriptive so that everyone is doing the same but rather to reach a position whereby it is the norm for children and young people to be engaged in and able to influence the planning, commissioning and evaluation of children's services in Northumberland.

## FEEDBACK

Feedback, in terms of what action has or has not been taken, to children and young people who have been involved is a vital element of the participation process and should be undertaken.

### TO ACHIEVE THIS...



...we need to develop a clear framework which addresses at what stage we gather views, how these views are obtained and what we do with this information. The table that follows begins to look at this.

It's important that we recognise the role vulnerable children and young people can play in shaping service delivery and development. This plan sets out our commitment and approach to involve them in all areas of decision making and taking their views seriously. Strong participation of vulnerable people is a hallmark of 'bringing communities together'.

The **Participation of Vulnerable Children and Young People Plan** will enhance delivery of Northumberland's strategic priorities by identifying children and young people's views to influence corporate and partnership priorities. This plan sets out proposals to not only seek the views of children and young people, but also to engage with them and support their participation in the implementation of key priorities and activities.



## What is participation and why is it important?

The **Participation of Vulnerable Children and Young People Plan** aims to enable children and young people to have a voice to inform decisions and to participate in the delivery of those decisions.

### (UNICEF: Rights of the child and a quote from a young person's perspective)

*"Young people must be in the driving seat to inform decisions, shape provision, and inspect quality. Young people matter. They are important to us now and to our future and we need them to flourish. A very small minority of young people feel no sense of belonging and as a result do not respect the communities in which they live. The vast majority, however, do make a positive contribution and feel misrepresented and undermined by negative images of, and attitudes towards, young people. We need to work together to create a society that is more positive for youth". (Positive for Youth, 2012).*

## Participation strategy priority

We will ensure the voices of our most vulnerable children and young people are heard, giving them the influence to directly affect the way we develop and deliver the services that support them.

Participation is important as it gives the young people ownership and responsibility over the services that are there for them (Young person, Northumberland).

### Our vision

That all vulnerable children and young people across Northumberland can have their views heard to influence decision making at all levels.

## For affective participation we need to:

- Know the value and contribution that vulnerable children and young people make within communities throughout Northumberland
- Make sure resources are available to encourage and facilitate high quality participation opportunities to vulnerable children and young people
- Increase the opportunities available for vulnerable children and young people to effectively influence strategic and political decisions if they want to

## To ensure:

- Our priorities reflect vulnerable children and young people's needs, hopes and views
- Increase the skills, competencies and confidence of vulnerable children and young people to develop and deliver their own participation activities
- Improve children and young people's leadership capabilities
- Influence cultural and strategic change and commitment amongst all partners
- Increase opportunities for vulnerable young people's employment and on-going progression
- Influence and embed vulnerable children and young people's participation within commissioning processes at all levels
- We will provide easily accessible information so that all vulnerable children and young people can make informed decisions
- We will safeguard all vulnerable children and young people when involved in a participation activity

