

TORBAY CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP BOARD



SPEAK OUT

Torbay Participation Strategy for
Children and Young People 2007-09



Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	5-6
Our definition of participation	7
Our vision of participation	8
What do young people think?	8
Torbay's Children's Partnership key principles	9
What are we doing well	10
Areas for development	10
Participation in targeted and specialist services	11
Priorities	12
How will we know?	12
Appendix 1: ACTION PLAN	14
Appendix 2: CLA Summary Action Plan	18
Appendix 3: CASE STUDIES:	20
Appendix 4: Useful contacts	26

Thank you to all the children and young people involved in the development of this strategy. A group of young people are publishing their own version of this strategy to help get the participation message out to all children and young people across the Bay.

If you are a child or young person, or you know young people that would like to get involved in any participation activity then please contact the Youth Service on 01803 208278, youthservice@torbay.gov.uk

All of the photographs included in this document are of local young people participating in activities and events.

This document can be made available in other languages, on tape, in Braille, large print and in other formats. For further information please contact 01803 208952.



Supporting words from our Positive Contribution Champion:

This Participation Strategy plays an important role in forwarding Torbay's commitment to ensuring children and young people have a say and are heard, influencing their lives, their future and their Bay.

As an Elected Member Champion it is my role to raise and maintain the profile of the Every Child Matters Outcomes. I want to ensure the Positive Contribution priority receives attention and consideration throughout the council's Children's Services and partners. Involving children and young people, encouraging them to express their views, responding to those views and ensuring opportunities to participate are all central to making a positive contribution.

I shall monitor the progress of the strategy and delivery of the action plan closely over the coming months and years to ensure we deliver our commitments, namely ensuring children and young peoples' views have a real impact on service changes and developments across the council, Children's Services and all our Partners.

Jenny Faulkner

Councillor Jenny Faulkner
Positive Contribution Champion

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce Torbay Children's Services Participation Strategy which has been adopted by our Children's Trust and will be central to the delivery of services to children and young people in Torbay.

Our Participation Strategy has been produced with input from a number of groups of children and young people. Their ideas and support have been key in shaping this document as well as demonstrating the principles of participation we are keen to promote. A big thank you to all the children and young people involved. This sets a precedent for the involvement of children and young people in all future developments and I hope you enjoyed the part you played in this important work.

This document outlines our strategy in relation to participation but more than this it provides local case studies to demonstrate how we have improved as a result of listening to young people. This strategy will also involve children and young people in moving forward our current priorities and shaping priorities for the future. It is fantastic to hear about the benefits of this engagement for services and more importantly for children and young people themselves, a true win - win situation. This is not a strategy that will sit on the shelf, with so many useful tips and ideas I am sure it will be used on a regular basis.

I would like to acknowledge the effort and dedication of all our partners and particularly the Children's Society in leading the strategy development on behalf of the Children's Trust and thank all staff involved for their input.

Finally I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Children's Trust to ensuring children and young people are involved in the development of services that affect them. This is why it is important we have a strategy setting out the principles and direction we have all signed up to but even more important is the commitment of everyone to drive it forward and make it happen. If our services are to truly meet the needs of children and young people we must hear and act upon their views. It is down to us all to make our strategy a reality.

Good luck and please feedback your success.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Dennison'.

Margaret Dennison
Strategic Director Children

On behalf of Torbay's Children's Partnership

Introduction

The Torbay Children's Partnership recognises the importance of involving children and young people in making decisions about the services that affect them.

This is a key priority in the Torbay Children and Young Peoples Plan 2006-09.

Encouraging participation and the expression of views by children and young people is crucial to ensure services respond to the needs of children and young people and families.

It is recognised participation brings a number of benefits:

- **Better services** – giving children and young people an active say ensures services more genuinely meet their needs.
- **Promoting citizenship and social inclusion** – listening to children and young people is a powerful means of persuading them that they do count and that they can contribute.
- **Personal and social development** – good participation opportunities help children and young people develop personal and social skills that will enable them to become more confident and resilient as they get older.

In this way the Children's Partnership in Torbay will live up to its obligations under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In Torbay the participation of children and young people has been increasingly promoted and encouraged to ensure services support their involvement and respond to their views. Children and young people have said they want to be listened to and have a say in the decisions that affect their lives.

The participation of children and young people has been integral to development across children's services. There is strong evidence that children and young people contribute their opinions and ideas to formal assessment and review processes and that these are acted on. Parents have also been engaged through a range of programmes and where this has happened there have been higher levels of participation and satisfaction about the service delivered.

Elected members and officers are committed to involving children and young people in the development of policies and services and work is planned to ensure a more consistent and co-ordinated approach between agencies.

This document sets out to build on the many examples of good practice that exist and presents a written statement of principles that will underpin a participation strategy to be used by everyone working with children and young people in Torbay.



