


Children's Services Participation Strategy 2017-2020



Date: April 2017

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Document control

Organisation	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Title	Children's Services – Participation Strategy 2017-2020
Filename	CS Participation Strategy 2017-2020
Owner	
Subject	
Protective marking	IL0: UNCLASSIFIED
Review date	

Revision history

Revision date	Editor	Previous Version	Description of revision
November 2016	Raj Bector	Version 3	
December 2016	Abdul Kahar	Version 4	
February 2017	Levain Preston	Version 7	
April 2017	Levain Preston	Version 8	

Document distribution

Employees working in Children's Services

Document approvals

Approver	Date approved
Vince Clarke - Service Director, Children & Families	April 2017
Jim Leivers - Director of Children's Services	May 2017

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1. Foreword by the Looked After Young People's Board; Care Leavers Forum and Director of Children's Services



With this strategy, it is important that children in care of Sandwell Council have the opportunity to contribute, and to have their voices heard and their views taken into account in decision making on all issues that affect their lives.

Through the Looked After Young People's Board (LAYPB) we have developed crucial platforms to obtain young people's views for children in care; LAYPB advocates the voices of children in care; The LAYPB have representatives who also sit on the Corporate Parenting Board.

During 2017 we will be launching the coming into care booklet (Show Me That I Matter) and the new pledge for Looked after Children.

As Chair of the Looked After Young People's Board, I aim to ensure that this progress is continued not only through LAC events but also through direct work with partners that will echo the aims and objectives of this Participation Strategy for the years to come.

Daveena Patel - Looked After Young People's Board



I am pleased to say that this participation strategy outlines and reflects increased engagement with children and young people in Sandwell. It shows a commitment by all involved to ensure children and young people - who are the experts in their lives - influence and shape the services which are being provided for them.

The Care Leavers Forum is to support care leavers. The forum is about young people having a voice to improve services for other young people. The Care Leaver's Forum aims to bring in experiences from different young people and give them the opportunity to improve the services for children in care and care leavers.

As Chair of the Care Leavers Forum, we want decision makers seeking and taking into consideration the views and opinions of children and young people, to bring positive change on issues that impact their lives.

Matthew O Toole – Care Leaver's Forum



As the Cabinet Member for Children Services, I would like to introduce you to Sandwell's participation strategy which is central for improving services and outcomes for children and young people in Sandwell over the next three years. It has never been more important to ensure that the voices of children and young people inform our work. Strategic leaders and commissioners, service managers, and frontline practitioners are all having to try and find ways to deliver effective support to children and families with increasingly reduced resources. Children and young people's views are integral to evidence-informed practice; their expertise is a valuable source of knowledge and respecting their experience is fundamental to social work values.

The creation of a strategy marks only the start of our journey. It will of course require coordinated and sustained effort across Children's Services and its partners. I would like to thank all of those who have been involved in developing this strategy and who will continue to have an important role in taking this forward to help provide the best possible care and support for Sandwell's children and young people.

***Councillor Simon Hackett-
Cabinet Member for Children Services***

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This document sets out Sandwell's participation strategy, which is intended for everyone working with children and young people aged 0 to 19 years of age (up to 25 if they have a disability or are included in the Looked After cohort) and their families in Sandwell.
- 2.2 This includes people working directly with children and young people and those who commission or manage staff, services or organisations that support children and young people. The strategy is also for organisations and partnerships whose work impacts on children and young people, for example public health, housing services and transport services.
- 2.3 The wishes and views of children and young people should contribute both to **individual case decisions** and to wider **service improvement**. This principle is enshrined in the Children Act 1989 and statutory guidance for services for looked after children (HM Government, 2010) and safeguarding services (HM Government, 2015), as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- 2.4 The strategy intends to:
- Set out our vision for participation
 - Clarify what participation means and why we promote it
 - Outline the legislative framework and benefits of participation
 - Identify good practice to date
 - Identify level of Participation
- 2.5 In order to achieve this we have developed a strategy which reflects a '*whole system*' integrated approach to supporting children and families. The intention is to bring together the range of activity across the council and children's partnership arrangements at all stages of the care journey, including a clear focus on supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so, and minimising the need for children to become looked after.

Governance

- 2.6 The Participation Team is responsible for the effective delivery of the strategy and will report to the Quality Development & Safeguarding Unit.

3. Our Vision/Pledge

In Sandwell, all children, young people and families will have the opportunity to participate in decisions which affect their lives. They will have access to services which they need and the opportunity to shape how these services are planned and delivered. Our vision is for Sandwell to be a place where Children and Young People feel that their views and experiences are encouraged, valued, respected and most importantly acted upon in order to shape the services that are there for them. To ensure that our Safeguarding, Looked After Children and Targeted Services all consider the views and needs of Children and Young People.

