



**Lancashire  
Children and Young People's  
Trust**

## **How to engage children and young people in developing and delivering training**



## Introduction

**Participation is a process where someone (in our case children and young people) influences decisions about their lives and this leads to change. (Treseder, P. 1997)**

Participation can happen in developing and delivering training - it should not be an 'add on' and it should be meaningful. This 'How To Guide' is aimed at all those involved in designing, developing and delivering training for children, young people and families. All children and young people are able to be involved in decision making. As participation and communication are basic human rights, we must support children and young people to participate in and influence decisions and issues that affect their lives.

This guide provides information and ideas about how, with the right attitudes and approach, you can enable children to do this.

There are so many opportunities for children and young people to take an active part in shaping the ways we live, the services they use and local and national organisations. Children and young people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them and this is promoted in law, policy and guidance; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), the Childrens Act 2004, current Government policy such as Positive for Youth and the NHS Operating Framework 2012/13 which specifically states that the NHS should collect and use patient experience information in real time and use it for service improvements. Children and Young People's participation is key to achieving change; to improving policy; and services and ensuring the best outcomes for them.

## What and why participation?

Participation is a process by which someone is involved in and influences a decision about their life and this decision leads to change.

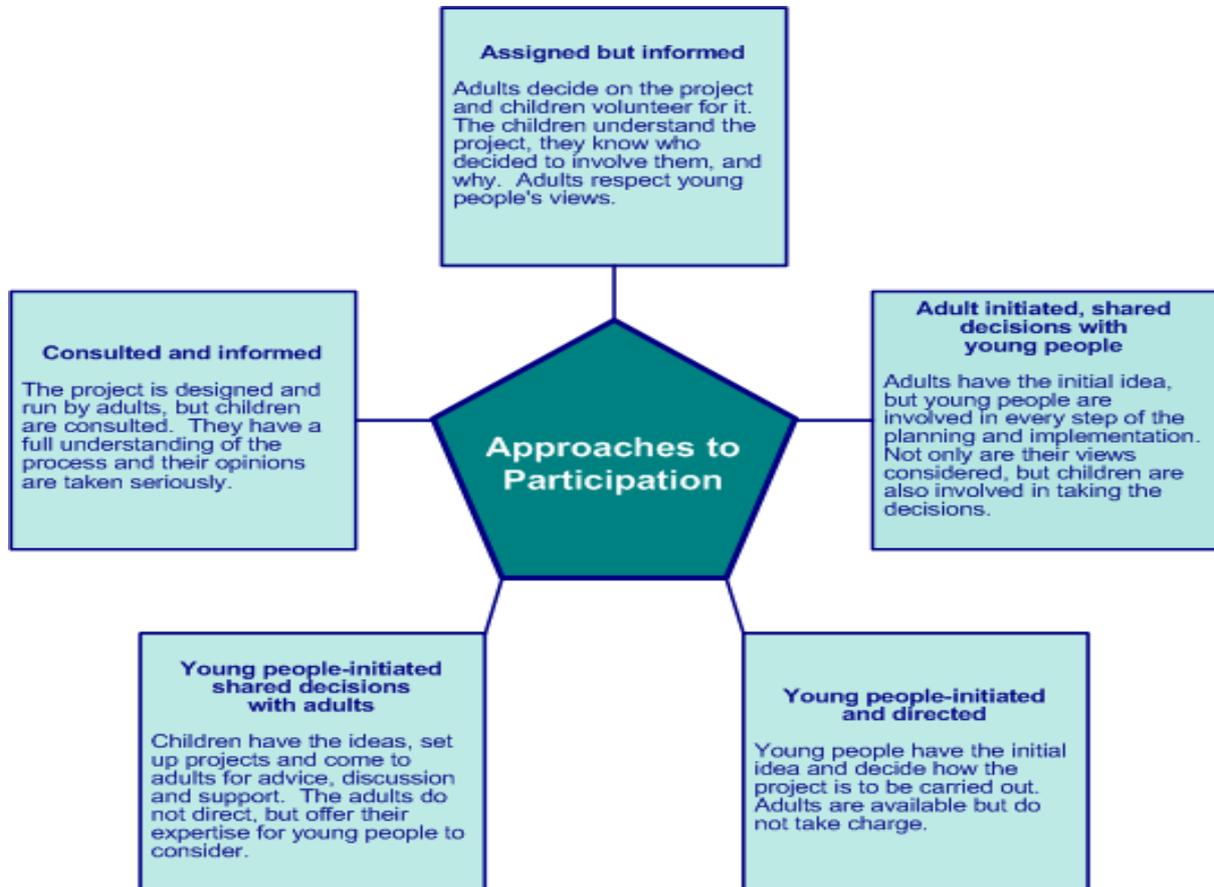
Effective involvement of children and young people must be rooted in their right to influence the policy and services that affect them. It should be based on shared values and beliefs including:

- Children and young people have equal worth to adults;
- All children and young people are experts in their own lives;
- Children and young people have the right to be involved in all decisions making that affects their lives;
- Children and young people's participation in decision making is key to improving their well being;
- Participation is about making everyday choices as well as seeking to influence wider public decision making and social change;
- Everyone who works with children and young people has a responsibility to encourage and support their active involvement in decision making;
- A commitment to children's human rights is key to achievement improved outcomes for children and young people.

Treseder, P (1997) has adapted Harts Ladder of Participation (see diagram 1 below) and in so doing allows us to recognise that at different points; in different situations; and at different stages we may approach participation in different ways. It's not always possible for young people to initiate and direct decisions and as long as we are clear, open and honest with them about this then that's OK. It's worth noting that we are assuming by using this diagram, that

we are avoiding tokenism, decoration and manipulation of children and young people (for more information please refer to Harts ladder of participation).

Diagram 1:



It is vital that you consider the diagram before you involving children and young people in any process. Different stages of the developing and delivering training may see you adopting different approaches which, in most cases, is perfectly reasonable as long as we avoid tokenism and manipulation. The key is to open and honest with children and young people about what they can influence, what they can share decisions about and what they can direct.

### Why involve children and young people?

There are a number of reasons why we should involve children, young people and families in the training, these being:

<p><b>To uphold children's rights</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are citizens and service users, sharing the same fundamental rights to participate as others</li> </ul>
<p><b>To fulfil legal responsibilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people have the right to be listened to and their opinions taken into account when adults are making decisions that affect them,. This right is formally recognised in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child ratified by Great Britain in December 1991. Ofsted has placed great importance on seeking the views of pupils with the inspection framework 2009 raising the profile of the "pupil voice".</li> </ul>
<p><b>To improve services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulting with children enables services to be improved and adapted to meet challenging needs that children can help define. Participation provides a level of influence and element of choice and can help them understand their own needs and wants.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To promote children's protection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation is an important aid in protection. A recurring theme of successive inquiries into abuse has been the failure to listen to children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To enhance democratic processes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative democracy can be strengthened as children gain new opportunities and are enabled to become active members of their community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To empower and enhance self-esteem</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective participation can provide a sense of self-efficacy and raise self-esteem.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To enhance children's skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation helps in developing skills useful for debate, communication, negotiation, prioritisation and decision-making.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To improve decision making</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation leads to more accurate, relevant decisions, which are better informed and more likely to be implemented; be used and become a success.</li> </ul>

**The benefits of involving children and young people:**

By actively involving Children and Young People in training we will see:

- A consistent standard of participation and involvement;

- A cultural change, improving participation levels;
- A system of promoting and embedding best practice;
- An increase and development of the opportunities for children and young people to be actively involved in decision making for and about them within the services that are commissioned;
- Improve access to health services and therefore contribute to reducing health inequalities;
- Co-production between children, young people and the local authority.