Speak out

Children and young people should be able to shape the services on offer. Therefore, Torbay Children's Partnership are doing everything they can to enable young people to participate by supporting the setting up of youth panels, supporting the organising of participation groups, providing them with feedback and organising conferences for young people.

James Roddy is an integral link between Children's Services and the young people of Torbay. As Torbay's Member of the UK Youth Parliament he represents the voice of children and young people in the Bay.

Torbay's Youth Parliament Member is leading the development of a UK Youth Parliament Structure.

The key group within this structure is a Youth Panel which will be plugged into decision-making processes within Children's Services and the wider council, taking the role of shadow Board for our Children's Partnership Arrangements (role to be defined and agreed by the Panel in consultation).

The Youth Panel is in its infancy; a small group is meeting and making links with a wide range of groups who it is proposed will sit underneath it. The Youth Parliament Member has a number of priorities decided upon through consultation and feedback from young people. These priorities and their delivery will be the focus of the Youth Panel in the first instance, whilst it develops its own agenda.

It is anticipated that the pace of the development of the Youth Panel and the wider participation agenda will increase in September when a dedicated Participation Worker starts in post, employed by the Youth Service and focusing on this agenda and the 13-19 age range.

The immediate challenges are:

- Increasing the pace so children and young people are setting agendas and influencing decisions as soon as possible.
- Ensuring children and young people play a key role in developing and shaping the mechanisms for delivering the participation agenda
- Ensuring school councils are integral in this process and that their development proceeds robustly to meet this challenge.
- Scoping and delivering a piece of work to ensure young peoples' priorities and issues are raised within the council's scrutiny arrangements.
- Ensuring the Participation Task Group takes the co-ordination role and no new consultation activity gets underway across Children's Services and partners without reference to this group, who in turn will link with the Youth Panel.

In October 2007, Torbay Council's Youth Service is hosting a Youth Conference. The conference will be opened by James Roddy and aims to encourage young people to find out more about local democracy and the services they can access. The main point of the event is to encourage young people to get involved and have their say. The event is being held at the Riviera International Centre, Torquay on Saturday 20 October.



Our definition of participation

Participation is the active involvement of children and young people in making decisions about the services that affect them or which they use. This is not just about consultation – asking for their views and opinions – but genuinely involving children and young people in decision-making processes and giving feedback on how their contribution has made a difference.

This includes the involvement of children and young people at a number of levels:

- Where individual decisions are being taken about children and young peoples' lives
- Where services for, or used by children and young people, are being developed and provided locally
- Where national policies and services are being developed or evaluated including consultation on broader issues that may have an impact on children and young peoples' lives.

The Torbay Children's Partnership supports the definition of participation produced by the young people's forum Teen Network Torbay.

Young peoples' definition of participation

Participation is the practice of involving

All people of all abilities in making decisions which ensures mutual

Respect and encourages shared responsibilities.

For true participation organisations need to listen to, respect and

Treat children and young people as they themselves would like to be treated.

All work with children and young people should involve young peoples

Input, views, values and experiences and everyone should

Challenge others if this is ignored or discarded.

Young peoples' involvement will

Improve the environment around us, for all of us, working as a community and breaking down misconceptions and

Prejudice aimed at children and young people, so that people of all ages and abilities can work together as a team.

There needs to be a commitment to the work as well as to providing

Assets and resources to allow for children and young peoples' participation.

It requires

Training for children, young people and adults to assist us in achieving our goals.

Inspiring everyone as well as benefiting the community and providing

Opportunities for individuals to achieve their full potential as well as benefiting the community ensuring equality so that

No one misses out.

Our vision of participation

Our commitment to participation and the engagement of children and young people will extend across the whole range of children's services from universal services – which all children and young people are able to access – through to more targeted and specialist services, for those children and young people who need additional support.

The aim of the participation strategy for children and young people is to:

- Create meaningful opportunities for children and young people to express their views and opinions about the way services are delivered and impact on their lives
- Ensure that children and young people have a direct input and say on decision-making about the design, delivery and evaluation of services
- Provide a framework for evaluating the impact of participation of children and young people
- Give clear information and feedback on how the views of children and young people have influenced the development of services.

It is important to engage with all children and young people whatever their circumstance or background.

This involves all staff working with children and young people: social workers, teachers, youth and play workers, childminders, health workers, including managers and support staff in the statutory agencies and voluntary and community groups.

We will work with all our partners to support the involvement of children in decision making to ensure better services.



What do young people think?

Young people in Torbay said that when decisions are made on their behalf or that affect them, they should have a chance to say what they think and express their opinions because:

“We are the ones affected by adult decisions.”

“We can! We want to be part of the community.”

“Young people know best about the issues that affect them. What it is like to be a young person now, in this time, in this place.”

"Young people are capable of negotiating to improve things for others."

"We should be heard because we have our own views on things."

"We can change negative opinions and perceptions of children and young people."