4. What we mean by Participation

- 4.1 In Sandwell, we are committed to promoting the active participation of children and young people and their families wherever possible, although we recognise that the extent to which children and young people participate will depend on the situation. There is sometimes a lack of clarity about what we mean when we talk about *participation* and it is often confused with *consultation*.
- 4.2 Participation is the process by which individuals can proactively influence decision-making and bring about change. This may mean individuals influencing decisions about their own lives, for example children who are supported by social care and health influencing their care plans, or it could mean young people influencing the development and implementation of service delivery. There are many examples of participation - the following is not an exhaustive list:
- Recruiting and selecting staff
 - Peer mentoring
 - Deciding how money should be spent
 - Planning, running and evaluating events
 - Being on forums or councils that lead to change
 - Lobbying elected members
 - Making positive changes in the local area
 - Involvement in commissioning services (identifying needs, drawing up service specifications, assessing tenders, inspecting services)
- 4.3 Consultation is the process by which children, young people and their families are asked their opinions. This includes asking their opinions on various suggested options, or retrospective satisfaction surveys and evaluation exercises. Consultation may support participation but does not replace it

5. Why we promote Participation

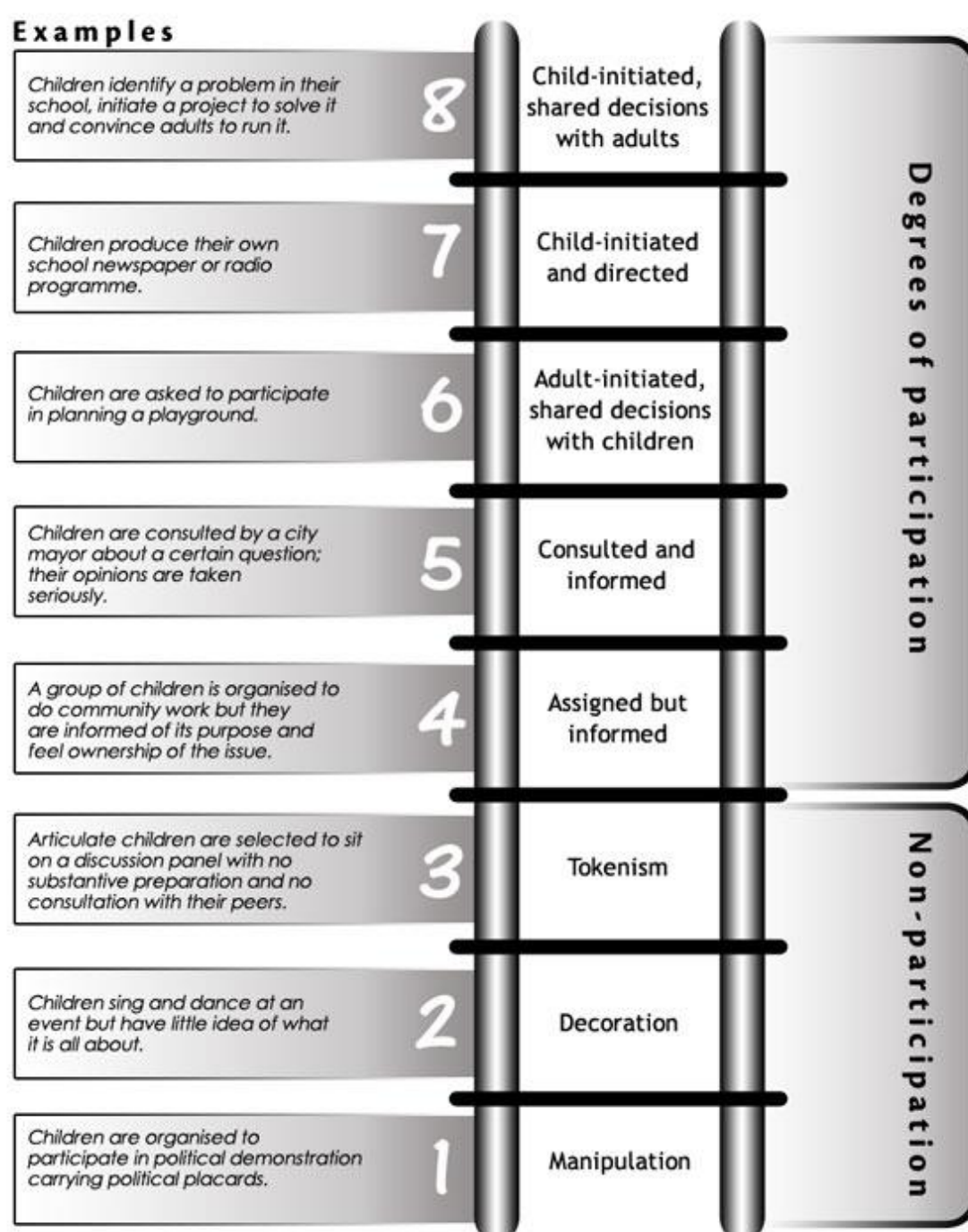
- 5.1 According to the legislative context, children and young people have the right to be involved in the decisions which affect them as individuals. We also believe that families should also have the option to be involved. Local authorities must take steps to ascertain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them, in line with **Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** which states that children and young people:

“have the right to say what you think should happen when adults make decisions that affect you and to have your opinions taken into account”

- 5.2 To inform continuous improvement, these arrangements should enable young people to inspect and report at least annually on the quality and accessibility of provision. They will also be encouraged to become involved in service design, delivery and governance, where appropriate. Young people should receive the support they need to participate, ensuring representation of the full diversity of local young people, and those who may not otherwise have a voice, providing an advocate to support them to be heard where appropriate
- 5.3 The principal reasons for involving young people in participation activities are summarised below:
- We are a public service and it is an obligation to listen to those we are employed to serve;
 - We have a statutory responsibility to listen to the views and experiences of children and young people;
 - The services that we provide will be more effective and better targeted as a result of young people's involvement;
 - Young people have a right to be involved if they want to be and share their views, thoughts, feelings and wishes;
 - Young people will benefit from services that are improved and more responsive to their needs;
 - Young people will benefit from being involved in decision-making processes by developing their skills and confidence and to build social relationships;
 - Young people's involvement can help to develop a sense of their own rights and responsibilities as 'citizens'.

