

North Somerset Children's Trust



Draft Participation Strategy

FOR CONSULTATION

May 2006

Every Child Matters
Change For Children

Draft Participation Strategy

North Somerset Children's Trust

Contents:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Who are we?
- 1.2 What do we mean by participation?
- 1.3 What is this strategy document about?
- 1.4 What is the purpose of this consultation
- 1.5 The consultation process

2.0 Our vision and aims

- 2.1 Our vision
- 2.2 Aims

3.0 Why participation? The reasons explained

- 3.1 Children's rights legislation and guidelines
- 3.2 Service improvement
- 3.3 Benefits to participants

4.0 Definitions, scope and principles

- 4.1 Definitions and framework
- 4.2 Scope and focus
- 4.3 Principles, practice and culture

5.0 What we will do and how we will do it

- 5.1 Strategic plan, audit and review
- 5.2 Putting it into operation
 - (a) Commissioning and other emerging Trust structures
 - (b) Service development
 - (c) Communication

6.0 Resource and co-ordination needs

- 6.1 Supporting, co-ordinating and strengthening participation
- 6.2 Resource and co-ordination needs

7.0 Work-plan and timescale

8.0 Appendices, glossary and questionnaire return sheets

Draft Participation Strategy

North Somerset Children's Trust

1.0 Introduction:

1.1 Who are we?

We are the 'shadow' North Somerset Children's Trust Board, established in April 2006, replacing the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

The Trust is an inter-agency body, led by the local authority, which has the legal duty to promote inter-agency co-operation 'to improve the well-being of children in the authority's area' under Sec. 10 of the *Children Act 2004*. Our Board partners include the Primary Care Trust, schools, the police, the Youth Offending Team, Connexions, the Learning Skills Council, political representatives and the voluntary and community sector - all the agencies that have a role in ensuring good outcomes for children and young people in North Somerset.

The primary task of the Children's Trust is to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people in North Somerset. Using the *Every Child Matters* outcomes as a framework, the Trust has the responsibility of developing the '*Single Plan for Children and Young People*' in the county and establishing effective inter-agency service planning, commissioning and accountability.

The Children's Trust Board also has a specific aim and duty to 'Ensure that the voices of children, young people, and their families are heard and acted on when planning and commissioning services for children and young people'. This Draft Participation Strategy sets out our ideas on how this might be achieved.

This draft Participation Strategy was developed on behalf of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Children's Trust by the Participation Workstream Group, an inter-agency group of senior staff. Co-ordinated by Barnardo's, its membership included representatives from North Somerset Council's education, social care, youth and youth justice services, from primary and secondary schools, the Primary Care Trust, Connexions, and the voluntary sector. We drew on 'best practice' research, agency practitioner experience and models from other Trusts.

1.2 What do we mean by participation?

We use the term 'participation' not simply to mean 'taking part' or 'being

present' but as having active involvement in and influence over decision-making and action for change. It means *'children, young people and adults working together to find solutions and initiate change'* (Davis, J., 2003).

We use the term 'children' to refer to those aged 0-13 and young people to refer to those aged 13-19 (or over, where the Trust has particular responsibilities for their care and wellbeing). Parents and carers are those who have parental responsibility for children and young people and/or provide their daily support and care.

1.3 What is this Participation Strategy document about?

The children's Trust has committed itself to ensuring that children, young people and their families and carers will have the opportunity to make a difference to how services work for them both now and in the future.

Participation is also now a legal obligation under the Children Act 2004 (Sec. 53), and this is reinforced within several other pieces of legislation. However, despite good practice in some areas, we recognise that we have some way to go to ensure that children, young people, their families and carers have real opportunities to participate and make a difference to how services are designed and delivered.

This Draft Participation Strategy sets out our ideas on how we will achieve our commitment. It provides all partner agencies with a set of principles and guidelines for their engagement with the Children's Trust in achieving its 'Single Plan'.

Our draft Participation Strategy focuses on:

- outcomes
- the approach and structures we will use, and
- identifies the resources needed to achieve our goals.

1.4 What is the purpose of this consultation?

We want the Participation Strategy to be as effective and robust as possible. For that to happen, we need you to contribute your views and comments on its aims, scope and approach, based on your expertise and the work you do in your setting. We are interested in your thoughts on how it might be improved to best meet the needs and challenges in your area of work. We want to know of any important gaps or omissions you notice.

We want to encourage all partner agencies in the Children's Trust - including schools, social care services, Primary Care Trusts, black and minority ethnic organisations, youth services, agencies supporting disabled children, police and the wider voluntary and community sector - to comment on the Draft Strategy.

We welcome comments from individuals or groups of individuals working within these agencies, as well as more formal 'agency-wide' responses. A set of questions

has been provided for your aid. There is also an opportunity for you to make additional comments and to give your views on the staff training needed for its successful implementation.

We hope that through this consultation process Children's Trust members and staff will feel 'ownership' of the strategy, and perhaps find some ideas that could be taken forward immediately. Once the Strategy is agreed, we hope that it will inspire your commitment and support.

1.5 The consultation process

This draft has the support of the Participation Workstream Group who has proposed that it is used as an interim 'working' strategy pending consultation. This recommendation has been agreed by the CYPSP Executive sub-group. The new Children's Trust Board has also agreed the strategy as a consultation document.