"There should be no hierarchy when it comes to adults and young people. Inclusiveness means all people – adults and children."

"We are not "just kids". Don't underestimate us."

"Young people have lots of ideas and energy."

"Young people know how to make things fun and can make it fun for adults too."

Torbay's Children's Partnership key principles

1. We will work to build positive and trusting relationships between staff and children and young people.
2. We will put in place measures to ensure that all children and young people have an equal chance to take part, whatever their age, race, gender, disability, sexuality, culture or faith.
3. We will listen to how children and young people want to communicate and support them by providing resources to fund innovative and effective ways to ensure they express themselves fully.
4. We will make sure that children and young people can contribute to our procedures and policies by using plain language and processes that they can clearly understand and follow.
5. We will ensure staff and volunteers get the help they need to acknowledge and accredit children and young people with taking part and for skills they have gained.
6. We will create, challenge or change policies so that they are clear and honest about children and young peoples' involvement and ability to influence their services.
7. We will provide on-going feedback for children and young people so they can see exactly how their contributions have been used, and record and report on what works so we can review progress, be consistent and share good practice
8. All participation should be voluntary and balanced to ensure that it does not get in the way of the lives and commitment of children and young people at home, in school or in play.

What are we doing well

There are a number of aspects where Torbay Children's Services and its partners are enabling children and young people to participate in decision-making:

- Most schools in Torbay have a school council and these make a significant contribution to the running of their schools.
- There is a strong commitment by all agencies to enable children and young people make a positive contribution to their communities.
- Elected members and children services managers have provided events to engage with children and young people in the design and evaluation of services.
- There are good opportunities for young people to have a say in the decisions that affect them, through the Take Part Project, Young View Forums, the Youth E-Panel and Play Panel for example.
- Children and young people can make a positive contribution to the way services operate, for example the Connexions service and Children's Rights service.
- A very high percentage of children in care contribute to their reviews and individual care plans.
- Torbay Council and its partners consult with children and young people in a variety of different ways.



Areas for development

We know that we can do better. A participation task group has been established to ensure we engage children and young people more effectively. Our plans include the setting up of a Youth Participation Board to directly influence services and speak to members and senior managers within the service. Other activities include;

- School councils can be supported to comment on broader issues affecting children and young people in the wider community, and to receive feedback on how their ideas are being implemented or reasons why this was not possible.
- More participation of service users in some service areas, such as the introduction of a disabled young people's forum.
- Having a positive and consistent approach to enabling children and young people to be involved in the development of services across the range. For example, to ensure young people who are old enough know about their rights to information relating to every service.

- Giving feedback to children and young people about the impact of their consultation and participation activity.
- More training for staff on how to involve children and young people in making decisions, and feedback from participants about what they did to improve things following the training.
- Find out what life is like for children and young people from hard to reach groups and particularly from black minority ethnic backgrounds and children and young people with disabilities, ask them how services could be improved, implement some changes and let them know what we have done.
- More young people to be involved in recruitment and selection.

Participation in targeted and specialist services

Sometimes, when young people are in crisis, they have to concentrate on themselves and their families' needs, rather than think about improving services for everyone. None the less most children and young people have views about the care and support they receive and being involved in decisions about their lives can help recovery and raise self-esteem.

There is a commitment to fully engaging with children and young people in individual assessments, reviews, support and care plans. It is recognised that frontline staff – social workers, teachers, youth workers, school nurses and others – have a key role in ensuring the voice of children and young people is heard.

The views of children and young people need to be considered in team meetings, staff supervision, and in operational and delivery plans. Where possible the collective views of service users should be sought.

We have developed a targeted action plan to address the specific problems faced by children in care and will also focus on a range of priority areas recognising participation as a strength, such as involving young people in reducing the high teenage conception rate in Torbay.



Priorities

The top three Participation priorities for the Torbay Children's Partnership are:

1. To review and develop a range of forums for involving children and young people including school councils and youth networks
2. Ensure children and young people contribute to and affect individual assessments, reviews and support plans, focusing on Child Protection, Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and Common Assessment Framework processes
3. Support and advice for children's services managers and staff on how to train, support and involve children and young people in consultation and participation including training and support for children and young people to enable them to be involved in recruitment and selection, service planning and commissioning and staff development.

These activities will be delivered through an action plan (appendix 1), incorporating our areas for development and approved by the Torbay Children's Partnership Board and monitored by the Participation Task Group. This will be made up of partners able to make the necessary changes within their own agencies or services.

How will we know?

The level of involvement of children and young people will increase as the Participation Strategy is developed.

Torbay Children's Partnership will monitor the progress of the participation strategy and the development of participation practice based on three key questions:

- How does your service respond to the views of children and young people?
- How have these views and opinions made a difference to the way in which the service is delivered?
- What difference has this made to the outcomes for children and young people?

Aside from the priorities and activities described above one way of measuring the involvement of children and young people is the Ladder of Participation developed by Roger Hart and published by UNICEF.