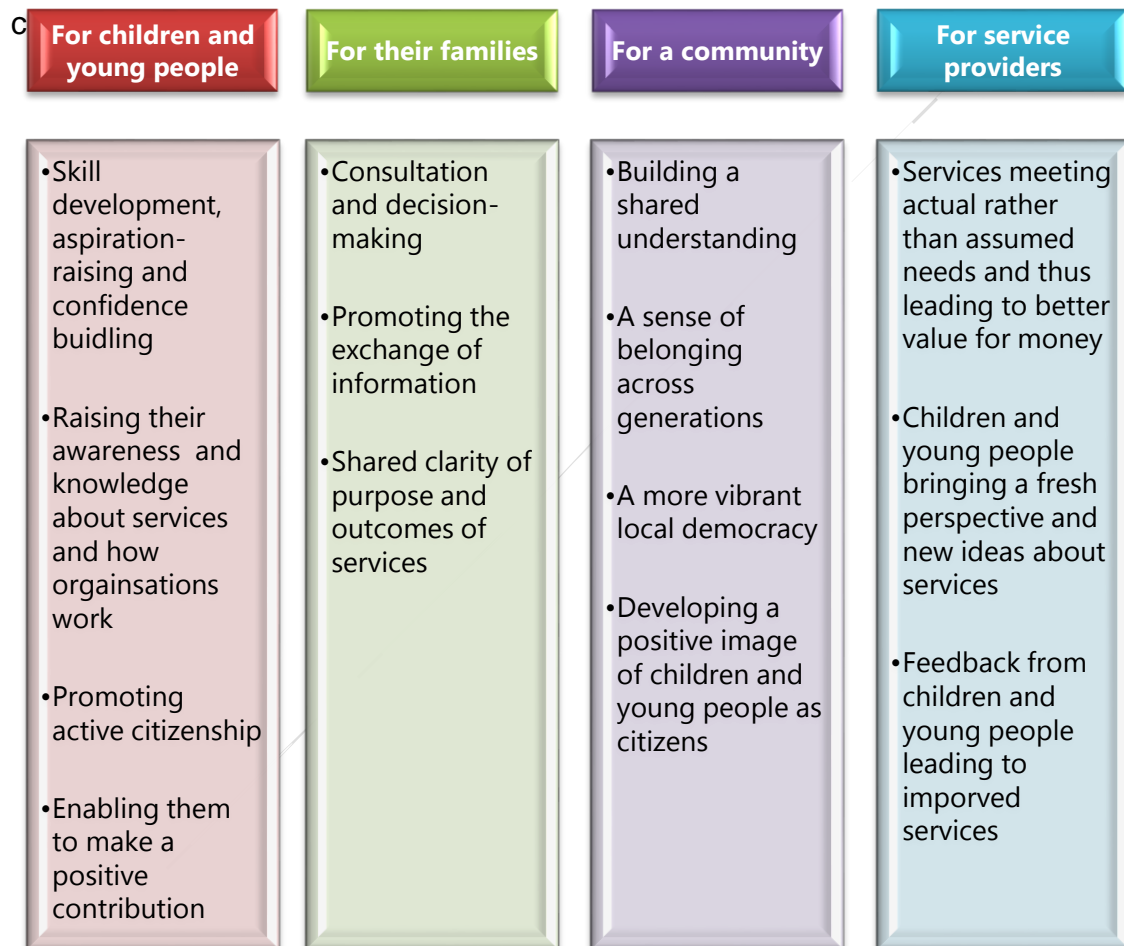
5.4 Levels of Participation

The ladder of participation is an idea developed by Roger Hart (1992) that identifies 8 levels of children and young people's participation. It is designed to demonstrate the degrees to which children and young people can be involved with organisations, with the bottom 3 levels seen as 'non-participation'



6. The Benefits of Participation

Our ambition to enable all children and young people and their families to have the opportunity to participate in decisions which affect their lives is also driven by the belief that the process of participation brings about many benefits and improves out.

