

# Strategy for the Active Participation of Children and Young People



**Involvement**

- Pre-School
- Decision Making
- 0-2 years - parents

Lead into likes

**Get out There**  
blind, physical disabilities.  
activities.  
fortnightly (school time)  
weekly (hols).  
Started by young people  
Ywca.

**MANIFESTO**  
- action plan.  
- needs to include all group

**LOCAL GROUP MEET**

CAREFREE Peer Mentors

May 2010

Conference across county

Edit/create MAT Government Policies

goes to London talks to Gordon Brown and Children's Schools Families people in Government.

**MYP**  
Member of Youth Parliament links to House of Commons. elected from schools + youth groups.

Need to improve how we find out who is your MYP.

**FACEBOOK?**

Contents

	Page No.
• Active Involvement Strategy.....	2 - 5
• Appendix A – Quality Standards for Active Involvement.....	6 & 7
• Appendix B - Diagram showing how Children & Young People's Scrutiny groups and Members of Youth Parliament influence adult decision making structures. ....	8
• Appendix C – Active Involvement work being done by children & young people. ....	9

## Strategy for the Active Participation of Children and Young People

This strategy is to advise Cornwall Children's Trust as to how to truly listen and act on the voices of children & young people, resulting in them having a real impact on decisions made at all levels and influencing service delivery across the whole county.

This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK in 1991) and over ten years of national policies and documents demonstrating a commitment to children & young people having a genuine influence over the design and delivery of services.

Cornwall Children's Trust has endorsed this by appointing eight strategic priority leads to assist in the implementation of the Cornwall Children and Young People's Plan 2008-11, and most recently Cornwall's Improvement Plan (March 2010) which focuses on the inclusion of our most vulnerable children & young people.

This strategy consists of a core document outlining a process for meaningful active involvement of children & young people, to which addendums can be added to and changed as the service we provide evolves bringing new challenges and ways of working.

Cornwall has a long history of high quality and in some cases ground breaking work in this field, of which we should be proud. It must also be acknowledged that we work in a geographically challenging county, consisting of many rurally isolated areas each presenting their own particular challenges for the children, young people and adults who work with them.

This document has been produced to give recommendations regarding active participation in order to link up and share good practice as well as identify where there are gaps or failings in service delivery.

It is essential that we are not only listening to the views of children & young people, and continue to creatively develop a range of approaches to do this that are planned and led by children and young people themselves; but that we adopt consistent, systematic and sustainable ways to capture the vital information we are given in ways that are meaningful and valuable to all.

Unless we succeed in doing this we cannot be truly inclusive or able to:

*'Make information, support and opportunities available and accessible to children and young people in Cornwall through listening to and acting on their voices.'*

(Strategic Priority 1- Cornwall Children & Young People's Plan 2008-11)

Who do we mean by children and young people?

For the purposes of this document children & young people are defined as those persons aged 0-19yrs (and up to 24 for those with complex needs).

Who is this strategy for?

This document is for children, young people, Cornwall Children's Trust and all its partners, the voluntary and community sector, and all organisations providing services for children & young people.

Why involve children and young people?

Active participation of children & young people is a statutory requirement for the Children's Trust and all organisations that provide services for them. Children & young people have the right to be involved.

What are the benefits of Active Participation?

*For Children and Young People*

- Having a voice and influencing change.
- Sense of ownership through having had their voice heard and acted upon.
- Services provided meet their needs.
- Development of new skills.
- Accreditation and recognition for their work.
- Increased self-confidence and self esteem.
- Opportunities to have fun and meet new people.

*For Organisations*

- Services meet the needs of children and young people.
- Services used more and therefore better value for money.
- Services work effectively and efficiently.
- Services more responsive to changing needs.
- Encourages them to work creatively and innovatively.

*For Communities*

- Children & young people become active citizens benefiting their communities.
- Children & young people become more engaged in the democratic process.
- C & YP develop confidence and useful decision making skills.
- C & YP influence change and develop a sense of pride and ownership.

Core principles which unpin Active Participation

The Hear by Right \* Shared Values provide an excellent framework with which to guide all our work, these are:

- Children & young people's participation is a visible commitment that is properly resourced.
- Children & young people's participation is valued.
- Children & young people all have equal opportunity to participate.
- Children & young people's participation is supported by effective policies and systems.