8. Child or young person initiated, shared decisions with adults:

Children and young people have the ideas and invite adults to join them in making decisions.

7. Child or young person initiated and directed:

Children have the initial ideas and decide how the project should be carried out. Adults are available to support them but do not take charge.

6. Adult initiated, shared decisions with children and young people:

Adults have the initial ideas but children and young people are involved at every stage of the planning and implementation. Not only are their views considered, but they are also involved in taking the decisions.

5. Children and young people are consulted and informed:

Adults take the lead on an initiative or project but children and young people are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their views are considered.

4. Assigned but informed:

Adults decide on the initiative and the children and young people volunteer for it. The children and young people understand what is being done, who decided they should be involved and why. Adults respect their views.

3. Tokenism:

Children and young people are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice in the way they express those views or scope of the ideas they can express.

2. Decoration:

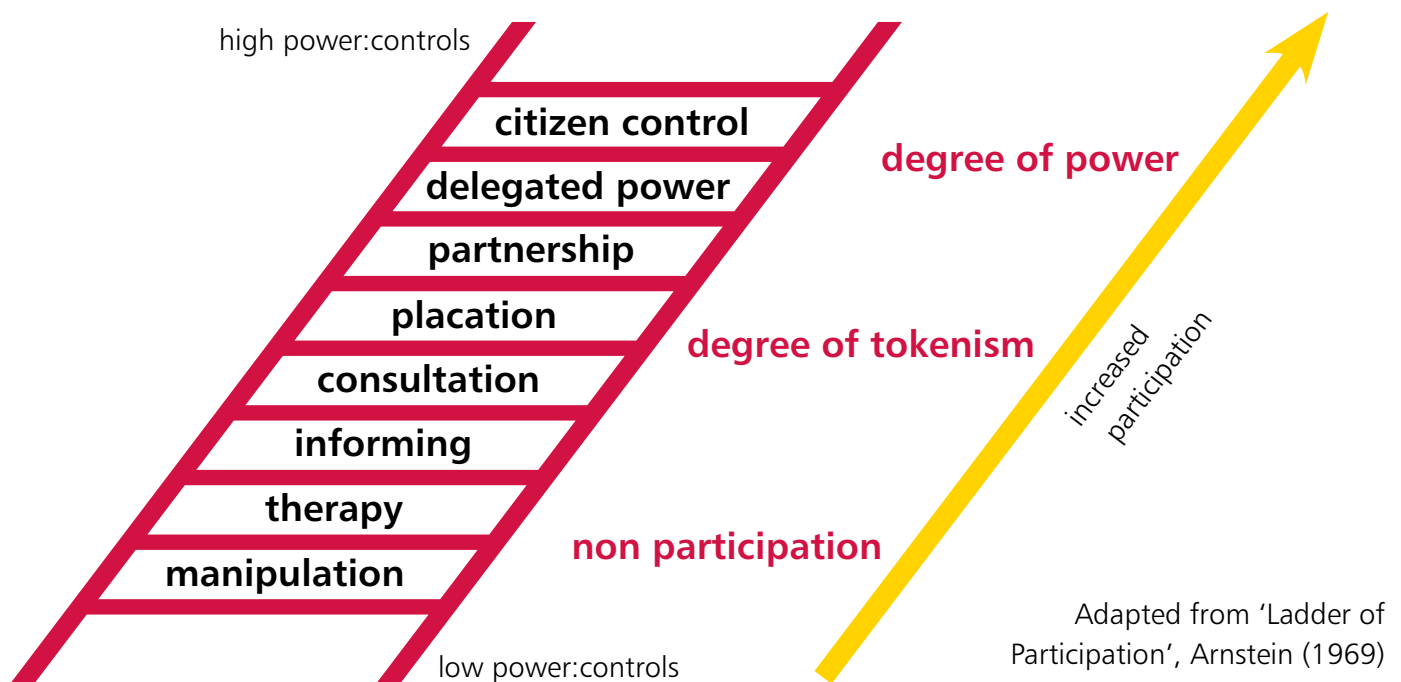
Children and young people take part in an event e.g. by singing, dancing or wearing t-shirts with logos on but do not really understand the issues.

1. Manipulation:

Children and young people do or say what adults suggest they do but have little or no real understanding of the issues. Or, children and young people are asked what they think, adults use their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision.

Ladder of Participation

The “Ladder of Participation” is a useful tool to inform us of the type of participation we are engaged in. For children and young people to have a genuine role in consultation and participation we have to move beyond the lower rungs (the bottom three rungs are generally perceived to represent no meaningful participation) and demonstrate evidence of what we are doing to engage with children and young people on the higher rungs, wherever possible.