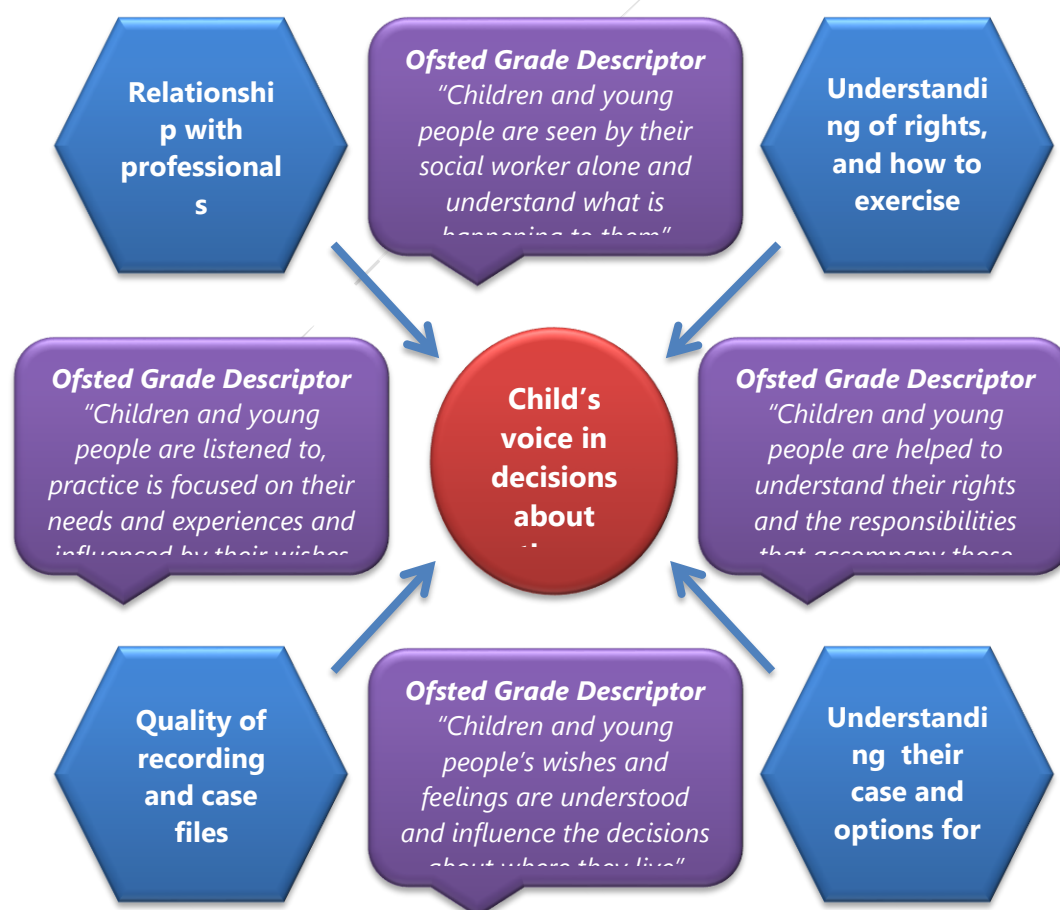


7. Evidencing the voice of the child in Sandwell

- 7.1 The [Single Inspection Framework \(SIF\)](#) sets out expectations that children and young people should have opportunities to express their views about their own case and to influence service design and improvement at a strategic level. This commitment is mirrored in the regulatory frameworks for other agencies.
- 7.2 Sandwell's participation strategy is centred on the wishes and views of children and young people contributing both to **individual case decisions** and to **wider service improvement**.

Participating in decisions about individual cases

- 7.3 There are a number of facilitating factors that support listening to children about their own cases. Ofsted's own grade descriptors for a 'good' authority provide a clear indication of the extent to which children's voices should be heard. These are summarised in the diagram below.



Facilitating factors that support listening to children about their own cases

7.4 Relationship with Professionals: Sandwell's children and young people need to be actively encouraged to express their views by someone they trust. Their social worker, or other lead professional, is best placed to ensure they are asked about their wishes and feelings. This means professionals need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to communicate with children and to understand the significance of what they are being told. The quality of the relationship between child and professional is crucial for building trust. Frequent changes in social worker or irregular visits, reduce opportunities to hear children's views and understand their experiences. Ofsted reports that in good authority's social workers know the children on their caseload well and are clear about the next steps for them.

7.5 Understanding of rights and how to exercise them: If Sandwell's children and young people are to participate fully in decisions being made about them, then they need to be aware of their right to be heard and to know how to influence what happens to them. During inspection, Ofsted considers the mechanisms in place for supporting children and young people to understand and exercise their right to be heard. In Sandwell, this will include:

- The information provided to children and young people about their rights and how to complain.
- The use of advocates.
- Opportunities for children and young people to attend, contribute to and chair meetings about them.

It is important that we evaluate these processes and how they work in practice in order to continue to improve the support available.

7.6 Understanding their case and options for the future: In order for Sandwell's children and young people to contribute effectively to decisions being made about them, they must first **understand their situation and options for the future**. To this end, it is important that:

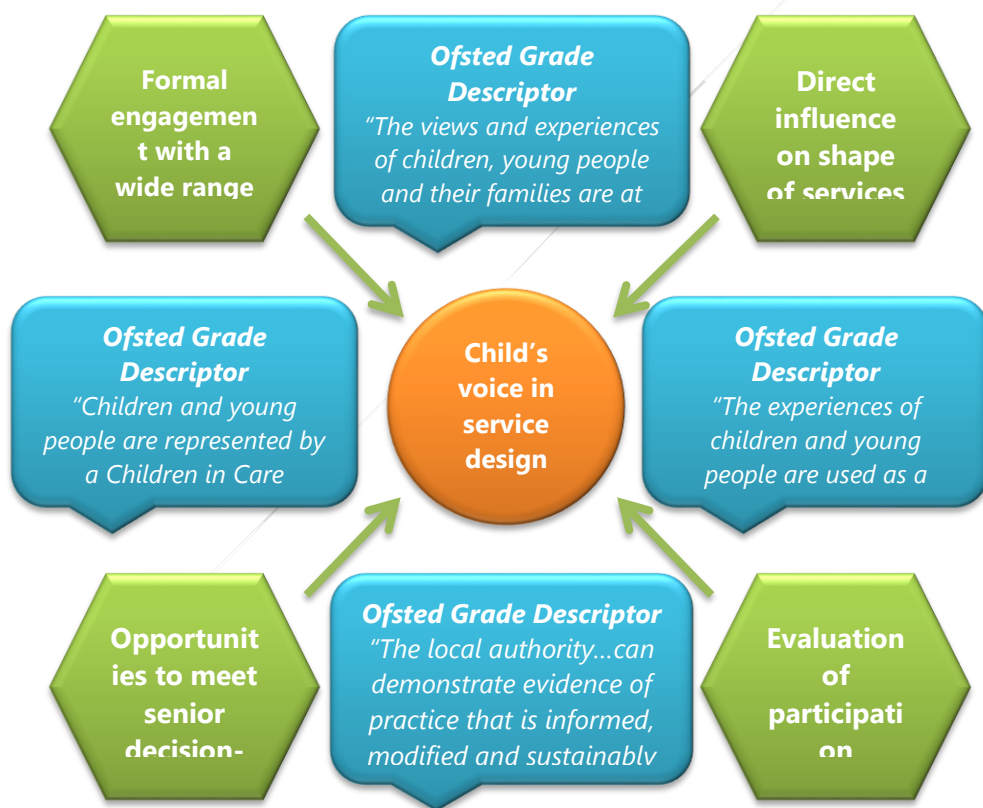
- reports to case conferences and meetings are clearly written and are jargon-free; and
- social workers use imaginative life story work to help children understand what is happening to them
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) play their part in providing additional support for Looked After Children