## **How to Use this Guide**

The guide can and should be used by anyone involved in developing and delivering training. The aim of the guide is not to give you the 'fail safe way' of involving children and young people but rather it is a document which sets out to make you aware of the background, methods, approaches and best practice that you could utilise when involving children and young people in developing and delivering training. Active participation is a journey that all those involved, staff, managers, volunteers, children and young people, go on and will always be different according to the setting and particular circumstances that surround the commission. Sticking to some basic principles and values, included in this guide, will keep you on track whilst giving you flexibility to develop something that works for you.

*'In a model of best practice the involvement of children and young people should be based upon how they themselves feel they should be involved in the process. The goal of any organisation, service or Partnership has for children and young people's active participation should be defined by the children and young people themselves'. (Taken from; Their Voice, their choice; Involving children and young people in recruitment, selection and induction. North West Regional Youth Work Unit). Therefore, it is with this, what do children and young people tell you about how they would like to participate, in mind that every part of this guide should be viewed.*

When using the guide feel free to adapt, develop and change ideas or simply lift them directly from the guide. The key to participation is **being creative**. When and where possible seek advice and support about developing your mechanisms for involvement from colleagues as well as children and young people.

## **Some key things to think about and be aware of;**

### **1. Child Centred approach**

**Before you begin please think about what it will be like from the child's perspective, put them at the centre of your thoughts and planning. Appendix 1 lists 12 principles of good practice when thinking about engaging children and young people in any process- we suggest you consider these (there are similar national lists available) and also the tick list below.**

"Before you begin a process of involving young people in decision making, you should be able to tick each box to show you have considered each point"

ARE YOU....	TICK
Clear about the boundaries and the level of consultation?	
Clear about the process; Why you are consulting us? What will happen as a result?	
How will you feedback to us? How long will the whole process take?	
Putting your money where your mouth is! If there is a budget implication have you considered this and got approval?	
Going to make the experience interesting, educative, and fun?	
Going to use a variety of methods, models, and materials which are appropriate to the group?	
Involving us at every stage of the process, especially in the early stages when the consultation is being shaped.	
Taking into account our ability levels, cultural backgrounds, and individual personal circumstances?	
Planning to formally recognise in some way the contributions we make, e.g. a certificate of participation or achievement which means something to us?	
Keeping in mind that whatever you are planning should always benefit us?	
Certain that we will understand the language you are using?	
Sure that you're involving everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, disability etc, and will treat everyone equally?	
Giving us plenty of time to get involved in your event or consultation?	

## 2. Do not recreate the wheel!

There are many well established children and young people's participation forums across the country, some are formal constituted groups and others are informal, they may include:

- **Youth Councils:** an elected and representative group of young people (mainly 13-19) with local, county wide and national representatives. For more information please go to:
  - North West Regional Youth Work Unit, who coordinate and work with many local and regional participation groups: <http://www.nwrywu.org.uk/our-work/>
  - British Youth Council: <http://byc.org.uk/uk-work/local-youth-council-network/find-your-local-youth-council.aspx>
- **Children in Care Council:** a group of children in care who are currently or have been looked after by the local authority.
- **Young Advisors:** young people aged between 15 and 21, who show community leaders and decision makers how to engage young people in community life, regeneration and renewal. Young Advisors are trained and employed consultants who guide local

authorities, housing associations and other local partners about what it is like for a young person to live, work, learn and play in their neighbourhood. For more information go to: <http://www.youngadvisors.org.uk/>

There may be other groups like youth forums; Pupil Parliaments; school councils; area based youth groups, etc.

There are also a number of specialist groups who specifically represent or give voice to those children and young people who are most marginalised, for example young carers and homeless and disabled children and young people.

All these groups have their own agendas, campaigns and particular areas of interest. Some of these groups may be able to partake in consultations whilst others may undertake pieces of work on your behalf, as commissioned organisations. Many of these groups have experience of using peer research to ensure a wide range of children and young people's opinions are heard.