Appendix 1: ACTION PLAN

This action plan is a section of the wider ‘Supporting Activity SMART Plan’ which forms part of the annex of our Children and Young People’s Plan. This plan needs to be viewed as a working document, whilst there is total commitment to its delivery there are likely to be some changes. The plan focuses on our key priority tasks, it does not cover all the participation activity Children’s Services and our partners are involved in, or plan to deliver. The plan will evolve as the work develops and progress is reviewed, led by the Participation Task Group, the key delivery group for this section of the SMART Plan. For example changes will be made as tasks are completed, we will add the next phase of activity, if an area progresses more quickly than expected we will shift our focus to another task, or if young people ask us to look at something new we may need to change our priorities.

Participation Action Plan: April 2007 – March 2008

PART 1: Outcome Measures

MEASURE 1: A children and young people’s Shadow Board is formed and functioning by December 2007

MEASURE 2: 100% of children and young people are involved in individual assessments and review meetings

MEASURE 3: All cluster managers and cluster teams to receive initial training by September 2007.

PART 2: Action Plan

What	How	When	Who	How Much	Dependency
3.1. Review and develop a range of forums for involving children and young people including school councils, youth networks and the Play Panel Co-ordinator: Steven Chown	3.1.1. A Youth Council / Youth Cabinet will be developed linked to the UK Youth Parliament elections. Representatives from school councils and youth networks will be involved in the Youth Council/ Youth Cabinet. This will be linked to decision-making processes within Children’s Services and the wider Council as a shadow Board for the Children’s Partnership Board (Children’s Trust Partnership Arrangements)	December 2007	Lead: Amanda Trafford	Staff time	Participation worker starting in post September
	3.1.2. All schools will develop a school council.	April 2008	Lead: Gill Brown	Within schools budgets	

What	How	When	Who	How Much	Dependency
	3.1.3. Youth networks will be developed in each of the three towns – Brixham, Paignton and Torquay. Resources will be provided to support disabled children and young people to be involved.	April 2008	Lead: Joe Elston	Dedicated resource to support involvement of disabled children and young people (£15 000).	
	3.1.4. Torbay Youth Service and its partners will explore how we meet the participation needs of BME children and young people, to include the potential development of a youth forum specifically aimed at BME young people.	April 2008	Lead: Joe Elston	Staff time to scope.	
	3.1.5. School councils and youth networks will be linked to Community Partnerships (formally Ward Partnerships)	April 2008	Lead: Tracey Cabache	Staff Time	
	3.1.6. Develop a plan for putting in place a local 'Expert Patient' programme for children, young people and pregnant women in all services		Lead: Chris Jackson	Staff time	
	3.1.7. Flier / leaflet to feedback to children and young people the impact of their participation on service delivery and development.		Lead: Amanda Trafford	Staff time and printing costs: £500	
	3.1.8 The involvement of children and young people in funding panels will be reviewed and co-ordinated e.g. TOFFY (Youth Opportunity Fund), Local Network Fund and Play Panel (Big Lottery Fund). This will include training and support for children and young people.	April 2008	Lead: Steven Chown	Staff time	

What	How	When	Who	How Much	Dependency
3.2. Children and young people will contribute to individual assessments, support plans and reviews.	3.2.1 The involvement and level of engagement of children and young people in individual assessments, review meetings and support plans will be reviewed / base lined	April 2008	Julie Skilton/ Elizabeth Payne/Jim Skilton / Peter Taylor	Staff time	*All identified partners participating in basic benchmark - ing exercise using draft Southwest Regional Partnership Participation Standards
Focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection ● Learning Difficulties and Disabilities ● CAF processes (future areas CLA & FGC) Co-ordinator: Marianne Lewis	3.2.2 Children and young people will be able to contribute and participate in individual assessments, planning and reviews and receive feedback and copies of material (age & circumstance appropriate) The draft Southwest Regional Partnership Participation Standards will be used for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities*.	April 2008	Julie Skilton / Elizabeth Payne / Jim Skilton / Peter Taylor		
3.3. Support and advice will be given to children's services managers and staff on how to involve children and young people in consultation and participation	3.3.1. Workshops will be developed about the principles and practice of participation. There will also be workshops focussed on recruitment and selection, creative consultation and evaluation.	April 2008	Lead: Steven Chown	Staff time	
Co-ordinator: Steven Chown	3.3.2 Training and support will be provided for children and young people involved in participation processes and workshop delivery.	To be scoped for next phase of the action plan	Lead Vince Clark	Staff time	
	3.3.3 Support and advice will be given to children's services managers on how to involve children and young people in service commissioning	-scope completed by April 2008			

PART 3 Risks

What	Risk	Risk owner	Mitigating Action
Capacity and resource	Medium	Children's Partnership Executive	Request the Executive gives a clear steer to leads across the partnership to deliver resources to agenda
Communicating to key players to ensure understanding and commitment	High	Children's Partnership Executive	Regular updates to the Executive and work with the task group and communication leads to develop a communication strategy to ensure sign up and support across the partnership.
Fail to deliver plan	Medium	Vince Clark	The initial plan was too ambitious, it has been reviewed and amended to ensure outcomes are realistic and achievable.

