

# **Participation Guidance**

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES JUSTICE SERVICE**

To sit under the overarching participation strategy

This guidance has been developed as part of the Early Help and Prevention participation task and finish group made up of champions from all individual service areas. An action plan was devised with a clear action to ensure individual services had guidance underpinned by the strategy. The action plan can be referred to as an attachment at the end of this document. The task and finish group have a planned presentation to a future service meeting to launch the guidance and highlight the pledge and commitment to participation. It's also important to acknowledge the excellent work that is already being undertaken across services to ensure participation is promoted. This guidance has been written to encourage this, encourage a consistent approach across all services and highlight the strategy that underpins all work across the authority.

**Vision:**

A partnership approach to participation which is consistently applied across all services to ensure all service users are enabled to fully participate in service delivery.

1. A clear strategy that complements the whole division strategy.
2. Individual guidance across services within Early Help and prevention.
3. Services that put participation at the heart of service delivery.

Early Help and Prevention to have an outstanding model of participation with a clear pledge for all our service users.

## Ensuring children, young people, families, victims and the communities we serve can participate within Early Help and Prevention Services

We will ensure that all service users have plenty of opportunities to participate and have made a number of commitments to support all service user's involvement.

Space – We will provide a safe and inclusive space for service users to express their views

We will do this by:

- Supporting our families, children, young people and victims to feel able to get involved with formal participation groups that work with council decision makers to scrutinise, evaluate and help plan services.
- Providing opportunities for service users to get involved in projects with the council and within Early Help and Prevention Services.
- Making sure that children, young people, families and victims feel secure and safe in their environment to speak out and/express their views.
- Making sure that all staff always put service users at the centre of their decision making, meet in places that are accessible to all and give time to understand what is happening. For example, in community settings, home visits and other appropriate settings. .
- Actively seeking the views of all service users.

Voice – We will ensure that all service users can express their views in a way they decide is best

We will do this by:

- Training children and young people when they join Council formal groups.
- Making sure that staff support service users to understand the processes they are part of and recognising their individual diversity needs.
- Using resources and tools that are creative and age appropriate and in line with Speech, Language and Communication principles.
- Being honest with service users about what can and cannot be changed in a transparent way. Communicating this to service users individually as well as through other means of communication as appropriate i.e. reception areas
- Ensuring all public facing building within Early help and Prevention hold information on participation, ways to have a safe space, voice, audience, influence and impact within individual service areas.

Audience – We will ensure that what our service users say is listened to by the most appropriate people

We will do this by:

- Making sure our formal participation groups have regular access to senior managers.
- Supporting service users to make a complaint if they feel the need to.
- Ensuring workers who work with service users will listen to them, make time for them to say what they think and share the families, children, young people's and victims' views with managers if appropriate. As well as feeding back to service users on any outcomes.
- Advocating on behalf of service users when requested.

Influence – We will ensure that service users views are taken seriously and acted upon

We will do this by:

- Actioning recommendations from our formal participation groups and always explain if we cannot make changes.
- Making sure that any plans (such as intervention plans for example) are co-produced and owned by service users. Ensuring their voice is heard.
- Ensure that there are a number of feedback mechanisms in place to support children /families and young people

Impact – We will ensure that young people know how they are making a difference

We will do this by:

- Inviting service users to evaluate services they receive and feedback their opinions. To ensure changes are fed back to service users in a variety of ways.
- Auditing case recordings, assessments, case files etc. and seeking the voice of service users during this process.
- Providing feedback about decisions made.

## Recruitment, Training and Development

Early Help and Prevention have a commitment to ensuring staff are, from the outset of their career within the service, putting participation at the heart of each role. All Job descriptions will have reference to the importance of participation within each role across the service and clear in the expectation for each role. Where possible service users will help shape interviews and actively participate in interviewing processes.

To ensure that all staff understand participation and it is delivered consistently across all work the authority has a participation training resource called **How will you hear me?** This training toolkit and its accompanying films will be used in workforce development sessions, the toolkit will be kept updated and new films added as and when necessary.

Yearly quality conversations will cover participation development and any additional training that may assist staff.

Monthly supervisions will encourage conversations on participation at an individual case level and identify areas of best practice and development opportunities.

## Other participation

Any individual service area preparing to seek young people's views and involve young people in some manner should be mindful of the overarching strategy and this guidance when planning participatory activity.

Individual service areas are responsible for developing specific plans which outline the methods through which young people will be involved and which are mindful of addressing the established standards. A brief template is provided for staff to use when planning to lead participatory activity in order to help ensure that practice meets this guidance.

Individual plans can be sent to the participation team for any suggestions and feedback and its important to ensure line managers capture learning.