Between now and the end of July 2006 all stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide their views on the strategy. These will be collated by the Workstream Group and the responses presented to the Children's Trust Board as part of the discussion of the final document.

This consultation process is primarily aimed at accessing the views of those working with or on behalf of children, young people, parents and carers, and the agencies and organisations for which you work. We are already consulting with children and young people about their views on participation and how to make it effective. We will provide less detailed and more 'user-friendly' information to parents and carers for their comments and include them in the process.

The Strategy will be finalised on the basis of your feedback and the discussions at the Children's Trust Board. It will be submitted to all stakeholder agencies and groups for their formal adoption. The aim is to complete this process by December 2006. The Trust will also consider the training, support and resources needed to implement the Strategy effectively.

Once the Strategy is agreed, separate, user-friendly '*Participation Charters*' will be developed with and for children, young people and parents and carers. These Charters will set out what they can expect of the Children's Trust.

2.0 Vision and aims:

2.1 Our Vision:

Our vision is that children, young people, their families and carers will have the opportunity to participate in the design, delivery and evaluation of the services that have an impact on their lives and well-being.

We know that their participation:

- makes a positive difference to outcomes for children and young people.
- makes a positive difference to the design and delivery of services and;
- acknowledges and increases their skills and understanding

2.2 Aims:

The aim of our strategy is to clarify our vision on participation and set out how we are going to achieve it.

To do this we will:

- Set out the reasons why we need a Participation Strategy
- Define more clearly what we mean by 'participation'
- Clarify the scope and focus of our strategy - we will state who is included, and around what issues participation is sought
- Set out our legal obligations and any government guidelines we need to meet
- Set out what goals we will seek to achieve, and how we will achieve them
- Identify what we need to do - in a work-plan.

3.0 Why participation? The reasons explained:

3.1 Children's rights:

- Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children and young people should be involved: '*in all the decisions that effect their lives*'. <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>
- It is now also a legal requirement to consult with, and involve children and young people in relation to many of the services and support the state provides, for example, in the
 - Children Act 2004
 - Children Act 1989
 - Health and Social Care Act 2001
 - Education Act 2002

It is also recognised as good practice in all areas, e.g.:

- 'Modernising Local Government'
- 'Learning to Listen Core Principles' (CYP, 2001)
- 'Children's National Service Framework' (NHS)

- 'Working Together' (DfES/0134/2004)
- 'Total Respect' (DoH Looked after Children Training, 2002)
- 'Hear by Rights' (National Youth Agency, 2003) and;
- in recent strategic documents such as 'Youth Matters'.

3.2 Participation can improve services and organisations:

With effective participation and consultation services can become more sensitive to the needs of their users or more 'fit for purpose'. They can also make the best use of resources to achieve positive outcomes for their users and clients.

A research study by Kirby et al 2003 (<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/participation/buildingaculture>) has shown that the participation of children, young people and their families can lead to:

- **Improved service development** - services and practices changed and improved, and new services were introduced, which better met the needs of service users.
- **Improved client support** - listening to children in personal decisions enabled services to better meet individual needs.
- **Increased participatory practice** - staff developed the knowledge, attitudes and skills to be able to involve children and young people more within services.
- **Increased access and use of services** - involving and listening to children and young people helped increase their access, use and positive experience of services.
- **Improved and more supportive communities** - involving children, young people and their families and carers helped communities become more supportive of their members and of services.

3.3 Participation can change lives

The process of participation can in itself bring many benefits to children, young people and their families and carers.

The research (Kirby et al, 2003) shows that in addition to fulfilling their rights under Article 12 of the UNCRC, participation has improved:

- **Empowerment** - increased children, young people's and parents' and carers' belief in their ability to create change and in their levels of control over elements of their lives.
- **Citizenship and Political Education** - increased their political and social knowledge, and awareness of rights.

- **Responsibility** - increased levels of responsibility, active involvement and pro-social behaviour.
- **Relationships** - improved relationships with and the perception of children and young people amongst communities, professionals and peers.
- **Confidence and Skills** - increased confidence, skills and self-belief.

Questions about our overall vision - pl. consider from the perspective of your role and setting:

Q1	What do you think about our vision - that children, young people and parents participate in the design, delivery and evaluation of Children's services in North Somerset? (Draft Strategy, Secs. 1&2)
Q2	Are there parts of our vision that you think need to improve or change? What are they and why?

4. Definitions, scope and principles

4.1 Definitions and framework

The word '**participation**' is often used to describe very varied activities in very differing circumstances. We think that it is important to define what we mean by 'participation' in North Somerset.

We use the term '**participation**' not simply to mean 'taking part' or 'being present' but as having active involvement in and influence over decision-making and action for change. It means:

'children, young people and adults working together to find solutions and initiate change' (Davis, J., 2003)

Similarly, in North Somerset we use the term '**consultation**' to refer to circumstances where children, young people and their families are asked for their opinions, but are not part of the planning or decision-making processes.

Organisations and services may involve children, young people and their families and carers in different ways, depending on:

- how much they work with them;
- and the nature of the service and its underlying values and aims.