## Core principles as stated by children & young people

- Don't limit us.
- Respect our uniqueness.
- Respect individual difference and willingness to commit.
- We want to be respected and able to exercise our free will.
- Don't constrain us in your box; give us the tools and the skills to build our own soap box.
- We believe that all children and young people can bring new and fresh ideas to society – we will defend our Cornish pride in the modern world.
- We are the experts in our own lives and realities.
- We want services to prove that they listen to and involve children & young people.

## How can organisations develop best practice?

The \* Shared Values principles should be central to the organisation and underpin all their work. Organisations should listen to and involve children & young people as a matter of course in all decision making through a range of approaches. Children & young people should routinely plan, review monitor and evaluate services and staff. Organisations should continuously make improvements and changes as a result of the active participation of children & young people. The organisation should react to the interests and needs of each individual, ensuring they fully develop their skills and potential, and are supported and credited for the work they do.

## What do we expect of organisations who deliver services to children & young people?

- Visible commitment to active participation of children & young people.
- Evidence of how they listen to children & young people in a variety of ways.
- Examples of changes made as a result of listening to children & young people
- Commitment to active participation of children & young people in policy documents e.g. in job descriptions, with detailed and time scaled plans on how to achieve this.
- Meaningful voice and influence of children & young people ingrained in practice as routine, e.g. planning, monitoring and evaluation of services, recruitment of staff.
- Children & young people offered an array of experiences, opportunities, training, skills development and accreditation.
- Feedback from children & young people verifies all of the above.

## How do we expect organisations to prove to us they are doing a good job?

- Appoint a named lead person within their service who will take responsibility to ensure a Hear by Right self-assessment is completed (you will get support to do this - see appendix A) within an agreed timescale, and keep us informed of your progress; sharing information regarding areas of good practice, where improvement is needed and how you will do this.
- To promote and implement local standards (see Appendix A), where appropriate, to guide good practice and as a means of collecting direct evidence for national standards, and the Children's Trust. Most importantly use of these will ensure we receive valuable and meaningful feedback from children & young people.

- To work together sharing resources and good practice, including provision of training and capacity building for a diverse range children & young people from across the county.
- To collect and share information of services on offer and feedback from their children & young people which will be fed into a central collection point; this way we can start to build up a picture of active participation across the county, in order to identify where there are failings, gaps and lapses in quality.

### What will the Children's Trust do?

- Provide free training, toolkits and support sessions for organisations to complete Hear by Right self assessments.
- Resource the production of active participation materials, devised by children and young people, containing recommendations how to embed active involvement into practice.
- Provide a central collection point (via its website) for information and help publicise events and individual organisations.
- Put relevant newsletters and documents on the Children's Trust website and/or provide links to organisations own websites.
- Gather and collate information and feedback gathered from children & young people and a range of organisations, services, events and projects.
- Ensure that the children & young people's scrutiny committee is open and inclusive and becomes an effective conduit between a diverse range of children, young people, the Children's Trust Board and other decision-makers.
- Produce an annual report of findings.
- Commission children & young people to undertake random sampling of services and how they listen to and involve their service users.
- Train and support youth media champions to develop a countywide programme to enable them to contribute to the media.
- Actively consult with, and take action as a result of feedback from children & young people.
- Attend key events focused on active participation and the achievements of children & young people.
- Support the Key Actions for Strategic Priority 1 with an aim to create sustainable systems to gather feedback from children & young people and ensure that this effects change.
- Measure success of the above.

### Active Involvement and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Board is working in collaboration with the Cornwall Children's Trust Board and, as such, has made a commitment to SP1 and the Active Involvement Strategy.

The LSCB has appointed an 'Information and Participation Officer', with a specific remit to develop its Participation Strategy. It is anticipated that the children's and young people's scrutiny committee's will have a similar interface with the LSCB as that outlined for the Children's Trust Board.

## APPENDIX A

Standards which measure meaningful participation of children & young people in organisations.

Cornwall Children's Trust has signed up to and is committed using the National Youth Agencies Hear by Right Standards; these consist of a self-assessment tool where both children's and youth services (including those working at a strategic level) can map, plan and measure their own performance against set indicators. The three levels – Emerging, Established and Advanced demonstrate increasing good practice in seven areas, the first being the overarching \*Shared Values (see Active Involvement Strategy) followed by Strategies, Structures, Systems, Staff, Skills and Knowledge and Styles of Leadership.

Hear by Right is not the recommended standard for use in schools, see #PADL below.

Local Standards and why we should use them.