We would recommend that you use these local established and supported mechanisms to ensure that you engage a properly representative cross section of children and young people.

### **3. Training and enabling children and young people;**

It depends at what stage you are involving children and young people in the process. Ideally children and young people should be involved in developing training whether they are developing their own training sessions for staff or if they are working with you to develop some. Either way, it means that they would need to be trained and supported to understand our processes and systems as well as: who the staff are likely to be; what they already know; and what they might want to know.

The more involved children and young people are in the process, the more time and training you will need to put in place, but the greater the benefits there will be. The below is a rough guide as to what training and information children and young people should receive:

- Facilitation skills
- Methodology skills
- Equality and diversity
- Stereotyping

### **4. Representation and specific needs**

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; beliefs/non beliefs; and living circumstances. These differences will need to be addressed with sensitivity. For example, consideration needs to be given to address issues and specific needs of any of the children and young people taking part.

It is vital that a wide range of children and young people are enabled to participate and steps are taken to actively include those children and young people who are often overlooked, such as looked after children; those from black minority ethnic groups; and disabled children and young people.

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.

It is recommended that where applicable the children and young people involved should have experience of using the services the position will be delivering. For example, commissioning for a mental health provider should involve some children or young people that have used these services.

## 5. Different approaches to participation

The below table is based on work carried out by the British Youth Council around participation. It explores the different approaches to involving children and young people.

APPROACH	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
<p><b>Consultations</b></p> <p>One off or short term pieces of work that focus on a particular issue or planning proposal.</p>	<p>Targeted and focused</p> <p>Time limited</p> <p>Cost effective</p> <p>Immediate relevance</p> <p>Results</p>	<p>Exclusive or unrepresentative</p> <p>Lack of follow up</p> <p>Lack of ownership</p> <p>No momentum</p> <p>Seen as a quick fix</p>
<p><b>Practice Initiatives</b></p> <p>Commission a task, develop a joint initiative or create a partnership to carry out an agreed piece of work.</p>	<p>Direct impact</p> <p>Working with adults as equals</p> <p>Payment, vocational relevance</p> <p>Use of knowledge and skills</p>	<p>Not rewarded properly</p> <p>Opportunity to the few</p> <p>Adults take over the results</p>
<p><b>Advisory or reference group</b></p> <p>A group of CYP (could include adults) advise the planning , development and review of a training course/ session</p>	<p>Influencing development</p> <p>Ownership</p> <p>Representative</p> <p>Established and ongoing</p>	<p>Time consuming and drawn out</p> <p>Rubber stamping</p> <p>No authority</p> <p>Drawn out and time consuming</p>
<p><b>Committee places</b></p> <p>Children and young people are selected or elected. Specific places reserved for them on training development groups.</p>	<p>Direct access to governance</p> <p>Long term influence</p> <p>Knowledge and expertise</p> <p>Continuous input people rather than in own right</p>	<p>Tokenism</p> <p>Not treated as equals</p> <p>Used to represent views of CYP</p>

APPROACH	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
	<p>Overcome misunderstandings</p> <p>Requires changes in attitude , representing children and young people</p>	<p>Demanding of skills and commitment</p> <p>Pressure to be seen as successful</p> <p>Significant cultural shift for an organisation / lose touch with peers</p> <p>Significant resources, staff support</p>
<p><b>Parallel Structures</b></p> <p>A youth body is set up to run alongside an adult led decision making processes to advise or act as a sounding board</p>	<p>Elected membership and mandate</p> <p>Confidence and authority</p> <p>Influencing organisational policy</p> <p>Reserved places on a committee</p>	<p>What real authority and power?</p> <p>Poor range of representatives</p> <p>Fractures from adult organisation</p> <p>Divisive</p>
<p><b>Larger Scale Events</b></p> <p>An event that involves a large range of children and young people which allows freedom and flexibility in influencing and shaping ideas, priorities and direction.</p>	<p>Inclusive</p> <p>Shared identity</p> <p>Fun and energetic</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p>A lot of work – quickly!</p>	<p>Preparation and planning</p> <p>Time and money</p> <p>Needs good follow up</p> <p>Needs commitment to action</p>

## 6. Rewards and incentives

It is important to recognise the work and achievements of children and young people who play an active role in the development of children and young people's services.