7.7 Quality of recording and case files: How the child's voice is recorded and reported is of vital importance as this not only ensures that their voice is at the heart of decision-making about their future, but also enables views about the quality of services and individuals' experiences to be gathered through thematic case audit and used in service design and improvement. Ofsted identifies good practice in systems that highlight the child's voice in both forms and reports and prompts practitioners to include the child's views in case records. The Child's voice should be reflected through good written records (picked up via case audits) as well as speaking to the Social Worker.

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Participating in service design and improvement

- 7.8 It can be daunting for children and young people to be asked to contribute to service design. The aims, language and procedures of commissioning and evaluation are unfamiliar, making it difficult for young people to participate meaningfully. Ensuring that dialogue is ongoing and that children understand how they can contribute and can see the impact of their contribution on what happens next, have all been identified as crucial in sustaining meaningful engagement (Badham and Wade, 2010).
- 7.9 Ofsted has identified features of good practice in engaging young people with service design and improvement. Ofsted's own grade descriptors for a 'good' authority provide a clear indication of the extent to which this engagement should take place. These are summarised in the diagram below.



Good practice in engaging young people with service design and improvement

7.10 **Formal engagement with a wide range of young people:** Children in Care Councils are a common feature of the governance arrangements in most local authorities and provide a forum for looked after children to influence the services they receive. In Sandwell, we have a Looked After Young People's Board comprising a group of young people of different ages and backgrounds who work hard to represent children in Sandwell's care.

7.11 Ofsted has published a number of good practice examples that underline the role of Children in Care Councils in:

- Monitoring progress on promises made in the looked after children's pledge (**see Appendix 1**)
- Monitoring progress on promises made in the care leavers charter (**see Appendix 2**)
- Arranging social activities to get more young people involved in giving feedback
- Attending Corporate Parenting Board meetings and addressing other strategic forums to raise key issues for looked after children

7.12 Ofsted's inspection of Sandwell services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers undertaken between 27 January 2015 - 19 February 2015 identified the following:

"The Children in Care Board is well established and representatives are enthusiastic about their role and have strong support from the participation officer. Members of the group sit on the Corporate Parenting Board and children's contributions influence the decisions that affect their lives"

"The Corporate Parenting Board has been strengthened and children's views now influence decision-making. Care leavers influenced the looked after children's and care leavers' pledge, which reflects issues that are important to them".

7.13 Whilst Children in Care Councils take the lead on many participation activities opportunities for other vulnerable groups to be involved in service design are less common. Good practice examples identified in inspection reports include the following:

- Young Inspector schemes in which young people visit services to examine how they work in practice;
- Children addressing conferences and influencing the business plan of the Local Safeguarding Children Board as *'experts through experience'*
 - Sandwell LSCB benefits from having the perspective of two young people who became Board members in May 2016, with them playing an integral part during the Board's multiagency annual conferences.
- In addition, young people have been involved in hosting and answering questions at the annual Children Services conference

- Involving children on child protection plans in providing feedback on services.

7.14 **Opportunities to meet senior decision-makers:** Ofsted identifies regular contact with senior decision-makers as an important factor in ensuring children's views influence strategic as well as operational decision making. Opportunities in Sandwell include:

- formal invitations to attend, or even chair, board meetings
During 2015-16 over 50 young people participated in takeover days by taking over roles in senior management roles in council and partner agencies, both on an individual basis and collectively
- less formal arrangements, such as an 'open door' policy or attending social events for young people
- visits to children facing difficulties

7.16 **Direct influence on shape of services:** This may include young people taking the lead on design or talking to other children and young people and representing their views. Young people can also participate in designing information used with their peers to make sure it is suitable for their needs. Examples in Sandwell include children and young people developing:

- pen portraits of social workers, accompanied by a direct contact number, which were provided online to children in care;
- welcome books for each foster placement that the child is given before arriving;
 - Sandwell will soon be launching its **"Show Me That I Matter"** booklet for children coming into care **(See Appendix 3)**
- surveys asking children and young people to contribute their views;
 - Surveys are regularly undertaken with all groups involving children and young people
- web-based or phone apps providing information about children's rights.
 - In October 2016 Sandwell launched the MOMO (*Mind of My Own*) app which has been designed to give young people more confidence and independence, and enables them to speak up, attend meetings, articulate problems, prepare for adulthood or raise anything they want to change about the shape of services.

