



Working together to reach your goals

**Buckinghamshire  
Children and Young People's Trust  
Participation Plan  
April 2011/March 2012**

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## 1. Introduction

This Plan has been produced in partnership with the multi agency Children and Young People's Trust Participation Group, in consultation with children and young people.

The Plan takes the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) as its strategic lead and builds on the work achieved under the previous multi agency funded Trust Participation Plans.

The aim of the Children and Young People's Trust Participation Plan is:

*To provide a mechanism for the active involvement of children and young people in decision making processes that affect their lives across Buckinghamshire so that services provided by all agencies better meet their needs.*

This Plan:

- Defines participation.
- Outlines why participation is essential to the work of the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Trust.
- Identifies representational issues.
- Identifies key actions to be taken.
- Details costings for these key actions.
- Specifies the total number of children and young people to be involved.
- Gives a contact for further information.

Other mechanisms outside of this proposal exist to ensure participation by parents, carers and professionals, although there could be overlap in delivery tools.

It should be noted that this Plan focuses on participation within the development of the strategic Children and Young People's Trust agenda, particularly the CYPP, and that there are many projects not detailed in it that contribute a great deal to enabling children and young people's participation in Buckinghamshire.

## 2. What is Participation?

'Participation is a term used by those working with children and young people to mean children and young people thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, and interacting in a positive way with other people; it means involving children in the decisions which affect their lives, the lives of their community and the larger society in which they live'. **(Introduction to Policy on Children's Participation - Save the Children)**

Although the concept of participation by children and young people has been around for a long time, the actual implementation is a relatively new area of work. However, attitudes are now changing and there is increasing recognition and understanding of the benefits of involvement to children and young people, organisations and to the community.

Barriers have had to be overcome in order to move forward. One example is the cultural change, which includes the recognition that children and young people with disabilities are also capable of making choices and decisions about their lives.

Consultation is a word that is often misinterpreted as participation. Whilst it has a valuable place in engaging children and young people, it should be seen as a first step in promoting participation and empowerment. Generally when consulting with children and young people power remains with those carrying out the consultation.

By contrast, actively involving children and young people suggests a joint ownership. Power is shared, and the children and young people are involved in the entire process. Where children and young people are involved in the processes, understand the issues and have the opportunity to give their views, there will be greater acceptance of the decisions made.

True participation is based on equality and the sharing of power. This is not to say that children and young people will 'take over' or 'get their own way' (a common fear of many adults).

Children and young people's opinions do not have more weight or validity than anyone else's, but they should have the same weight if they are based on equal access to information and resources.

In simple terms, participation means 'taking part', and in the fullest sense. Tokenism is no longer acceptable and it is now well acknowledged that participation cannot be 'bolted on' because it is seen as a good thing.

### **3. Why is participation essential to the Trust agenda?**

Participation by children, young people, parents and carers has been identified by the Children Act 2004, the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services and Youth Matters, Care Matters and Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) as an essential element to their implementation.

There is also international agreement that children and young people have a right to be listened to and involved through Article 12 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

The Children and Young People's Trust Board has agreed to adopt The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognising Article 12's central role.

There is therefore a clear obligation to enable children, young people, parents and carers to be able to contribute at all stages of these national initiatives.

As a result, participation by these groups forms a key principle in the Every Child Matters (ECM) Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services (Principle 7, page 5).

In Buckinghamshire:

- Participation continues to be a priority in the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Plan.
- There is an ongoing commitment to:
  - increase the impact of consultation with children and young people on the design and shape of services for them;
  - increase the numbers involved in the children and young people's Participation Network.
- The 2008 APA identification of the involvement of looked after children and young people, disabled children and those from traveller communities, in mainstream processes for consultation and participation also continues to be a focus for development. The employment of the LAC and Disability workers has enabled further progress in supporting LAC and disabled children and young people's involvement in participation initiatives and various consultation events.
- This work has been given added impetus as a result of the findings of the recent Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection, which recommended further work to "develop and widen the membership of the 'We Do Care', Children in Care Council, to strengthen its representative role for looked after children including the development of effective links with key strategic groups such as the corporate parenting panel group"

Furthermore the introduction of the Localism Bill and the concept of the 'Big Society' illustrate the Government's intention to devolve decision –making to a local level, not only to local governments but to local community groups.