Appendix 2: CLA Summary Action Plan

Aim	Evidence of achievement	Gaps identified Suggested responses
<p>Improve services by learning from the experiences of children and young people who are receiving services. Feedback into policies and practice to make changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Young people provided with suitcases ● Young people attend more CLA Reviews and have input which affect individual care plans ● Many young people access advocacy services ● Total Respect affects policy change (cf pocket money, sleepovers), attitudinal/cultural change across the authority ● Missing persons policy ● CYPiGs group lead on ‘Making a Positive Contribution’ and scrutinise (from their experience) other policies being presented to the Improvement Strategy Forum. ● Broadhaven’s feedback questionnaires and surveys (menus, chalkboards etc) ● Young people involved in foster care training ● Young people contribute to Compass Cred, though infrequent delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No strategic collation of CLA or advocacy responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IRU collating feedback from young people from their CLA Reviews and providing regular thematic feedback to CLAISF and teams ● Young people tend not to sign up to missing person’s protocols (e.g. agreeing to phone in when away from home). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work is going on to make the policy ‘child-friendly’ - Involve young people in this proposal ● Young people feed into the Foster Carer’s annual review when long term Looked After, but needs to be substantially updated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update the young people’s forms - Exit interviews at all placement breakdowns - Advocate for young person during Disruption Process

Aim	Evidence of achievement	Gaps identified Suggested responses
<p>For young people to have a sense of agency or control, to make a positive contribution. Help young people feel more like stakeholders (done with, rather than done to)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CYPIG (this works because we started with the need for the young people which then adapted into something that fitted wider needs.) ● Access to advocacy services ● Total Respect – eight further young people keen to undertake 'Training for Trainers' programme ● Attendance at CLA Reviews and opportunity to talk to IRO ● Children's Meetings at Broadhaven (e.g. interest in golf leading to donation of golf equipment from local golf club and change of use of part of the grounds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No current forum for young people more widely to discuss or comment on policies (save CYPIG, Care Leaver forum etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An achievements awards day is being set up for young people – this could incorporate a chance to put across their views - Set up a young people's union to enable a more empowered and coordinated response to service delivery - Develop the groups being coordinated by the Adolescent Workers - Children's Conference to which workers are invited in the afternoon. What worked for me...? ● Limited involvement in end of placement decisions, choice of placement decisions (must be a focus for disruption/pre-disruption meetings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include these in policies and audit practice – start
<p>Young people to be regularly consulted at key times about their views, for example on leaving the CLA system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CLA Reviews happen following significant changes ● SW visits include young people's views ● Broadhaven really do have this embedded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No coordinated approach ● No exit interviews ● Independent Sector Placements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree key times and set up process (maybe involving Adolescent Support Workers) - Ask young people which times would be good to explore – foster carer annual review, exit interviews and at 21?

Appendix 3: CASE STUDIES:

Young View

Young View forums bring together children and young people from Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 (6-14 age range), from school councils across the Bay.

Key Stage 2 Young View forum has focused on Every Child Matters (ECM) during 2006-2007 and what primary schools are doing to meet each of the five ECM outcomes.

We wanted to ensure that all school council members had the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the discussions at the Young View forum. At the first meeting pupils from different schools chose initiatives which interested them to take back to their school to form the basis of an action plan. At the June meeting pupils made presentations about these. It was clear that the sharing of ideas had been the catalyst for a large amount of positive change.

Initiatives chosen and developed in schools included:

- Wake `n` Shake
- School gardens
- Golden Time
- Creative Arts Week
- Healthy tuck shops
- Healthy Week
- Awards
- Safety lessons
- Bully boxes

Forum meetings are held in different schools at the request of the members. Pupils were also able to tour the host schools which were Cockington and Oldway. They found this very interesting and inspiring.

Members of the forum have been involved in planning next year's agenda which will focus on Emotional Health and Well Being and will also share ideas for fund raising.

In the new school year, to ensure that those people involved in writing plans for children and young people, receive details of the outcomes and influence priorities, Young View will meet with their MYP, who will take their points forward.

Recruitment and Selection.

Young people's views and opinions have been used to recruit a range of staff working in children's services from front line practitioners to Elected Members to Assistant Directors.

For example when recruiting a new participation worker, five young people all aged 10 years old, were involved in the interview process. There were several training sessions with the young people to look at the job role and the qualities expected of the new member of staff. The young people learnt how to ask relevant questions and how to give every candidate a fair chance. They devised their own questions and scoring sheets. All candidates were asked to prepare an activity that would involve the young people. This took place alongside a formal adult led interview panel.

After the interviews the young people gave feedback and discussed with the adult panel what they thought of each candidate. This discussion and their scores were used in the overall scoring process and informed the final decision. The candidate selected was the one who scored highest with the children and young people.