8. Evidencing that children are being listened to effectively

- 8.1 Local strategic leaders need to be able to assure themselves that the child's voice is at the heart of their work with children and families. Providing evidence of participation is a complex task that requires advance planning to ensure data is collected routinely as part of the process. The information collected should be both quantitative (counting how many children participated) and qualitative (providing descriptions of what was done and what was said). This combination of different forms of information will provide a rich source for analysis of both the process and impact of participation work.
- 8.2 The views of children and young people about the services they receive should be at the heart of any evaluation. Involving children in evaluation requires skilled management to ensure that their voices are heard. Participation work itself needs to be evaluated to ensure it is having the required impact.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Sandwell's participation strategy has been developed as an aid for Sandwell Children's Services and its partners to review the ways in which they involve children and young people in decisions that affect them, both in individual cases and in designing services to meet their needs.
- 9.2 The strategy has set out some of the key features of good participation work, including the need to support good relationships between professionals and children and good recording and analysis of their views to inform service design and evaluation.
- 9.3 To fully achieve our vision for participation we have identified three key objectives –
- **Raise the visibility and influence of Sandwell's participation strategy**
 - **That the wishes and views of children and young people should contribute both to individual case decisions**
 - **That the wishes and views of children and young people should contribute to wider service improvement**
- 9.4 We will build on our current strengths of consultation and evaluation of services to create regular opportunities for children, young people and their families to participate in designing services.
- 9.5 We will ensure we have a workforce which regularly creates environments for children, young people and their families to be offered the opportunity to participate.
- 9.6 To deliver the strategy and the key objectives, an action plan has been developed to ensure that meaningful involvement is taking place. The action plan covers the two key objectives and includes clear measures and actions.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Sandwell's Looked After Children's Pledge



The poster is titled "SANDWELL'S PLEDGE TO YOU" and "The promises by Sandwell Council to all children in care". It features the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council logo. The pledges are presented in various shapes: a yellow rectangle for Pledge 1, a blue cloud for Pledge 2, a yellow rectangle for Pledge 3, a pink rectangle for Pledge 4, a yellow rectangle for Pledge 5, a yellow rectangle for Pledge 6, a blue rectangle for Pledge 7, a pink heart for Pledge 8, a yellow rectangle for Pledge 9, and an orange hexagon for Pledge 10. Each pledge is accompanied by a small illustration of a child or a star. The background is blue with white stars and a paperclip icon.

PLEDGE 1
We will provide you with information about being in care
We will give you a booklet called Show Me That I Matter when you come into our care, which gives you information that you need to know about being in care. It will give you important phone numbers of people you may need to contact.

PLEDGE 2
When you live in care we will keep you safe from harm
We will make sure you have a caring place to live and we will make sure you feel happy, safe and settled and receive the right information about where you live.

PLEDGE 3
WE WILL SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR EDUCATION
We will do everything we can to enable you to do well at school as you possibly can. Your education and individual learning is important to us. We will encourage and guide you to reach your full potential and achieve your goals and aspirations and celebrate your achievements with you.

PLEDGE 4
WE WILL SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR HEALTH
We will support you in all your health needs including physical, emotional and mental health. We will ensure you are able to participate in decisions about your health and have access to the health history that we hold for you.

PLEDGE 5
We will get you ready for being an adult
We will make sure you are aware of the Care Leaver Charter which outlines support offered to Sandwell Care Leavers. We will involve you in making decisions about getting ready to leave care and moving into adulthood and becoming independent.

PLEDGE 6
WE WILL ENSURE YOU HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD
We will listen to you and take your wishes and feelings into account in all of our work we do with you. We will make sure you have the right support at the right time from the right person. If you need to talk to someone independent, we will make an advocate available to you. You can also raise your views and report a problem around the pledge on the Mind of My Own (MOMO) app for children and young people.
Log onto www.mindofmyown.org.uk

PLEDGE 7
WE WILL ENSURE YOU HAVE A SOCIAL WORKER AND AN INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER
We will make sure that the social worker and independent reviewing officer working with you listen to you, be supportive and honest. They will work on your behalf and make sure you have access to all your rights and entitlements. They will ensure that you know how to contact them, to speak to them.

PLEDGE 8
Whilst in care we will ensure you have a plan in place
We will make sure you understand your own life story, the decisions that have been made and the plans that are in place for you. Where possible we will involve you in the decision making.

PLEDGE 9
WE WILL KEEP YOU IN CONTACT WITH FAMILY WHERE POSSIBLE
We will help you stay in touch with people who are important to you. We will find an appropriate place for your contact. If contact can't happen we will be upfront with you and explain the reasons why.

PLEDGE 10
We will give you the Opportunities to get involved
You can get involved with the Looked after Young People's Board (LAYPB) which is made up of children and young people like you. You get a chance to tell us what you think about services and how they could be improved and organise

SANDWELL'S PLEDGE TO YOU
The promises by Sandwell Council to all children in care
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

For further information about the pledge please contact
The Participation Team on 0121 569 5922 or email lapp_board@sandwell.gov.uk

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Appendix 2: Care Leavers' Charter



Department
for Education

Care leavers' charter

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter sets out promises care leavers want the central and local government to make. Promises and principles help in decision making and do not replace laws; they give guidance to show how laws are designed to be interpreted.

The key principles in this Charter will remain constant through any changes in Legislation, Regulation and Guidance. Care leavers urge local authorities to use these principles when they make decisions about young people's lives. The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good Corporate Parents.

We Promise:

To respect and honour your identity

- We will support you to discover and to be who you are and honour your unique identity. We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will celebrate your identity as an individual, as a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community. We will value and support important relationships, and help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events. We will support you to express your identity positively to others.

To believe in you

- We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations. We will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of these yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you.