In accordance to the above, the Government has identified six essential actions that they say need to happen to turn decentralisation/the Localism Bill into reality.

**“Empowering communities to do things their way- by creating rights for people to get involved with, and direct the development of their communities”**, has been identified as one of the key fundamentals.

This increased emphasis on local decision-making further strengthens the argument and makes it even more imperative to ensure that all children and young people are equipped and supported to take an active role in decision-making that will impact their communities and services.

#### **4. Representation**

Undoubtedly children and young people will have different experiences of services based upon a number of issues including their gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or ability, religion and living circumstances. These differences will need to be addressed with sensitivity.

It is vital that we enable a wide range of children and young people to participate and take steps to actively include those children and young people who are often overlooked, such as those from black minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.

Ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to participate regardless of their circumstances is a principle of equality upon which effective participation is based. This principle will be reflected in the delivery of this Plan.

However, it is essential to recognise that not everyone will want to participate or be consulted in the same way. A range of different mechanisms therefore need to be employed to appeal to different people and thereby enable better representation. This is reflected under the Key Actions section of this document.

#### **5. Feedback, evaluation and monitoring**

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 will be undertaken for each of the Key Actions listed below as required.

It is also essential for service providers to ensure ongoing evaluation and monitoring of progress on work that is taking place and, that children and young people are involved and informed about this.

It is essential that both voluntary and statutory organisations are involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of this work.

## **6. Themes for 2011/12**

This year's plan is developed against a back drop of dwindling resources and the restructuring of many services. Therefore delivery of the actions contained herein relies heavily on partnership working and greater emphasis on a joined up approach to realising the outcomes.

As part of the process to identify areas for inclusion in the Plan, the Trust Participation Group held a workshop which began the process of identifying key themes and gaps in relation to participation work.

Some of the key themes/gaps identified include the following:

- Imminent gap in collecting data on a range of issues concerning children and young people as a result of the demise of the national Tell Us Survey.
- Further need to integrate and embed tools such as the Hear by Right Standards and the NHS Your Welcome Framework across relevant services.
- Communication remains a constant issue - services and organisations knowing what each other are doing, therefore facilitating effective joining up of resources and delivery.
- More effective sharing of good practice and resources/materials.
- Continued need to raise the level of involvement in participation by disabled children.
- Further work to consolidate and facilitate a joined up approach between school councils and other forums and forms of participation work.
- Continued development of the 'We Do Care Group!' Children in Care Council in response to the recommendations from the OFSTED Inspection.

The themes and gaps identify above have informed some of the actions detailed in the 2011/12 Participation Plan, along with those carried forward from last year's delivery plan.

## 7. Key Actions

Action Number	Activity (April 2011 to March 2012)	Completion by	Number of CYP involved (minimum)	Status
1	Multi agency CYP Trust Participation Group continues to be operational.	In place.	Via links to existing groups.	Need to re-engage some partners
2	Develop and implement a bespoke annual survey to capture the views of young people in Bucks in view of the demise of the Tell Us Survey.	October 2011	30	
3	Monitor consultation/participation work (planned and outcomes) via Participation Group using Hear by Right Framework.	Ongoing.	N/A	
4	Review of children and young people friendly overview of local Trust/Plan developments, how to get involved etc on appropriate web sites i.e. Family Information Service Children's Web Group & Young People's Web Group.	Ongoing	20	
5	Participation Network promoted and utilised across the county. This will include formal groups e.g. school councils and informal groups e.g. looked after children in residential care, Youth Action Agencies and individual members and enable a more coordinated approach to participation initiatives.  The Network also includes Parent/Carer Groups (figures are not listed here).	March 2012	3,000	
6	Participation / Hear by Right Training – 2 courses delivered & co-facilitated by young people supported by an adult, to those providing services to children and young people.	October 2011 and February 2012	30 adults trained.	

