



Every Child Matters

Leeds children and young people's participation strategy 2007

Children Leeds



Children Leeds

Children Leeds

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Local partnerships making things happen

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Appendices	
A single document containing the following appendices to this strategy can be found on the Children Leeds website: www.childrenleeds.org.uk	
Appendix 1 - Resources to support participation	
Appendix 2 - Participation model	

You can also get this information in large print, in Braille or on audio tape. Please phone the number below for advice.

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‘Making sure that every child can get involved in shaping the services that they use is vitally important.’



Foreword

Making sure that every child can get involved in shaping the services that they use is vitally important. It forms a central theme of our children and young people's plan as it helps deliver effective and personalised services. It also ensures that each and every child makes the most of their talents, fulfils their potential and develops their confidence.

Leeds has an abundance of children's centres, schools, services, organisations, partnerships, projects and activities that do just that. The list is endless. But we have made a good start, as you will see in Appendix I!

This strategy shows the commitment to take our success in the participation of children and young people to the next level. For the first time it brings together in a single approach how we will work as a partnership to plan, deliver and improve the participation of children and young people in the services that matter to them.

We asked children and young people how they would know if we had succeeded in involving them. One young person told us that "it would look like heaven and everyone would be more friendly."

We couldn't agree more.



Councillor Richard Brett
Lead executive member for children's services



Rosemary Archer
Director of children's services

Summary written by children and young people

Did you know that under the United Nations convention for the rights of a child, all children and young people have the right to influence their services?

Lots of organisations and services in Leeds are already working with children and young people to change things for the better. But to do our best we need to work together more – so together we've written a plan on how we'll do this. The plan is called the Leeds children and young people's participation strategy 2007.

What do we mean by participation?

Participation means that children and young people have an ongoing influence over decisions and actions. It's not just about turning up at activities. So as well as going to school, the youth club or a sports team, we also get the chance to have a say in how things are set up and how they work. It could also mean that we are part of decisions made about our local area, such as how green spaces are designed and what different services we get at the health centre.

Who are we?

Children Leeds is a partnership of everyone who works with children and young people. That's all the different services, organisations and groups that provide all the things children, young people and families need in Leeds. It includes all of the people who work with us; teachers, nurses, the specialist workers who support and help when we or our families have problems, community groups, the police, youth workers and our sports coaches are just a few. It also includes all the people who support them to do their job, like the director of children's services and her team. In fact when we are working with Children Leeds to plan, develop and improve services we are part of Children Leeds too.

Children Leeds wants to:

- let all children and young people know it is our right to have a say in what services we need and how they are delivered.
- make sure that all services and organisations can support us to participate and help make decisions about how and where they deliver.
- be able to check out whether enough of the right things are being done to help us participate and get involved.
- make sure that we have opportunities to let Children Leeds know how things are doing.

Children Leeds is getting it right if:

- adults are talking to us.
- we have the confidence to have our say and the skills to work in partnership with adults to plan and deliver better services.
- we can tell Children Leeds when things are going wrong - and when we are doing it right.

The strategy

Who is the strategy for?

This strategy affects us all. We want to work together with children and young people in Leeds to help them achieve the outcomes that they want for themselves. The strategy covers all children and young people aged 0-19 years as well as some young people with additional needs up to the age of 25.

What do we mean by participation?

Participation means that children and young people have an ongoing influence over decisions and actions, not just that they are present.

The aims of the strategy are:

- to provide a framework for all organisations across the Children Leeds partnership to assist them in involving children and young people in the design, delivery and review of the services that affect them;
- to provide a mechanism for establishing and embedding good participatory practice in Leeds; and
- to set out the range of activities underway in Leeds and the support available.

Principles

The Leeds Charter for the participation of children and young people was adopted in 2002. Its five principles underpin this strategy. These principles are:

1. We have positive attitudes towards all children and young people.
2. We are accessible to all children and young people.
3. We have the appropriate resources to support the participation of children and young people.
4. Our information will inform and involve all children and young people.
5. We have the skills to enable all children and young people's participation and will support them to develop skills to participate.

The benefits of participation

The government has made its commitment to children and young people's participation clear. It wants children and young people to have more opportunities to get involved in the design, provision and evaluation of policies and services that affect them or which they use.

There are many initiatives, projects and policies that require organisations to involve children and young people. These include:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004;
- The National Service Framework for Children's and Maternity Services 2004; and
- Youth Matters 2006.