It is important that we are clear about our approach to participation. We need to choose and tailor our approach, using appropriate methods and techniques, suited to the situation. Our aim is to encourage the fullest participation possible. This will depend on the particular circumstances and different contexts that apply to the situation.

It is also important that the participation of children, young people, parents and carers is voluntary and well supported, and that we are honest with them about its limitations in achieving proposed changes.

The following table represents different approaches to consultation and participation:

Approach 1	Approach 2	Approach 3	Approach 4	Approach 5
Being Consulted	Representing	Involvement in Decision Making	Sharing Decision-making Implementing	Initiating
Children, young people, parents and carers are invited to express views, interests and opinions.	Children & young people/ parents & carers represent their peers and express their views.	Children & young people/parents & carers are involved in decision -making with Trust reps/staff.	Children & young people/parents & carers are fully involved in decision-making and given or share responsibility for a project and its outcomes.	Children & young people /parents& carers generate project ideas and action all major decisions.
Trust reps/staff make key decisions, control the information given and may or may not take the views provided into account or feedback about their decisions.	Trust/staff set the agenda and make the decisions. The views provided are taken into account and feedback is given about decisions and actions.	The views of children, young people/parents & carers and Trust reps/staff are given some weight. The degree of influence they have is clear and explicit.	The views of children, young people/parents & carers and Trust reps/staff are given equal weight. Trust reps/staff may support, advise and monitor.	Trust reps/staff are available for consultation but do not take charge.

(Adaptation of Connexions from Millar et al (2003) Research Report and other models)

Questions about our approach to participation – pl. consider from the perspective of your role and setting:

Q3	What do you think about our aim that the participation of children, young people and parents will be as full as possible, aiming for 'shared decision-making and implementation' and 'project initiation'? (Sec. 4.1)
Q4	Are there any specific issues you think we need to consider? What are they and why?

4.2 Scope and Focus

Which children, young people and families does this strategy apply to?

All children and young people aged 0-19, plus those over 19 receiving leaving care services and those between 19 and 25 with learning difficulties, and their parents and carers, should have the opportunity to participate in North Somerset 'in all the decisions that effect their lives' (child welfare legislation and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12).

We use the term 'children' to refer to those aged 0-13 and young people to refer to those aged 13 and over.

Which organisations?

Our strategy covers all the work of the Children's Trust and its partner agency staff, across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors and universal, targeted and individual services.

What types of issues?

Our strategy covers all aspects of the 'Single Plan for Children and Young People,' its development, planning, implementation and review.

We want to see children, young people and their parents and carers participate:

- **Where individual decisions are being taken about children's own lives.** For example, the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 say that 'looked after' children and 'children in need' should be involved in decisions about their care and the services offered to them. Statutory guidance is being developed to ensure that children and young people with special education

needs are involved, where possible, in all decisions relating to their education.

- **Where services for children, young people, parents and/or carers are being developed or provided.** For example, to influence the design and provision of play facilities, education, child health and guidance services.
- **Where services used by children, young people, parents and/or carers are being developed or provided** For example, to influence the design and provision of community leisure, transport, housing and health services used by children and young people as well as adults.

Questions about the 'reach' of our approach - pl. consider from the perspective of your role and setting:

Q5	<p>What do <u>you</u> think about our aim that children, young people and parents participate fully</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in decisions affecting their own lives, • in the development, planning and evaluation of 'children-focussed' policies and services and • in the development, planning and evaluation of other services that they may use? (Sec.4.2)
Q6	<p>Are there any specific issues you think we need to consider? What are they and why?</p>

4.3. Principles, Practice and Culture

Principles

We will use the following general Principles drawn from the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (by *Save the Children Fund*) to guide our work on participation:

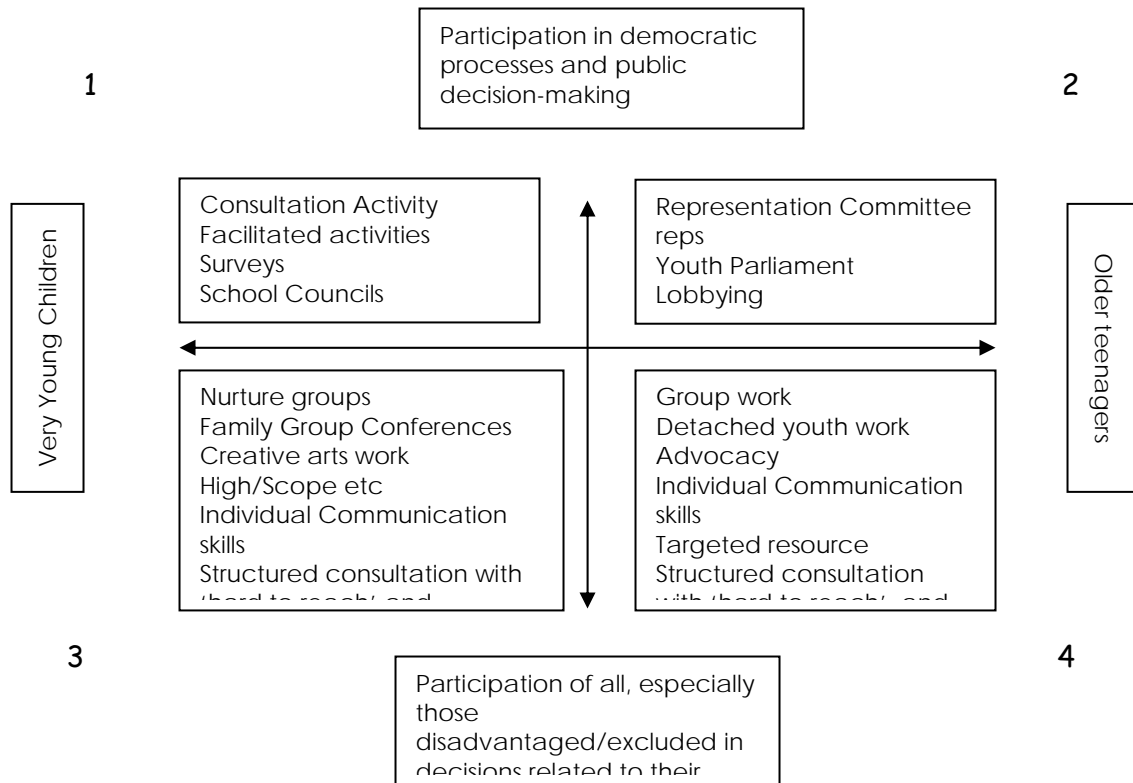
- Children have rights to be listened to, to freely express their views on all matters that affect them, and to freedom of expression, thought, association and access to information.
- Measures should be put in place to encourage and facilitate their participation in accordance with their age and maturity.
- Participation should promote the best interest of the child and enhance the personal development of each child.
- All children have equal rights to participation without discrimination.
- All children have the right to be protected from manipulation, violence, abuse and exploitation.

Practice Model

Participation also needs to be understood as a process and usually it involves more than a one - off activity. It relates to our approach to work with individuals and with groups; to children, young people and families using universal services as well as those using specialist and targeted services; to very young children, to young adults and to those with special needs. It is also an area where understanding and learning is at a relatively early stage of development. The models and structures we develop need to reflect this need for ongoing, flexible processes, with a commitment to reviewing their impact and suitability.

The following model, (amended from Doble, 2005, Barnardo's) is an aid to identifying and planning responses across a diverse range of services and groups.

Model of participation activity



When choosing an approach, it will be important to identify and support the best possible participatory models within and across services and to ensure that disadvantaged and excluded groups, such as disabled and Black and minority ethnic children, young people and their parents and carers are actively included. This approach will need to be replicated within the formal participation structures of the Partnership.

Our aim is that we consult with children, young people and their parents and carers on what they think would be the most appropriate model(s) in different circumstances.

Creating a culture

The research evidence suggests that agencies will need to change their ethos and culture at every level if we are to work with children, young people, parents and carers in a sustained, participatory way. Kirby et al identify four stages to this process:-

1. Unfreezing existing practice and attitudes
2. Establishing catalysts for change
3. Internalizing new ways of working
4. Institutionalizing new ways of working.

We believe we are mainly working at Framework stages 1, 2 and 3 at this point and our action plan reflects this.

For example, the need for a more comprehensive and sophisticated approach to participation has been recognised in North Somerset, to ensure that children and young people of all ages and those using both universal and targeted services have the opportunity to contribute their views. New approaches have been developed for consultations around major partnership issues such as Every Child Matters and the Single Plan. However, much remains to be done to ensure that the views expressed in these consultations affect plans and outcomes and that feed back is given to those involved. The participation of parents and carers in early years' settings has also increased. Consultation with and participation of children and young people using health services is at an earlier stage of development, as is the participation of 'hard to reach' children in some educational and social service settings.

Over the past few years Sure Start, the Children's Fund and Connexions have been able to build on and extend the participatory practices developed within the youth service, school councils and 'looked after' children's services and increase the commitment and skills necessary to develop participation. The work of the inter-agency Participation Workstream, and especially of its sub-group, the practitioner-based Participation Network Group (PNG), has acted as a catalyst, helping consolidate and develop good practice across agencies, services and age-ranges.

This strategy, as well as the *Participation Good Practice Guide* recently produced by the PNG, builds on these developments, working towards greater involvement and participation across the entire Children's Trust's strategic and operational activities.

Questions about the principles and model underpinning our approach - pl. consider from the perspective of your role and setting:

Q7	Do <u>you</u> think our principles and model helps ensure that all children, young people, parents and carers - 'hard to reach', disadvantaged and excluded
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	children and young people, and those accessing universal services - will have opportunities to participate? (Sec. 4.3)
Q8	Are there any specific issues that you think the Strategy needs to address to ensure further development? What are they and why?

5. What we will do and how we will do it

This section sets out both what has been achieved so far and what we see as the next steps.

5.1 The Strategic Plan

5.1 (a) Developing the Plan:

In May 2005 the CYPSP Executive sub- group set up the inter-agency Participation Workstream Group. In July 2005, it was given the task of developing '... a strategy for the involvement of children and young people aged 0-19, and their parents and carers in the work of the CYSP/Children's Trust arrangements, across community, voluntary and statutory sectors and universal, targeted and individual services.'