<b>Action Number</b>	<b>Activity</b> (April 2011 to March 2012)	<b>Completion by</b>	<b>Number of CYP involved</b> (minimum)	<b>Status</b>
7	Monitor the need within services /organisations for Recruitment and Selection –Supporting Young People Training’.			
8	<p>CYP Plan 2011/14 refresh consultation.</p> <p>Establishing the views of a broad range of children and young people via a range of mechanisms including web based surveys, focus groups, face to face surveys and the Participation Network. As well as linking into existing consultation work with partners. To include Disabled CYP and those who are Looked After.</p> <p>This work will also contribute to the work of the various local community initiatives.</p>		500	
9	<p>A series of Focus Groups to investigate the outcomes of a range of participation and consultation work that has taken place such as consultations, Youth Cabinets, Youth Parliament, and Participation Events.</p> <p>This work will inform the refresh of the CYP Plan 2011/14.</p> <p>The Focus Groups will enable participation by children and young people in strategic planning, delivery and evaluation of the work of the Children and Young People’s Trust.</p> <p>They will include refreshments and fun activities to encourage a broad range of children and young people to attend and acknowledge their contribution.</p>	March 2012	TBC	

Action Number	Activity (April 2011 to March 2012)	Completion by	Number of CYP involved (minimum)	Status
10	<p>Undertake series of participation events with children and young people who are looked after, in partnership with appropriate organisations, to inform the work taking place in response to the Care Matters Participation agenda. For example:</p> <p>Continued support and development of the 'We Do Care Group'. To include training and attendance at regional and national networking and sharing of good practice events.</p> <p>Annual update of the 'Welcome Pack' Looked After Children/Care Leavers Increase membership of We Do Care Group by holding promotional activities that reach new groups of young people, e.g. Takeover Day, team building and the Annual Celebration Event, recognising CYP achievements.</p> <p>This work will contribute to the work of the Trust and subsequently the CYPP.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement and participatory activities to develop the role of the Safeguarding Participation Champions.</p>	January 2012	<p>65</p> <p>Attract and work with a minimum of 125 yp with a target of 20 to become members of WDC</p> <p>Potential of reaching up to 30 champions</p>	

Action Number	Activity (April 2011 to March 2012)	Completion by	Number of CYP involved (minimum)	Status
11	<p>Undertake series of participation events with disabled children and young people in partnership with appropriate organisations, to inform the work taking place in response to Aiming High for Disabled Children. For example, Residential Short Breaks consultation with the Commissioning Team, contribute to Participation Information &amp; Communication Task Group. Support disabled young people's involvement and access to County and District Youth Cabinets. In response to the findings from South East Participation Project establish mechanisms that will support and enhance disabled younger children's involvement in participation initiatives.</p> <p>Create the role of disability champions to support and promote participation work. This work will contribute to the work of the Trust and subsequently the CYPP.</p> <p>Continued support to schools participating in Rights Respecting Schools Award</p>	January 2012	To reach and work with a minimum of 20 new young people	
12	Consultation on/participation in Trust related materials/projects e.g. web site, leaflets.	As required.	Cannot give a figure at this stage.	
13	MEP event – organisation and delivery, involving 15 young people, aged 11 to 19 years.	February 2012	15	
14	11 Million Day – support a project for children and young people's involvement in the Trust. Individual projects to engage LAC and disabled children and young people.	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	30 children & young people	