In Leeds, we want our children and young people to be happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty. We want them to feel lucky they grew up in Leeds. We will do this by working in partnership, developing participation, personalising services and preventing difficulties from occurring or worsening. This will only be achieved with children and young people's help.

Organisations benefit from children and young people's participation by:

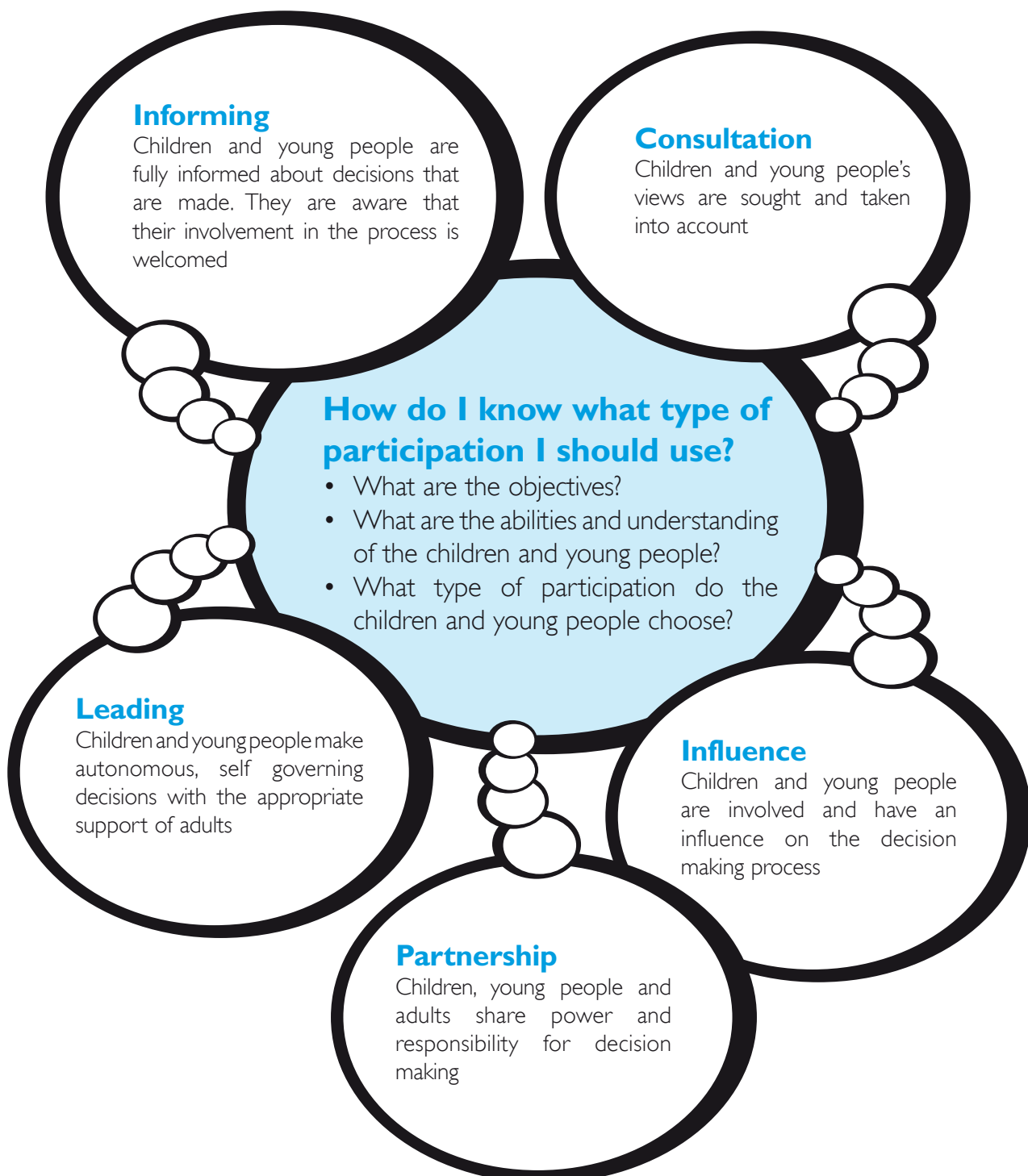
- meeting legal requirements and inspection regimes.
- commissioning services more effectively.
- having confidence that they are meeting service standards and the needs of children and young people.
- developing a more responsive ethos that leads to services that are valued by the whole community.
- using their research and analysis to enable services to develop efficiently.
- providing useful evidence for funding applications.
- recognising and improving the status of children and young people as valued members of their community.
- enabling children and young people's participation in wider society, both now and in the future.