To listen to you

- We will take time to listen to you, respect, and strive to understand your point of view. We will place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you, negotiate with you, and show how we have taken these into account. If we don't agree with you we will fully explain why. We will provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and promote and encourage access to independent advocacy whenever you need it.



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To inform you

- We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and the service you can expect to receive from us at different stages in the journey. We will keep information up to date and accurate. We will ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular touch with leaving care services. We will make clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information, and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

To support you

- We will provide any support set out in current Regulations and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We will make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down. We will not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you. We will make it our responsibility to understand your needs. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will help you learn from your mistakes; we will not judge you and we will be here for you no matter how many times you come back for support.

To find you a home

- We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living only when you are ready. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not judge you for your mistakes or refuse to advise you because you did not listen to us before. We will work proactively with other agencies to help you sustain your home.

To be a lifelong champion

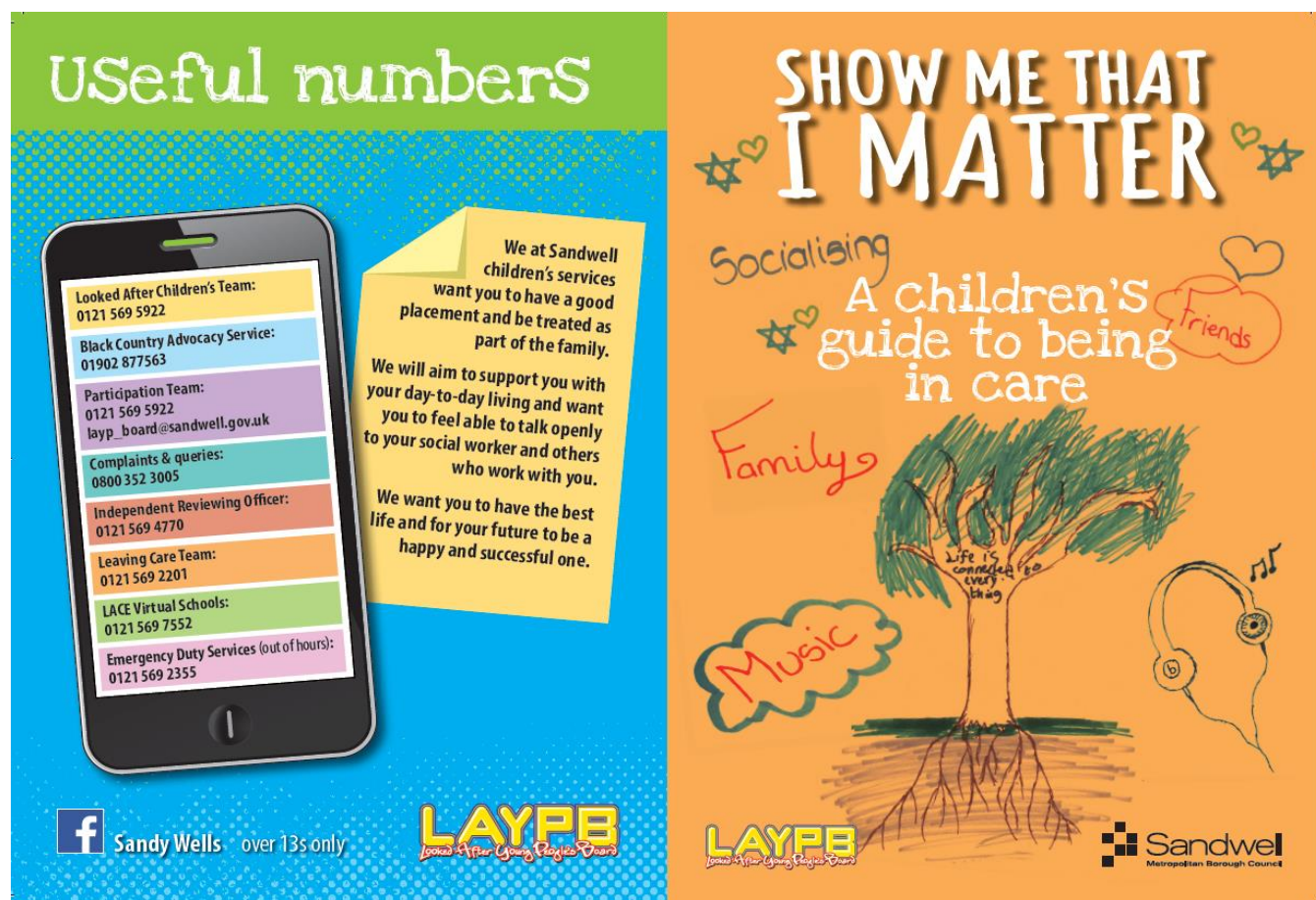
- We will do our best to help you break down barriers encountered when dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges and universities, employment providers and health services to help you establish yourself as an independent individual. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger. We will point you in a positive direction and journey alongside you at your pace. We will trust and respect you. We will not forget about you. We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.