The strategy is to

- 'establish clear criteria and structures for the participation of children, young people, parents and carers using universal, targeted and individual services in the development, planning, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of services.
- map existing consultation and participation exercises and evaluate their outcomes, identifying gaps and key issues in order to inform future developments.
- identify the resource implications of an effective participation strategy.
- define initial outcomes and identify a timetable for the implementation of the strategy.' (Participation Workstream Terms of Reference, 2005).

Participation in formal decision-making structures

A range of formal structures guides the work of the Children's Trust and its partner agencies e.g. Trust commissioning bodies, Management Boards and Advisory Groups, recruitment, service evaluation and review processes, individual service plans, etc. The participation of children, young people and their parents and carers will benefit planning and decision-making in all of these areas. The challenge is to ensure that participation is meaningful and that the processes used are appropriate. Otherwise there is a danger that it will waste the time of children, young people, parents and carers and staff and lead to cynicism and lack of

interest. The remainder of Section 5 sets out some ways in which meaningful participation might be achieved and progress monitored.

5.1 (b) Auditing Practice and Progress

An initial audit (*Children and Young People's Participation in North Somerset - A Mapping Report, Jan. 2006*) was conducted by the Children's Fund on behalf of the Workstream Group to identify existing consultation and participatory exercises across all partner agencies, record the views provided by children, young people, parents and carers and their impact on subsequent events. This will provide an information baseline to help monitor some of the priorities already identified by children and young people and the outcomes of their impact on service provision. It will also be helpful in identifying gaps and cascading good practice in recording the views of children, young people, parents and carers and their outcomes.

This audit will be updated annually and outcomes monitored and reported to the Workstream Group and the Children's Trust.

5.1 (c) Strategy Evaluation and Review

The Workstream Group will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the appropriateness, reach and effectiveness of the Participation strategy on service design and delivery and on ECM outcomes and for the development of recommendations for further improvement, as necessary.

It will provide an annual report to the Children's Trust and use the evidence of evaluations and reviews to ensure that participation is supported and strengthened across all service areas and to develop the skills and confidence of all those concerned with this work.

5.2 Putting it into operation

5.2(a) Commissioning and other Children's Trust structures

The Children's Trust structures and arrangements are now beginning to be developed. Children, young people, parents and carers will need to be able both to influence and respond to the recommendations made about structure etc. as these emerge. However, some general principles can be established at this stage to guide the new processes.

The PNG have begun consulting with children and young people about their preferred participatory structures, covering both universal and targeted services. This work will be completed by mid 2006 and a report provided. It will aid the development of effective structures, suited to children and young peoples' age, abilities and special needs and help ensure that those children and young people most likely to experience exclusion are supported and encouraged to become

involved. The Participation Workstream Group has requested the Early Years and Childcare services to plan a similar consultation process with parents and carers. It will be important to include a mechanism for scrutinising and initiating policy and commissioning priorities within these new structures.

All applications for service commissioning and review will be expected to indicate the evidence used to support the planned service from the perspective of service users (using evidence from practice or research etc.). The views of potential users will be sought and recorded by the commissioning body and their contribution to the decision-making recorded.

5.2(b) Service development across Partner agencies

(i) Management Boards and Advisory groups

All Management Boards and Advisory groups of agencies or projects providing services to children, young people, parents and/or carers will consult with children, young people, parents and carers about how they wish to contribute to the governance of the project and ensure that their views are represented on the Board/Advisory group. Boards/Advisory groups will make arrangements for this to be addressed appropriately.

(ii) Evaluations and reviews

All services will provide an opportunity for the children, young people, parents and carers to contribute to the planning, evaluation and review of the services they have received as individuals and/or as part of a group. The views of children, young people, parents and carers (as appropriate) will also be included in the broader development of new services and reviews and evaluations of existing ones.

(iii) Staff appointments

Children and young people will contribute to the recruitment of all permanent appointments of staff who work directly with or whose primary role relates the education, health and welfare of children and young people. Children and young people will be provided with support for this task by staff trained to do this.

Parents and carers will contribute to the recruitment of all permanent appointments of staff who work directly parents and families or whose primary role relates the education, health and welfare of parents and families. Parents and carers will be provided with support for this task by staff trained to do this.

(iv) Practice and practice standards

An inter-agency Participation Network Group (PNG) was developed in 2003, co-ordinated by the Children's Fund. This has been established as the practitioner sub-group of the Participation Workstream group. The PNG aims to co-ordinate participation practice across the age-range and within universal, targeted and individual services. It has successfully co-ordinated and facilitated the participation of children and young people on the Every Child Matters outcomes, on

a Play Policy for North Somerset and on the Single Plan (*North Somerset Strategic Plan for Children and Young People's Services 2006-2009 - findings of consultation with Children and Young People, Dec 2005*).

The PNG has developed a *Participation Good Practice Guide*, setting standards and guidelines for all partner agencies. The Good Practice Guide draws on the best practice approach outlined by *Save the Children Fund* and was developed with the active participation of young children and a representative of the National Youth Council (see appendix...).

The PNG will continue to co-ordinate participation events, audit consultations and their outcomes and support practitioners in their skill development.

Over the next period the PNG will:

- Consult with children and young people on their preferred method of engagement with the Children's Trust structures
- Map the 'participation' training needs of staff across statutory and voluntary sector agencies, and work with the Workforce Development officer to identify how they might best be met; and
- Develop the skills of children and young people to participate in 'peer evaluations', recruitment, and governance structures etc.