Children and young people benefit from participation by:

- having influence that is recognised and valued.
- knowing that they have a right to influence.
- having services that meet their needs.
- being active partners in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of services.
- being recognised as valuable within their communities.
- being equipped with knowledge, skills and understanding to have an active part in wider society, both now and in the future.

Types of participation

There are five different types of participation, each appropriate for different situations. These are informing, leading, partnership, influence and consultation.



Priorities for Leeds

The priorities for improving the participation of children and young people in Leeds are:

- embedding the Hear by Right standards;
- using the Participation Evaluation Tool for service reviews and planning;
- ensuring that staff are trained appropriately in children and young people's participation;
- developing robust and rigorous processes for ensuring compliance with this strategy; and
- building children and young people's participation into the commissioning processes of Children Leeds.

Implementation and responsibilities

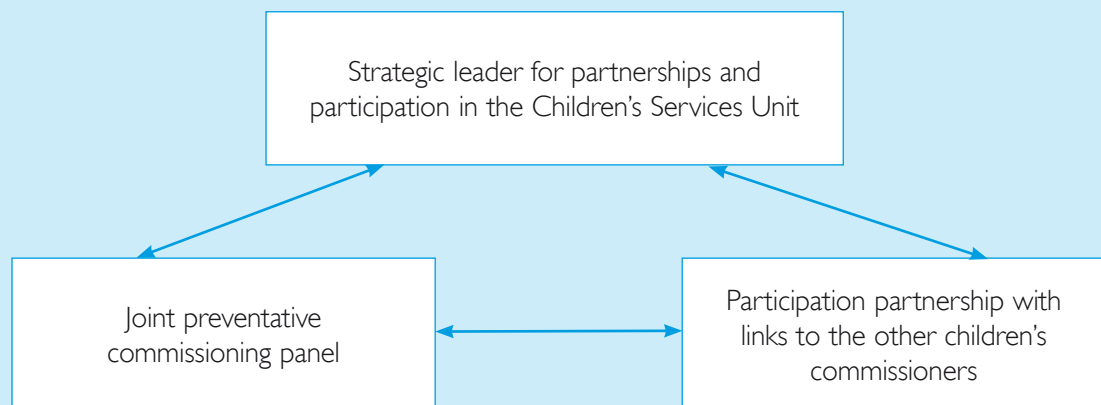
Given the overarching nature of participation and the importance in ensuring children and young people's voices are heard, the lead responsibility for delivering our priorities will rest with the Children's Services Unit and the strategic leader for partnerships and participation. The next steps for implementing

the participation strategy will be taken by the strategic participation group. They are:

- An implementation plan to be developed from December 2007 onwards;
- A commissioning plan to be completed by the start of the next financial year. This will need to cover the full range of young people's involvement work; and
- It is proposed that there will be a review of the group's membership and role. The group will be reformed as the participation partnership to oversee implementation and performance management of participation. Working with the joint preventative commissioning panel and the joint preventative partnership the participation partnership will be linked to the integrated strategic commissioning board.

The resources available to support this work are set out in Appendix 1. A more detailed diagram at Appendix 2 outlines partnership arrangements.

Proposed commissioning model



How will we know if the strategy is working?

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Children and young people told us they would know that this strategy was working when:

- Life wouldn't be perfect, but it would be fairer.
- The future would be a better place for children and young people in Leeds.
- Not having money wouldn't be such a problem for families.
- Children and young people would be safer and welcome on the streets.
- Children and young people would make more of a contribution.
- It would look like heaven and every one would be more friendly.
- There'd be colour everywhere.
- Schools would be flexible and let you also learn things that you identify as important to you like driving skills, music, story telling, film making, how to work as a team, what's the best way to communicate and work with people to get what you want and help others.
- There would be more opportunities for children and young people and they would know about them.
- We would have a theme park in Leeds.
- We would have a water park with water slides and stuff.
- Health care would be better and we'd get free glasses.
- There would be no racists.
- More free leisure facilities and youth clubs; free sports for all races and that would help solve obesity.
- Everyone would have access to a career, not just a job.
- Everyone would have shelter; food and money to meet their minimum needs.
- There would be more respect for authority because they would respect us; children and young people would have more respect.
- Top class teachers. Children and young people would be able to have a say in who was employed to be a teacher and what was in their job description.

Conclusion

We want all children and young people in Leeds to be happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty. Getting this right, with everyone working together, is real proof that the Leeds participation strategy is working.

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