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Appendix 3: 'Show Me That I Matter' Booklet



Appendix 4: Action Plan

Action	Strategic Priority	Desired outcome	Date to be Completed	Action Owner	Success criteria	Commentary	Status
1. Raise the visibility and influence of Sandwell's participation strategy	SP 1	Good awareness and use across Children and Families of Sandwell's participation strategy	March 2017	Carol Singleton, Group Head for Safeguarding and Quality	Participation strategy	Discussions are underway in respect of formally launching the strategy	Not completed but on track
2. Develop a care leaver's booklet around entitlements and independence.	SP 3	Children and young people leaving care are well informed about the support in place as they make the transition to adulthood	March 2017	Claire Anderson, Leaving Care Manager	A comprehensive and informative care leaver's booklet	Draft booklet has been designed which is in the final stages of development	Not completed but on track
3. Develop work programme for the LAYPB	SP 3	A clear trajectory is in place for the work of the LAYPB over the next 6 months (June 2017)	February 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	A robust work programme developed in partnership with young people	Consultation has been undertaken and a final draft will be published during February 2017	Not completed but on track

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4. Develop work programme for the Care Leaver's Forum	SP 3	A clear trajectory is in place for the work of the Care Leaver's Forum over the next 6 months (June 2017)	March 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	A robust work programme developed in partnership with young people	Consultation has been undertaken and a final draft will be published during March 2017	Not completed but on track
5. Monitor the usage of the MOMO app in order to determine its effectiveness in obtaining the wishes and feelings views of children and young people.	SP 2 SP 3	The wishes and feelings views of children and young people are captured and influence their care planning.	October 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	Report produced a year after the launch of MOMO that evidences an increase in its use by a wide range of children and young people that has influenced decision making	Usage is currently being monitored on a monthly basis	Not completed but on track
6. Adhere to the MOMO implementation plan to ensure a timely and coordinated rollout of the app across children and families	SP 2 SP 3	The Children & Families workforce are trained in promoting and using the MOMO app	June 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	Trained workforce in Children and Families promoting the app and its benefits/ usage to children and young people Increased usage of the MOMO app	All LAC Social Workers; IRO's; Leaving Care Advisors have received training. Upcoming training is scheduled for a wide range of practitioners	Not completed but on track

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7. Increase the number of Children & Young people taking part/ chairing their LAC and CP reviews.	SP 2	An increase in the number of Children & Young people taking part/ chairing their LAC/ CP reviews.	June 2017	Paul Russell, IRO Team Manager Mel Jarvis, IRO Team Manager	Children and Young people have an awareness that they can be involved in their own reviews and actively engage with this	Baseline currently exists of the volume of children and young people currently taking part	Not yet completed but off-track
8. Develop and implement a Leadership Programme for children and young people to become leaders.	SP 2 SP 3	Children and young people participating in the programme are equipped with the necessary skills that enable <i>'child-initiated, shared decisions with adults'</i>	April 2018	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	Successful completion of the Leadership Programme by a number of Sandwell's children and young people	Two providers have tendered for the programme and interviews took place on 05.01.17. An appointment has yet to be made.	Not completed but on track
9. Obtain the voice of the child for children with disabilities by working in partnership with Changing Young Lives	SP 2 SP 3	The wishes and feelings of children with disabilities influence service improvement	June 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer Jayne Leeson, Chief Executive of Changing Young Lives	Increased participation in decision making forums by children with disabilities	Changing Young Lives commissioned in October 2016 to contribute to the progression of this area of work Quarterly meetings take place between	Not yet completed but off-track

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						SMBC and Changing Young Lives. Next meeting scheduled for January 2017 at during which further discussions will take place about the next stage of the project	
10. Care Leavers Forum and Looked after Young People's Board representatives influence decision making at Corporate Parenting Board.	SP 3	Children and young people from the Care Leavers Forum and Looked After Young People's Board routinely attend Corporate Parenting Board and make an active contribution	July 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	Full engagement by Care Leavers Forum and Looked after Young People's Board at Corporate Parenting Board	Young people from both forums currently attend Corporate Parenting Board on a bi-monthly basis and supply reports relating to the business of both boards when required.	Not completed but on track
11. Ensure that the wishes and feelings of children are obtained through	SP 2	Social Workers routinely take into consideration the wishes and feelings of	July 2017	Tracy Collins, Group Head for LAC and Permanency	Children are routinely seen alone Audits reflect the recording of the	This is currently reviewed on a weekly basis	Not completed but on track

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statutory visits by Social Workers and these are recorded on Liquid Logic.		children during statutory visits			child's voice on Liquid Logic Performance Data		
12. Ensure the Young inspectors programme is fully embedded in order to improve placement for young people.	SP 3	All LAC and Care Leavers have the opportunity to become " <i>Young Inspectors</i> " who will carry out inspections on different areas across the service to ensure that services are appropriately meeting the needs of children and young people	September 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	Young Inspectors Pack The Young Inspectors Programme includes training on how to become inspectors Quarterly reports to appropriate forums on upcoming and completed inspections.	Mock inspection was undertaken in September 2016 on two provisions and reported to Corporate Parenting Board Schedule of inspection is under development	Not completed but on track
13. Ensure young people are involved in the recruitment and selection of all staff in	SP 3	Children and young people contribute to the decision-making process of all staff in children social care.	June 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer Winnie Maynard, HR Service	A workforce exists in Sandwell that effectively engages with its children and young people	Regular young people's panel currently take place	Not completed but on track

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children social care.				Delivery Manager Resourcing			
14. Ensure children and young people are training new and current staff around the importance of getting the child's voice in assessments and care planning.	SP 3	The child's voice runs through assessment and care planning.	June 2017	Abdul Kahar, Participation Officer	Active engagement by children and young people in the form of delivering training. Practitioners seeing the child's perspective	Children and young people will be in attendance at the upcoming Children's Induction in February 2017	Not completed but on track

Key to Status of Actions	
White	Not yet started
Blue	Completed
Green	Not yet completed but on-track
Amber	Not yet completed but off-track
Red	Overdue