After the interviews the children and young people gave a Powerpoint presentation to their school assembly about their experience of being involved in the interview process.

The young people said:

"I've learnt to be brave and serious and that I would make a good interviewer. My family are proud of me."

"I've learnt to co-operate with other people."

"I've learnt not to be scared and shy of people by doing difficult things."

"I've discovered I can work and communicate with people well."

Toffy

TOFFY is the name created by a group of young people formed to make decisions about how to allocate the Youth Opportunities Fund in Torbay. There are 16 young people aged 13-19 years old on the TOFFY Grant Panel. This is supported by a partnership led by Torbay Youth Service, The Children's Society and Connexions.

The group designed the TOFFY Application Pack and Guidance booklet called "Chew It Over". This is aimed directly at other young people who have ideas for projects that create more places to go and things to do. In 2006-07 TOFFY allocated over £140,000.

The funding was allocated to groups like Chelston Kids Next Door who were supported by Safer Communities Torbay. They were concerned about anti-social behaviour and wanted something for young people to do in the evenings. They were awarded £5,659. This will help provide

equipment for sport and other activities using the local church hall. The group and their adult volunteers were Highly Commended in the national Sparkplug awards for projects that have made a difference in their community.

Understandably the young people involved in TOFFY are very proud of their achievements and are looking forward to allocating a similar amount of funding in 2007-08.



Mad 4 Paignton

Mad 4 Paignton is a group of 10 students from Paignton Community and Sports College, who were at risk of disengaging from education. With support from Connexions, the Youth Service and the Children's Society, the group decided to create improvements for young people in their community.

Mad 4 Paignton conducted some research, visiting local areas of concern and interviewing residents and peers. They identified 5 main areas for improvement; graffiti, safety, recycling, parking and things to do. The group recorded their findings on a DVD which was presented to the local Ward Partnership in December 2006.

As a direct result of the issues raised, the Police have increased the frequency of patrols in Victoria Park. The group's work has also raised the profile of participation, with the Preston Ward Partnership setting up a young people's forum to bring the views and needs of young people into the partnership.

The young people in Mad 4 Paignton have received one-to-one support and guidance from a Connexions Personal Adviser alongside their work in the group. The combination of the group project and individual support has had a positive impact on their engagement in learning. All group members are set to make successful transitions into continued learning at the end of the academic year.

Surveying the views of children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities who attend special schools in Torbay

Surveys were conducted at each of the 3 special schools in Torbay. Separate core groups were set up in each of the schools consisting of up to 3 children and young people from Key Stage 4. The core group then facilitated separate consultation sessions with up to 10 children and young people from Key Stage 3 in each of the schools. Within the consultation children and young people were asked to describe what they felt made a good school and what made a bad school before considering how they felt about their own school. Afterwards there was a celebratory event for all children and young people who took part in the core groups where initial feedback was shared and certificates awarded. Certificates for other participants were awarded via school assemblies.

Although the full report is not yet available, initial feedback has shown that the experience has been enlightening for all, and has created many learning opportunities for similar future work. Many of the children and young people in the core groups expressed an interest to continue to be involved in future participation.

Reporting on Every Child Matters outcomes.

The Children's Fund wanted to involve children and young people in evaluating the services they use, focusing on what they think of these services and the difference they make to their lives. They also wanted to know why they wanted to take part in participation activities and what keeps them coming along.

Rather than use a traditional questionnaire format they used a medium that would actively engage children and young people and allow them to express their opinions in their own way. The children and young people discussed the ideas and the reasons behind them. These were then grouped and voted into ranking order.

The young people went onto design, film, edit and produce a DVD to highlight their "Top 10 Tips" for involving children and young people. The DVD was first shown and presented at the Torbay Children's Services Conference in March 2006. The DVD will be available as part of a workshop package for Children's Services staff that will help them develop their own approach to participation with the children and young people they work with.

The Top 10 Tips

1. Make it fun and interesting
2. Listen to everyone's ideas
3. Provide food for meetings
4. Make it so everyone can join in
5. Have the right workers
6. Give rewards and recognition
7. Provide team building and training
8. Be organised and communicate
9. Work at our pace
10. Help us with our problems

Big Cheeses Listen Up!

The "Big Cheeses Listen Up" workshops were designed to train and support Children's Services managers and councillors in how to involve children and young people in planning and decision-making. A group of children and young people aged 8-18 years old facilitated two workshops in February and November 2005. The workshops were attended by nearly forty managers from education, social care services, health and other agencies.

The young people said:

"It showed adults we could do something."

"I didn't think they would get involved in the activities but they did."

"I think they learned something from us."



The children's services managers said:

"I can deliver better services by working with young people"

"Participation is not just about planning better services but also a growing understanding that children and adults can work together."

"There is a lot to gain from including young people."