5.2 (c) Communication

The Workstream Group has begun to disseminate the results of participation and consultation activities to parents and carers via schools, and to staff via the *Change for Children and Young People's Bulletin*. The approaches used will be further developed and strengthened to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible.

The Group will also develop proposals to provide regular feedback to children and young people. It will set up a 'two-way' communication approach that will encourage the informal participation of children, young people, parents and carers in the work of the Children's Trust in ways that are fun and appropriate to children and young people's age and communication needs. This will include celebrating success and maximising its impact.

6. Resources and co-ordination needs

6.1 Supporting, Co-ordinating and Strengthening participation activity

Many agencies in North Somerset are already committing time and resources to enable children, young people, parents and carers to participate in meaningful ways in the decisions that affect their lives, although the level of commitment and resource allocation varies greatly.

The Youth Parliament and the Schools Councils, along with the more targeted work undertaken with Looked After and disabled children, all involve a significant resource and staff allocation within Children and Young People's Services. It is anticipated that these resources will continue to be needed, at least at their present levels. Newer initiatives such as Sure Start, the Children's Fund and Connexions have had a major commitment to participation as part of their brief and have extended practice into new areas. It will be necessary to ensure that mainstreaming plans for these initiatives include resources for participation. Other agencies and services have less of a tradition of participation and will need to consider what resources will be needed to undertake this work.

Working closely with colleagues in other services, the Children's Fund, and Barnardo's, (as its accountable body and lead agency), initiated the development of a co-ordinated, inter-agency approach to participation with children and young people in North Somerset. The Children's Fund manager co-ordinates the work of the PNG, and the Fund's staff and other PNG members have been heavily involved in supporting the delivery of consultation and participation activities for the CYPSP and Children's Trust. Barnardo's co-ordinates the Participation Workstream Group which leads the strategic developments on participation within the Children's Trust and to which the PNG reports.

These inter-agency and cross-professional structures have already had many positive benefits. They have

- Reduced professional barriers and increased learning between staff in different services
- Developed approaches to participation that work across the age-range and in targeted as well as universal services
- Made best use of existing participatory structures
- Provided efficiencies in the co-ordination, planning and analysis of consultation exercises - and in doing so, increase the value and robustness of different elements
- Raised understanding of the benefits of participation amongst staff, service users, politicians and the wider community
- Ensured that North Somerset has met its obligations around the participation of children and young people in the ECM and Children's Trust developments to a high standard
- Raised the profile of North Somerset participation work within the region and nationally
- Placed North Somerset in a strong position for this element of the APA and Joint Area Review (JAR) inspections
- Helped clarify the participation gaps and needs, including staff training needs.

6.2 Resource and co-ordination needs

To take the strategy forward over the next period, resources will be needed to:-

- Ensure that participation is integrated in the planning, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of individual services and new Children's Trust arrangements,
- Develop methods to support, encourage and (where possible) accredit the participation activities of children, young people, parents and carers, including their development as trainers, mentors and evaluators,
- Co-ordinate the participation strategy and good practice developments across agencies and sectors, balancing the needs of hard-to-reach and other children and young people, parents and carers,
- Workforce development - identify staff and participant skills needs, co-ordinate cross-sector support and training,
- Audit and support an outcome-based approach to participation work in children's services self evaluation
- Contribute to performance assessments, e.g. Joint Area Reviews, Area Performance Assessments, OFSTEDS, youth service inspections etc.
- Develop effective two-way communication between the Children's Trust and its staff and children, young people, parents and carers.

To meet these needs and achieve the aims of the Strategy, it is recommended that

- the Workstream Group and the PNG continue in their current roles,
- Barnardo's continues to lead and co-ordinate this work and that this involvement is built into the Children's Fund mainstreaming plans
- the Workstream Group explore a mechanism to develop and co-ordinate parent and carer's participation
- the Workstream Group and senior Children's Trust management work together, using the feedback from children, young people, parents and carers to develop a model that will ensure that participation is central to the 'policy and scrutiny' elements of the emerging Trust
- hard to reach groups of children, young people, parents and carers are involved at all levels

Questions about our approach to putting the strategy into operation - pl. consider from the perspective of your role and setting:

Q9	What do you think about our approach to putting the strategy into operation? (Secs. 5 and 6)
Q10	Are there any specific issues you think we need to consider? What are they and why?

7.0 Work plan/timescales

The work plan related to this Strategy, with timescales for its completion, is outlined in Appendix 1.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Draft Strategy. We hope the Strategy and work plan are helpful in outlining the approach to participation we are suggesting and its implications for all of our work within the Children's Trust. We are sure there is room for improvement and look forward greatly to your contributions, ideas and comments.

We think we have developed a challenging but achievable agenda. We believe that, with support and commitment from all of us, this approach to participation will help improve outcomes for the children, young people, parents and carers of North Somerset, ensure resources are used to best advantage, and support respectful, creative and positive relationships between us and the communities of children, young people, parents and carers we serve.