Please refer to appendix 2 which is a guide to ensure a consistent, thoughtful, legal and ethical approach to recognising the contribution children and young people make to Lancashire. The guidance is largely taken from work developed by Blackpool youth service.

## 7. Costs

There is a cost associated to active participation – to give you an estimate of the amount would be very difficult as it depends what you are setting out to do, for whom and why. Generally, you should ensure that you have funding available to cover transport and refreshments **as a minimum**. Please refer to Appendix 2 for more information about this. Services around the table may feel they are able to carry this work out in which case there

will be no associated staffing costs however, there is always the need to consider how those with SEND are going to participate – you may need to buy staff into enable their participation. To do this meaningfully you may decide you want to commission an organisation to carry this work out for you. Costs will be incurred in: holding event/ meetings; travel and transport for children and young people. We could go on but the more involved children and young people are, the more the costs will be. However, the outcome will be much better and richer.

And lastly a note on **availability**, children and young people are often in school; college; training and employment when we are delivering training sessions. Taking them out of education or employment to participate is not ideal and should be avoided wherever possible. Schools and colleges will consider and in many cases authorise absences for children and young people to attend and participate if it is clear that it will have educational benefit however, this approach should be considered and discussed with all involved most specifically parents/carers and a course taken infrequently. This makes bringing the voice of the child into training even more challenging but think about creatively doing so using film, art work etc. which enables them to have their voices heard and get their messages across without always being present.

### **How you move forward**

In developing training you may be working with colleagues from other settings/services. It would be most valuable to engage them in discussions and debates about active participation within the development of training. As we have previously stated it would also be ideal to engage children and young people in these discussions as well.

In Lancashire we have tended to focus our participation in training using two main approaches which we will explore in more detail below:

- **Advisory or reference groups** – working with pre-existing groups we ask them about the development of relevant training. In some cases they have actually approached us. This is usually, but not exclusively, because we know they have an interest in the area this maybe because they have campaigned about Sex and Relationships Education or because they are looked after and often talk about the quality of their social workers or because young people often talk about how they want staff, across the board, to work with them and have key messages about listening, engaging etc.

#### **Case study 1**

The Lancashire LINX group (Children in Care Council) worked with training commissioners to explore and discuss their participation in developing and delivering **Lancashire County Council (LCC) training for social workers**. In November, as part of the nationwide Children's Commissioner Takeover Day, a group of young people spent the day with a member of the Social Care Development (SCD) team and an external trainer. They were delivered elements of two courses usually delivered to staff exploring communicating about sex and relationships to young people. They then gave their opinions on what could be improved through interactive feedback activities. This feedback then led to the development of those courses. A member of the SCD team attended LINX meetings (run by Barnardo's on behalf of LCC, with the aim of giving children who are in or have previously been in care input in to services).

The young people were asked to give feedback of staff training and what was important about it to them, as well as how they could have continued input in to staff training. It was eventually decided that they would work with the SCD team to compose hand-out materials for staff about communicating with young people. 'Through a series of meetings and discussions with various members of the central and district LINX councils (youth councils for children that have been or are in care in Lancashire) the points in this booklet were agreed on. It is hoped that the booklet will serve as an insight in to how best to communicate and manage social work relationships with young people, according to young people'.