Cornwall has a number of accredited local standards which implement good practice and processes; devised by young people themselves they involve them as trained assessors actually making the decision regarding the outcome of the assessment. They also gather invaluable recorded feedback from young service users they talk to.

# PADL (Promoting Active Democracy Loudly)

These are a highly respected and well established set of criteria for use by primary, secondary and most recently infant school councils, as a means to guide and measure effective student voice and leadership. Cornwall Children's Trust endorses these as the quality assurance standard for use in schools.

PADL is an example of good practice at its best, devised by young people from the Cornwall Youth Forum in 2002, as a result of the national 'Y-Vote, Y-Not' campaign.

The criteria move through four levels Bronze – Platinum. Children and Young Peoples achievements through their school councils are celebrated biannually at PADL conferences.

PADL now needs to be promoted in schools in a variety of ways; for example in the west of the county secondary PADL support groups have been set up, where a cluster of schools come together to focus on elements of PADL and share problems and good practice. In the middle of the county secondary schools and their feeder primaries are linking together using PADL as a main theme, we also think that PADL could be a theme in transition programmes between secondary schools and their feeder primaries.

## Youth Engagement Standards (YES)

Devised by young people in 2007 these are local standards that measure the effective voice and influence of young people within organisations who deliver 'face to face' services to them. They have been devised alongside Hear by Right using the same Shared Values and guiding principles.

The criteria from Bronze – Gold, and are based on practical steps through which the organisation can evaluate, measure and score their performance, before requesting an external assessment from young people to verify this.

YES has been endorsed by the National Youth Agency and provides evidence for Hear by Right accreditation. YES has the potential to be easily adapted for use by children's organisations.

## EEFO

These quality standards measure how effectively young people can access services, including confidential health based services. EEFO links to the National standards '*You're Welcome - making Health Services Young People Friendly*'.

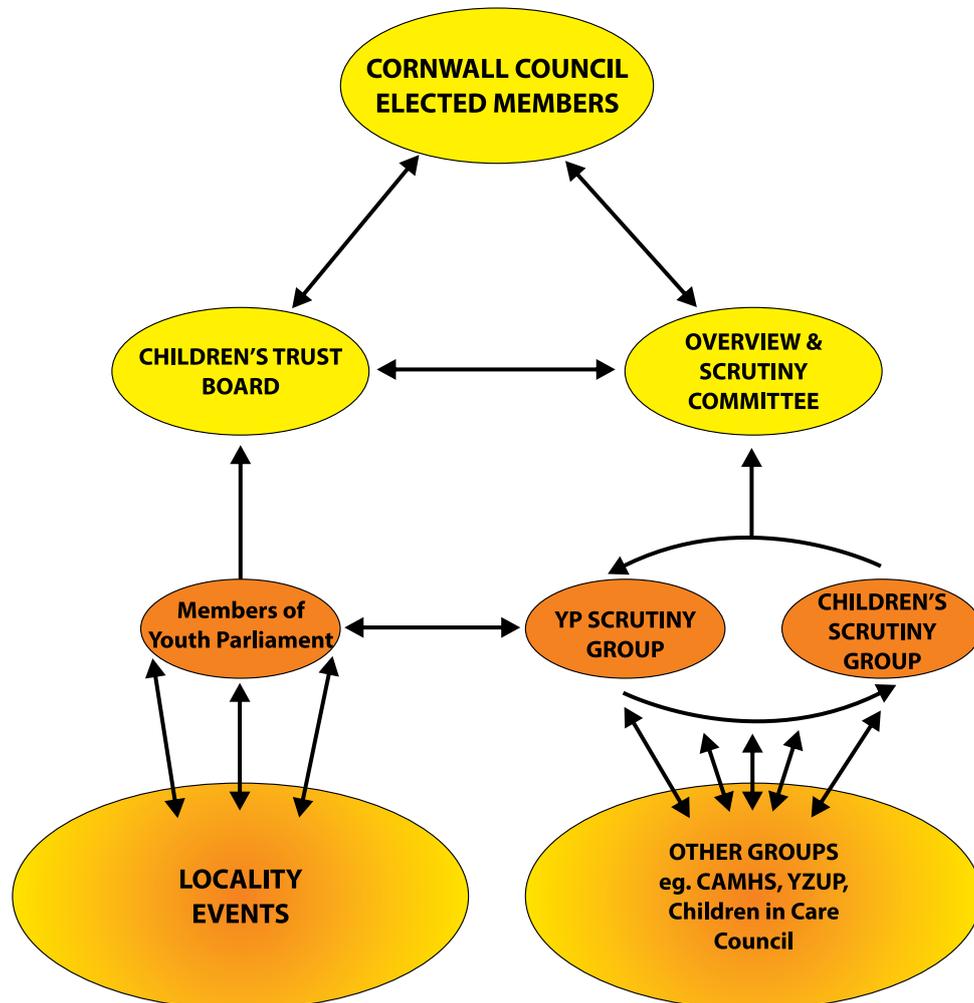
Young people are trained as mystery shoppers to check up on services who have gained kite-marked accreditation from levels 1-3.