The Big Cheeses made a number of pledges about how to include children and young people in future. The young people were very keen to follow this up and invited the managers to make presentations on what they had achieved. This included involving children and young people in recruitment, school design and service planning.

Play Panel

The Play Panel was formed to support the Torbay Play Partnership allocate £294,000 from the Big Lottery Fund on play projects for the next three years.

The Play Panel was drawn from existing groups supported by the Children's Fund, Extended Services and the Torbay Play Forum. Invitations were also sent to the Youth Offending Service and Link Youth Support. A social worker and school nurse "referred" other young people to the panel. The final Play Panel was made up of 12 children and young people aged 9-17 years old.

The young people came together for three training sessions to decide how they would make their decision on which projects to support. They looked at the criteria in the Torbay Play Strategy ("Our time, our space, our choice") and devised a list of questions they would like to ask each of the applicants. They decided an X-Factor format would be the best way to do this and invited all the projects short-listed by the Play Partnership to make a presentation to the Panel. Seven of the eight "finalists" sent along representatives except one group who were unable to attend and sent apologies.

Each of the "finalists" was given 20 minutes to make a presentation and answer questions from the young people. Most of the adults said they found this quite scary.

"The young people asked a lot of tough questions!"

The young people on the Play Panel scored each project, some made their own notes, one of their participation workers also made notes of their discussions. These were all brought together at the end and the projects were put into order of preference. One young person was chosen to give the feedback from the group to the Play Partnership and the projects chosen by the young people were put forward as part of the portfolio bid from the Torbay Play Partnership to the Big Lottery.

Torbay was one of only 33 local authorities approved in the first round. The projects have now started and the Play Panel are visiting each project to evaluate what they are doing with the money.

Case examples of participation in children looked after reviews

- A 13 year old boy in a residential placement chaired his own review, this resulted in raising his self-esteem and confidence and ensured the meeting discussed the important issues for him. He was given a round of applause for his excellent chairing.
- A 17 year old young lady with hearing and learning difficulties loves having reviews and takes delight in telling the meeting all that she has been doing. She picks out who will speak next and takes delight in 'chairing' her own meetings and receiving applause for doing well. She has told the meetings what she wants to happen in the future and talked about her anxieties and worries. This young lady is now in a specialist placement that allows her to have a good degree of independence with staff on hand for support.
- A 16 year old young man explained in his review that he wanted a suit to wear to interviews. This was agreed and arranged.
- 13 year old twin boys were not happy at being moved from a placement and they told their review about this. An advocate was arranged who facilitated appointing a solicitor to take this matter to court.

The twins also said they wanted to see their extended family in Scotland. This resulted in a social worker

making arrangements and it was cost effective for them to fly which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Connexions Teenage Advisory Panel (TAP)

Young people in the TAP group meet regularly at Torquay Connexions Centre to advise on Connexions activities, as well as issues affecting young people at local and national level.

Each year the group prepares a Young Person's Plan, which forms part of the Connexions Business Plan for Torbay. This includes a range of objectives for developing Connexions services for young people, in line with the Every Child Matters criteria. TAP works closely with Connexions staff to implement and evaluate the Young Person's plan.

Achievements of the group to date include:

- Setting up and facilitating a Jobs Fair for school leavers to meet local employers
- Participating in Young People Panels for the recruitment of Connexions delivery staff
- Re-vamping of the Connexions website and publicity materials
- Meeting with local councillors to discuss issues affecting young people

In response to feedback from young people, Connexions has appointed a young person as a Youth Participation Apprentice. This apprentice facilitates the TAP meetings.

Appendix 4: Useful contacts

All the sites listed below provide information about resources, practical toolkits and handbooks to support the participation and engagement of children and young people in decision-making.

Every Child Matters/ Change for Children

Supports the involvement of children and young people and their families and carers in the development and running of all children's trusts. Includes research and guidance on building a culture of participation.

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/participation

Hear By Right

Hear by Right is a tried and tested standards framework for organisations across the statutory and voluntary sectors to assess and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people.

www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright

Participation Works

Participation Works an online gateway to the world of children and young people's participation.

www.participationworks.org.uk

Ready Steady Change

The Children's Rights Alliance for England produces Ready Steady Change – training and tools to put children's and young people's wishes, feelings and ideas at the centre of public services. Funded by the Department for Education and Skills to increase children's and young people's effective participation in decision-making.

www.crae.org.uk

Rights4me

Rights4me is the website of the Office of the Children's Right Director for England. The aim is to give children and young people who live away from home a chance to have their say about how they are looked after.

www.rights4me.org

Schools Councils UK

School Councils UK is an independent charity which promotes and facilitates effective structures for pupil participation in every school.

www.schoolcouncils.org

UK Youth Parliament

The UK Youth Parliament aims to give young people aged 11-18 years old a voice, which will be heard and listened to by local and national government, providers of services and other agencies who have an interest in the views and needs of young people.

www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk

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