*See appendix 3 for a copy of the final leaflet*

- **Practice initiative** – this sees young people playing a part in developing part of a training session/course or, when possible, actually co-facilitating training sessions. The latter is much harder to achieve but regardless this is the thing which people who attend the training often remember and remark upon:

*'Interesting, nice to hear from young people in their own words' and 'Its important to hear young people's views and experiences of working with professionals/ adult support, to help professionals learn from first hand experiences of young people'.*

We also regularly incorporate relevant information from consultations with children and young people into training sessions meaning that the voice of the child is reflected.

## **Case study 2**

**LSCB Neglect conferences** – leading up to the conferences (2013 and 2014) two groups of young people were supported to come together on a weekly basis to discuss, explore and develop a presentation. The groups were recruited through current participation groups and were supported to attend by staff from relevant organisations. The group was facilitated by a member of staff from the council and the training manger from the LSCB. The sessions lasted 2-3 hours and always involved lots of refreshments and snacks- these were key and didn't last long! The sessions focused on enabling the young people to understand, discuss and work on art works which they would use as a basis for the presentation. Some young people only came for one or two sessions but each of the groups had a core of 4 young people who attended most sessions. Their art works represented what neglect meant to them but we were clear that they did not have to share or tell any personal stories. Some young people made art works whilst others developed them using digital media. The presentation was young people led and as such each group chose how they would present their works of art- both groups decided they wanted one of the staff members to interview them on stage. Each individual piece of art was presented on screen (a photo of it was projected) and also displayed at the front of the room.

**LSCB Neglect film (2013)** – following LSCB neglect training events it was agreed that a film of the young people's presentation would be made in order to share at other LSCB training sessions which young people could not attend (as they are at school etc.). This film has been so well received that it is now shown at LSCB events but also in every CAF, Lead Professional and Solihull training sessions.

Feedback from professionals about the film is always very positive and comments include 'interesting, nice to hear from young people in their own words' and 'its important to hear from young people's views and experiences of working with professionals/ adult support. To help professionals learn from first hand experiences of young people'.

## APPENDIX 1

# ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY WHAT THEY THINK SHOULD HAPPEN, WHEN ADULTS ARE MAKING DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM, AND TO HAVE THEIR OPINIONS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT:



Article 12 - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland ratified (agreed to obey) the Convention on

the Rights of the Child on 16th December 1991

## Lancashire Children and Young People's Charter

How should services engage with children and young people and make it possible for them to have meaningful participation?

1. Children and young people should have the right to be continuously involved in consultation and development of the work from start to finish
2. A sufficient amount of money should be put aside specifically for consultation and involvement of children and young people, whilst also ensuring that there is enough money available for other services
3. Adults should take into account what children & young people want, not just ask us and then ignore our ideas. Explain what's possible and what isn't, right from the start
4. Tell us what's going on - children and young people should have feedback on what they have said and what is going to be done next
5. Have a variety of ways to involve children and young people, such as questionnaires, discussions, websites, arts activities or texting
6. Children and young people need to be consulted about subjects and issues which they are experienced and interested in.
7. Consultation work should be straightforward and explained clearly to the children and young people involved.
8. Children and young people should be treated equally with respect, whatever their race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or life experience
9. Adults should not make biased judgements about young people, or our attitudes, based on our appearance.
10. Adults should be approachable & should use their body language in a friendly and positive way
11. When you are talking to us, make sure we understand - don't shout and don't patronise us.
12. Confidentiality needs to be maintained when consulting children and young people on sensitive issues.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Recognising and Rewarding Young People's Involvement**

*We would like to thank Stuart Dunne formally from Blackpool Youth Service for this document.*

#### **Purpose:**

- 1.1 Organisations or agencies signed up to Lancashire Participation Network believe that, it is important to recognise the work and achievements of children and young people who play an active role in the development of children and young people's services in Lancashire. Children's and young people's participation is integral to Lancashire's Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14.
- 1.2 These guidance notes aim to ensure a consistent, thoughtful, legal and ethical approach to recognising the contribution children and young people make to Lancashire.