Action Number	Activity (April 2011 to March 2012)	Completion by	Number of CYP involved (minimum)	Status
15	Delivery of the Rights Respecting Schools and Early Years Settings Award. Promotion of the UNCRC to children and young people in partnership with UNICEF staff. Provide training to staff to support roll out of programme in other settings	Ongoing	30 schools and Early Years settings	
16	Ongoing consultation children and young people on the Child Poverty Strategy	Oct/Nov 2011	150	
17	Involvement of children and young people in commissioning of services.	As required.	25 CYP	
18	Involvement of children and young people in staff recruitment for Trust related posts.	As required.	Whilst it is not possible to give a figure at this stage it is hoped that all Trust partners will be committed to involving children and young people in staff recruitment.	
19	Children and young people to review the Participation Plan	October 2011	15	
20	Young People offered Work Experience with the Participation Team, Youth Services in order to gain skills and experience in this specialist area of Children and Young People's Participation. With specific reference to participation on the review of CYPP.	Feb 2012	2	

Action Number	Activity (April 2011 to March 2012)	Completion by	Number of CYP involved (minimum)	Status
21	Children's Centres – Involvement of young parents and their children under 5 years in participation activities and consultations	As required	Cannot give a figure at this stage.	
22	Promote the use of the Outcomes Forms among services and partner organisations to capture feedback from children and young people on the impact of the work and as a tool to capture and share examples of effective practice	ongoing	TBC	
	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED:</b>		<b>4027</b>	
	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF TRAINED:</b>		<b>60</b>	

## 8. Resources

Financial contribution to support the delivery of the plan has, over the lifetime of the plan, come from a number of partner organisations. In recent years contributions have declined and no doubt the current financial climate that is affecting all public sector organisations will further impact on the level of funding available to support delivery. While in-kind support is an important element of the resources available, it is vital to stress that implementation of the plan is reliant on financial support from partners.

### .Costings

The following costing takes into account the in-kind support and assistance identified through the previous audit and reflects the minimum required to deliver the key actions identified above.

The costs are for the whole programme across the age range. The majority of the costs are for direct work with children and young people, with a small proportion of costs allocated to support this work.

ITEM	COST
CYPP 2011/14 Consultation	£1,000
Trust overview and how to get involved	£400
Participation/HbR Training (staff) x 2 courses	£1,000
Consultation on/participation in Trust related materials/projects e.g. web site, leaflets.	£500
2 print run of Outcomes Leaflets	£2000
MEP Event	£200
11 Million Day(Trust event)	£300
Involvement of children and young people in staff recruitment for Trust related posts.	£600
Participation Action Plan review with Youth Cabinets	£100
Right Respecting Schools Award Training (staff)	£1200
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£7,300</b>

It is proposed that this cost be divided between the below Children and Young People's Trust Board member organisations:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Proposed Contribution</b>
Aylesbury Vale District Council	£825
Buckinghamshire County Council	£825
Buckinghamshire Hospital Trust	£800
Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust	£800
Chiltern District Council	£800
Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust	£800
South Bucks District Council	£825
Thames Valley Police	£825
Wycombe District Council	£800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,300</b>

It is aimed that a total of 4027 children and young people will be directly involved in a variety of ways between April 2011 and March 2012. This gives an indicative outlay cost of only £1.81 per head, as well as the strong possibility of services better meeting children and young people's needs and being delivered more effectively.

In addition to this a minimum of 60 staff will have the opportunity to receive training which will lead to more effective participation for other children and young people in the future.

External funding and training opportunities will also be sought in order to further develop participation work.

## **9. Delivery of the Plan**

The Participation Plan will be delivered via a Service Level Agreement between Children and Young People's Services and Youth Services.

The Operations Manager for Youth Services, Laura Nankin, will Chair the Participation Group and provide administrative support to this group.

Implementation of the work outlined in this plan is only possible with the continued funding of the Trust Participation Worker, the 2 specialist participation workers, LAC and AHDC. However, as a result of cuts the administrative post attached to this team and this work will be drastically reduced.

It is also important to acknowledge that many organisations make in kind contributions to the participation agenda. These include the use of meeting rooms, providing transport for children and young people and staff time, which enhance the delivery of the participation agenda a great deal.

## **10. For further information**

Please contact:

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01296 382976 or lnankin@buckscc.gov.uk

## **11. Glossary**

CYPP            Children and Young People's Plan