Margaret Boushel

Asst. Director Barnardo's & Chair of Participation Workstream Group

January 2006

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Acknowledgements

This draft strategy was written by Margaret Boushel in consultation with Jenie Eastman and Tim Blasdale and the North Somerset Participation Workstream Group. It is based on discussions, ideas and examples of strategies provided by a range of people and agencies, as well as from the bibliography identified above. In particular, the draft strategy developed by Bath and North East Somerset provided a helpful framework in getting us started. Thanks to all who contributed. Thanks also to Mary Adams, Communications Manager, North Somerset Primary Care Trust for her advice and assistance with layout.

APPENDIX 1 - Participation Strategy - Draft Timetable and Responsibilities

Area of work	Develop by	In place by	Review	Who's Responsibility
Agree Workstream Terms of Ref. & co-ordination		July 2005	Annually	Exec sub-group, CYPSP
Agree PNG role & co-ordination		July 2005	Annually	Exec sub-group, CYPSP
Participation Audit and Mapping	Oct.2005	Jan 2006	Via annual 'Outcomes Audit'	Barnardo's/Workstream
Develop Draft Strategy and agree Consultation Process	February 2006			Workstream Group, Exec. CYPSP, Children's Trust Board
Consultation on Draft strategy	May 2006	August 2006		Workstream/PNG/ Children's Trust reps
Revised Draft Strategy and report to Children's Trust	Sept. 2006	Nov. 2006		Workstream
Children's Trust endorse & sign up to final strategy	Nov 2006	Dec. 2006	Annually	Children's Trust reps
Consult with children, young people, parents & carers about Children's Trust commissioning, policy & scrutiny structures	Dec. 2005	Aug.2006		PNG/Workstream
Finalise participation within Children's Trust commissioning, policy & scrutiny structures		Oct. 2006	Annually	Workstream, Children's Trust Board
Support, training and co-ordination for children, young people, parents and carers on new Trust structures	Oct. 2006	ongoing	Annually	PNG Co-ord/Workforce Development
Review report on Participation Strategy and effectiveness		Oct. 2007	Annually	Workstream/Workstream chair
Participation on Management Boards, service evaluations, recruitment boards etc.	Identify agency 'sign up' by Nov 2006		Via annual outcomes audit	PNG co-ord
Participation Good Practice Guide developed and rollout		May 2006		PNG

Area of work	Develop by	In place by	Review	Who's Responsibility
Good Practice - map staff training needs and plan training	Sept. 2006	Oct 2006		PNG/Workstream Group
Children, young people, parents and carers peer evaluation training and support		Nov 2006	Ongoing/ Via annual outcome audit	PNG/children, young people, parents and carers
Participation accreditation		July 2007	Via annual outcome audit	PNG/Workstream
Communication re participation - two-way process in place for staff		Nov. 2005	Annually	Communications team/Workstream Group
Communication - two-way process in place for children & young people		June 2006	Annually	Communications team/Workstream Group
Communication - two-way process in place for parents and carers		June 2006	Annually	Communications team/Workstream Group
Participation - contribution to JAR, performance assessment		March 2006/ ongoing		Workstream Group, PNG, children, young people, parents and carers
Participation Resource & co-ordination needs audit & agreement	Sept 2006	Oct 2006	Annually	Workstream Group/ Barnardo's /Children's Trust

Appendix 2

Glossary

Engagement	Making initial contact with people with the aim of encouraging involvement in working together.
Every Child Matters/Change for Children	<p>This is the outcome-based national framework use to plan and monitor services for children and young people. There are five outcomes -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Being Healthy,Staying Safe,Enjoying and Achieving,Making a Positive ContributionAchieving Economic Well-being <p>All strategic planning and inspection of the Children and Young People's services will focus on the delivery of these outcomes (although some services will also work to additional specific outcomes or guidelines, such as the National Health Service Framework).</p>
North Somerset Children's Trust/ 'shadow' Trust	<p>The 'shadow' North Somerset Children's Trust Board was established in April 2006 and replaces the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. It is an inter-agency body, set up under Sec. 10 of the <i>Children Act 2004</i>, which gives the local authority (now Children's Services Authorities) the duty to lead and promote inter-agency co-operation 'to improve the well-being of children in the authority's area'. The task of the 'shadow' Children's Trust Board is to ensure that there is a set of local arrangements in place and operating at every level in order to establish a joint vision and priorities for children's and young people's services, set up joint commissioning arrangements, and provide integrated service delivery and a shared set of processes. The <i>Every Child Matters</i> outcomes provide the framework for the Trust's work a board of Chief and Senior Officers will support its work. By April 2008 it will be mandatory to have these arrangements in place. The 'shadow' Children's Trust Board decided at its meeting in April to use the term 'Children's Trust' to refer to its role and activities.</p>
Partner Agencies	<p>Different organisations that come together to work on projects for a shared purpose, they could be public bodies, such as health or voluntary bodies such as charities. In this context, they include all statutory and voluntary agencies participating in the Children's Trust. This includes the police, the strategic health authority and Primary Care Trust, schools, the Youth Offending Team, Connexions, the Learning Skills Council and the voluntary and community sector - all agencies that have a role in ensuring good outcomes for children and young people in North Somerset.</p>

The Single Plan	This is the <i>Single Plan for Children and Young People</i> , which every local authority, working with their Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships, was required to produce and present to national government by the 1 st April 2006. It sets out the overall strategy for council services affecting children and young people and how the local authority will work with partners such as police, health and the voluntary sector to achieve the outcomes identified. It will be reviewed and updated on a three year cycle. Consultation with children and young people is an essential element of the Plan.
Specialist services	Services to support children and young people with special additional needs - for example, services for looked after children, or children with hearing impairments.
Targeted services	Preventive services focussing on children and young people who, because they are 'in need', economically disadvantaged or likely to experience discrimination or exclusion may need access to additional support if they are to achieve their potential - for example, services supporting children living with domestic abuse, black and minority ethnic children experiencing discrimination, or children living in areas of particular disadvantage.
Universal services	Services available as of right to all children and young people, -for example, mainstream education and health services.