## Toolkit for under 5s

A participation toolkit is at present being developed for use in early year's settings, with a quality assurance framework rooted in Hear by Right. It will be disseminated via workshops delivered to staff from September 2010, with an aim to be developed countywide by the New Year.

## APPENDIX B

Diagram showing how Children & Young People's Scrutiny groups and Members of Youth Parliament influence adult decision making structures



**Young Peoples Scrutiny Group (VIP - Voice, Influence and Participation)**  
The VIP group meet a minimum of six times a year to scrutinise and investigate services highlighted by the Adult Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and young people themselves as areas of concern. They will also act as a conduit for other youth groups and young people to investigate areas of specialism or interest to them. Representatives from the OSC will attend VIP meetings regularly and vice versa to ensure action planning and feedback is an essential part of the process.

### Children's Scrutiny Groups

These groups are to be held in localities and will be linked in the first instance to participation projects in schools. They will investigate areas of concern and interest to children in each area, and feedback findings to the OSC via the VIP group. In addition, 'reps' from this group will meet biannually with 'reps' from the VIP group.

**Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs)**  
MYPs have two votes on the Children's Trust Board. Elected MYPs will attend the VIP group on a regular basis, and use the information and opinions gathered to inform how they should vote, in addition MYPs will attend locality events in their own area, where children, young people and adult decision makers come together to inform, discuss, consult and action plan on local issues.

**Children's Trust Board and Cornwall Council Elected Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
Although not shown on the diagram in its present form, it is anticipated that as we move towards March 2011 processes will be put in place where children and young people directly contribute to agenda items on both these committees several times a year, and contribute on a more regular basis to meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## APPENDIX C

Contact details for some of the active involvement work being done by children and young people across Cornwall.

Disabled Children's Manifesto for Change  
www.edcm.org.uk  
Email: info@edcm.org.uk  
Contact: 02078436082

Young People's Manifesto, Fares Fair and other youth led projects  
www.cornwallyouthforum.org.uk  
Email: cyfvoice@hotmail.co.uk  
Contact: 01872 326326

*Cornwall Youth Forum is an open group which supports young people to led projects and campaigns on issues of concern to them; strong links to the elected Members of Youth Parliament are central to this group.*

YWCA - Young Womens Manifesto  
www.ywca.org.uk  
DARE & other youth led projects  
Email truro@ywca.org.uk  
Contact: 01872 263112

*For young women 11-26yrs with an interest in getting their voices heard on issues and services which affect them in Cornwall.*

Young People Cornwall, Hear Our Voice  
www.ypc.org.uk/projects.php  
Fusion + Horizons  
Email: info@ypc.org.uk or office@hov.org.uk  
Contact: 01872 222447

CAMHS Young People's Board  
*commission their own services as well as scrutinising services across the county, they also provide training for those working with young people with mental health issues.*

Children in Care Council; Voice4us  
Email: voice4us@barnardos.org.uk  
Contact: 01872 276803

*Voice4us is a participation project for children and young people in care, so they can have voice and influence around the services delivered for them and in the decisions made about their lives.*

TravellerSpace  
www.travellerspace-cornwall.org  
Email: travellerspace@yahoo.co.uk  
Contact: 01736 366940 or 07939 210014

*Gypsy and Traveller young people build multi-use sports pitch and play area on their sites. 'Dreamcatcher' workshops. Deliver workshops on Traveller culture to other young people and wider community.*

Barnardos Participation and Advocacy Service 0-13yrs  
email: Oliver.mackie@barnardos.org.uk  
Contact: 01579 343294 or 07500 762171

Young Promoters Project  
www.youngpromoters.org  
Email: ellen.moule@realideas.org

*A group of young people who are involved in commissioning, creating and promoting arts events to other young people.*