| AREAS  | VIEWS OBTAINED  | EVIDENCE  | OUTCOMES   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Planning and assessment</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social work team assessment</li> <li>• What do you think YOT assessment tool</li> <li>• Early help assessment process</li> <li>• LAC pathway plan</li> <li>• Health assessment</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people's involvement to be recorded in ICS / Childview and service files</li> <li>• Care leavers to develop a framework to ensure that young people are at the centre of service planning and development, team system to collect views</li> <li>• Case studies collected from a range of assessment processes from across social care to showcase best practice</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people consulted with and involved in the development of social care plans where appropriate</li> <li>• Case file audits to consider if children and young people's views have been considered when developing plans and interventions</li> <li>• Case study report to be put together as evidence of good practice</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Consultation</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child in need survey</li> <li>• Children's centre survey</li> <li>• Ofsted LAC survey</li> <li>• Regulation 34/45 survey</li> <li>• Northumberland LAC promise priorities</li> <li>• Children's commissioner survey</li> <li>• NAS Support team survey</li> <li>• Health and behaviour schools questionnaire</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children and families where appropriate have the option to give feedback via surveys</li> <li>• Reports on local residential home performance completed every 6 months</li> <li>• Quarterly report to cooperate parenting</li> <li>• Annual survey completed and sent direct to children's commissioner</li> <li>• In house survey to establish intervention needs</li> <li>• Support team developed as a response from survey monkey feedback around young people's needs and required interventions</li> <li>• Schools Health and behaviour report completed every 2nd year</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal feedback reports for CIN and children's centres surveys</li> <li>• All children where appropriate offered a chance to contribute to council priorities</li> <li>• Reports and survey results presented to head of service or appropriate meeting</li> <li>• Views collected from a broad range of children and young people</li> <li>• Elected members updated and involved where appropriate in participation group work</li> <li>• Support team developed as a result of needs identified by young people</li> <li>• Local trends and patterns monitored with services tailored accordingly</li> </ul> |
| <b>Review</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online advocacy offer to all vulnerable young people working with social care teams if appropriate</li> <li>• Independent evaluation of participation and social action work</li> <li>• HMIP viewpoint work</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind of my own online advocacy app fully utilised by whole service</li> <li>• Newcastle University impact report</li> <li>• Viewpoint questionnaires completed by core YOT group and report feedback to service manager</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual MOMO reports produced and used for advocacy, LAC and other social care service reviews and meetings where appropriate</li> <li>• Independent report published on the effectiveness of the interventions delivered by NAS</li> <li>• YOT team influenced and shaped by feedback of service users</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Service development</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people to be given the opportunity to contribute to the development of social care services and strategies</li> <li>• Young people given the opportunity to become involved with delivering social action projects and NCS work</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people's strategic statement</li> <li>• Emotional and mental health strategy consultation</li> <li>• Accommodation team strategy</li> <li>• Alcohol survey</li> <li>• Personal education plans</li> <li>• Foster carer profiles</li> <li>• Sexual health survey work</li> <li>• Young people going on to become leaders and peer supporters</li> <li>• Support carer profiles</li> <li>• Respect equals change work</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement reviewed by young people, linked to the annual children's commissioner takeover day event</li> <li>• Young people involved in ongoing strategy and plan development work</li> <li>• Young people involved in the delivery and development of leadership and mentoring training</li> <li>• Positive activity offer for young people including further development of the max card scheme</li> <li>• Children's university passport scheme open to LAC and other vulnerable young people</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Participation groups</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young advisors - vulnerable children and young people's participation group age 10-18 years old</li> <li>• Young Health advisors, age 13-16 years</li> <li>• Voice's making choices, LAC age 8-16 years</li> <li>• Future route, LAC age 16-21 years</li> <li>• Virtual group who do not wish to be part of formal groups</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly young people's group meetings</li> <li>• Consultation work</li> <li>• Guest speakers</li> <li>• Fundraising</li> <li>• Event management skills</li> <li>• Finance workshops</li> <li>• Life skills session work</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Junior safeguarding board developed and running effectively</li> <li>• Celebrating achievement event</li> <li>• Social action projects delivered</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Project work</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project work developed by the young people to address concerns raised in the feedback and consultation work</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My super social worker</li> <li>• Designated teacher training</li> <li>• Emotional and mental health</li> <li>• Alcohol awareness</li> <li>• Adult safeguarding project (SAY)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training packs completed and used by teams to improve outcomes for young people</li> <li>• Numbers of workers trained to be monitored and fed back via team managers and participation champions</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Staff and foster carer recruitment and training</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people's input into the recruitment of social care staff</li> <li>• Young people's involvement in recruiting foster carers</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people involved with staff recruitment from workers to management appointments</li> <li>• Young people to attend recruitment events for foster carers</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in number of interviews panels with young people present</li> <li>• Increased number of foster carers recruited</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Impact</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in the number of vulnerable children and young people who are involved in the local authority decision making process</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from groups and young people captured and used to inform service delivery</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 520 young people involved in participation work 2014/15</li> <li>• Target of 700 young people involved in 2015/16</li> <li>• Target of 850 young people involved in 2016/17</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Developing a participative way of working across social care services</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation champions identified in all key teams to help develop a more young person centred approach to service planning and delivery</li> <li>• Feedback cards developed and rolled out across the social care teams</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear participation framework so all staff understand the common goals</li> <li>• Feedback card results converted into quarterly reports to the senior management team</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of the participation groups to develop services and interventions</li> <li>• Social care documents "Youth Proofed" where appropriate</li> <li>• Feedback reports used to implement changes and recognise good practice where appropriate</li> </ul>   |



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