Children and Young People's Participation

A guide to good practice in North Somerset

"Participation is the active involvement of children and young people in decision making on voluntary basis"

Children and Young People Say:

- * Listen to us and don't interrupt
- * Use words that we understand
- * Help to keep us safe
- * Be enthusiastic and use our ideas with adults taking part
- * We want to know what difference we are making
- * How is it going to help me and my community?
- * Speak nicely - ask, don't tell and get to know us and give us the chance to get to know you
- * What I have to say is important,
- * How much difference is my opinion going to make?

We Will:

- * Be willing to listen and learn
- * Child/Young person friendly
- * Make sure it is safe and sound
- * Make it fun and interesting
- * Feedback is quick and meaningful
- * Think about positive outcomes
- * Participants feel comfortable
- * Value and reward involvement
- * Be honest and realistic

Straight forward?

Here are a few more things to consider if you want to make participation successful:

- * Make it visible
- * Resource it properly
- * Promote equal opportunities
- * Vary and develop methods and approaches to make it relevant
- * Give staff the skills they need
- * Train and inform children and young people
- * Obtain consent and protect confidentiality
- * Celebrate it and let people know you do it
- * It takes time, effort and money and can't be done on the cheap!
- * Use positive locations and local venues that are accessible to all
- * There are lots of different ways to engage and include children and young people to be creative and have some fun!
- * There's a lot to think about and all staff need the right training and support
- * It works best when children and young people are involved from the start and go on to develop new skills and confidence
- * Children and young people have the right not to participate and to have their identity protected. Always gain children's and parent's permission when using photos, quotes etc.

Using this good practice in participation will lead to positive results:

- * Children and young people with new skills and confidence
- * Improve services for children, young people, families and communities
- * We believe it will change you, the staff you work with and your whole organisation for the BETTER

This good practice guide has been created jointly by children and young people from Windwhistle School Breakfast Club and the National Youth Agency working alongside the North Somerset Participation Network Group. For more details on this guide please contact Rod Tyler, North Somerset Children's Fund, 21 Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1NR telephone 01934 415374

APPENDIX 3 - Consultation Questions for North Somerset Draft Participation Strategy - Summary of questions

Please consider from the perspective of your role and setting:

Questions about our overall vision

Q1	What do you think about our vision - that children, young people and parents participate in the design, delivery and evaluation of Children's services in North Somerset? (Draft Strategy, Secs. 1&2)
Q2	Are there parts of our vision that you think need to improve or change? What are they and why?

Questions about our approach to participation

Q3	What do you think about our aim that the participation of children, young people and parents will be as full as possible, aiming for 'shared decision-making and implementation' and 'project initiation'? (Sec. 4.1)
Q4	Are there any specific issues you think we need to consider? What are they and why?

Questions about the 'reach' of our approach

Q5	<p>What do you think about our aim that children, young people and parents participate fully</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in decisions affecting their own lives, • in the development, planning and evaluation of 'children-focussed' policies and services and • in the development, planning and evaluation of other services that they may use? (Sec.4.2)
Q6	Are there any specific issues you think we need to consider? What are they and why?

Questions about the principles underpinning our approach

Q7	Do you think our principles and model helps ensure that all children, young people, parents and carers - 'hard to reach', disadvantaged and excluded children and young people, and those accessing universal services - will have opportunities to participate? (Sec. 4.3)
Q8	Are there any specific issues you think we need to consider? What are they and why?

Questions about our approach to putting the strategy into operation

Q9	What do you think about our approach to putting the strategy into operation? (Secs. 5 and 6)
Q10	Are there any specific issues you think we need to consider? What are they and why?

North Somerset Draft Participation Strategy
Cut out feedback sheet:

You can use this form for your feedback to any or all of the questions summarised in this appendix. You can also email your comments to Margaret Boushel, C/o Mandy Summers

Please use the left hand column for the question number you are responding to. If there is not enough space, you can always attach another sheet or write on the back of this one.

Your Contact details (optional)

Your name:.....

Your Title:.....

Your Organisation:.....

Your contact address:.....

Your telephone / fax:

Your email:.....

Are you responding on behalf of a group/team/agency? If so, please give brief details:

.....

Question number	Your feedback

Question number	Your feedback

Any other comments you would like to make? If so, please include below or on separate sheet.

Please email/post this form to: Mandy Summers, Administrative Assistant, Early Years, Childcare & Play Team, Room 100, PO Box 51, Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset BS23 1ZZ (mandy.summers@n-somerset.gov.uk)