#### **Legalities:**

- 2.1 It is important to be aware of the implications of offering financial reward for young people. This can be construed as payment for employment and if not thought through can be negative for children and young people of Blackpool and the services working with them.
- 2.2 Risks for children and young people could include exploitation, loss of benefit, liability for tax, or even court proceedings and criminal records.
- 2.3 For regular or substantial pieces of work, paid employment might be appropriate. This needs full planning and budgeting discussions with HR.
- 2.4 Gifts and rewards for recognition can be construed as payment. This includes the giving of vouchers, going out for meals or prizes. The benefits agency regards this as a grey area, and individual offices have discretion to decide whether they affect benefits.
- 2.5 Reasonable expenses to reimburse children and young people do not have to be declared to the Benefits Agency or Inland Revenue. Children and young people should not be out of pocket for their involvement.

#### **Types of rewards, incentives and recognition:**

- 3.1 Please see rewards, incentives and recognition matrix.

#### **Children and young people's four Access and Participation activities:**

- 4.1 Consultation events/projects. These are often one-off events seeking the views of young people on specific areas.

The types of rewards we offer are:

- B,D,E,G,H,I,J,I,K

- 4.2 Projects or evening meetings. Led and run on a regular basis. Local forums, BYPC, 5 key areas.

The types of rewards we offer are:

- C,D,F,G,H,I,J,K

- 4.3 Recruitment and inspections. Children and young people engage in interviewing potential new staff. Attending team meetings, designing interview questions and interviewing candidates as well as attending interview training. Children and young people engage in OFSTED, JAR, CPA or Quality Assurance inspections.

The types of rewards we offer are:

- B, Equivalent to £5 per hour or lump sum agreed with children and young people and finance.
- Or C.D.F.G.H.I.J.K

- 4.4 Delivering presentations or training. Children and young people lead on delivering presentations at meetings or conferences or facilitating workshops.

The types of rewards we offer are:

- B, Equivalent to £5 per hour or lump sum agreed with children and young people and finance.
- Or C,D,F,G,H,I,J,K

### **Inclusive service**

- 5.1 Being a parent should not exclude a child or young person from participating. Child care costs should be reimbursed. This is only possible if the carer is a recognised child care provider;
- 5.2 Expenses, incentives and rewards are agreed with children and young people from the outset;
- 5.3 Expenses are reimbursed as quickly as possible;
- 5.4 Receipts are provided and details provided.

### **Rewards, incentives and recognition matrix**

REF	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
A	Payment	Children and Young people are paid in finance. This can be problematic please refer to the information in section 3.1
B	Gift voucher	Children and young people are paid/rewarded for their time and expertise in gift vouchers. These can be from a number of household named stores. Amount and store should be negotiated with the children and young people prior to activity. This can also be problematic please refer to section 3.4
C	Celebration of children's and young people's involvement	Children and young people's involvement is celebrated through an event /party
D	Activity or event	Children and young people go out on an activity such as a meal, residential or fun leisure event

REF	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
E	Letter of thank you card	Children and young people receive a thank you letter or thank you card of appreciation
F	Nationally recognised certificate	Children and young people receive a nationally recognised certificate for their achievements and time spent. E.g. Duke of Edinburgh or Millennium Volunteers hours. This can form part of their record of achievement, go on CVs or go towards UCAS points.
G	Locally recognised certificate	Children and young people receive a local certificate for their involvement. This can recognise their input to an event to their commitment to a project.
H	Promotion in the media	Information about children and young people's achievements are widely publicised in the national/local media, young people's newsletter or the internet.
I	Services change	Services that the children and young people are involved with value their opinions by actively involving them in the development and governance of the service.
J	Thank you	A verbal thank you for children and young people
K	Refreshments and drinks	Children and young people are supplied with food and drinks

## References

NCH – Recognising Children and Young People's Contribution

Hounslow – Policy on payments to LAC & YP for their involvement