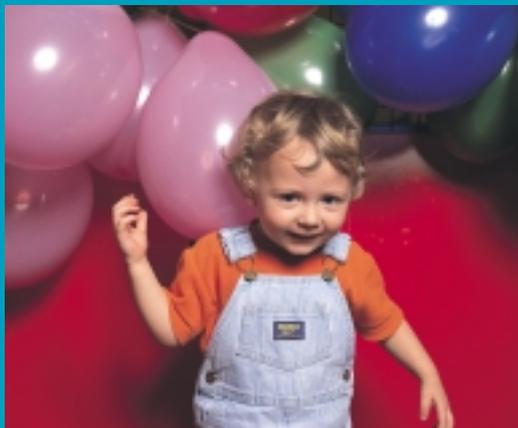
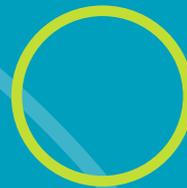




## Learning to Listen

### *Core Principles for the Involvement of Children and Young People*



children and young people's unit





## Core principles for children and young people's participation in the planning, delivery and evaluation of government policies and services

### Foreword

The Government has set out<sup>1</sup> its commitment to designing policies and services around the needs of children and young people. Ministers across departments are committed to giving children and young people a real say and real choices about the government policies and services that affect them. We want children and young people to feel that they can influence the services they receive. We want to see them contributing to and benefiting from their local communities. We want them to feel heard and valued and to be able to make a difference. This document represents an important step towards achieving that vision.

The best government services are already engaging effectively with children and young people. We want to make that the norm. The result of effective participation should be better policies and services. Getting this right should also help us to achieve our key ambitions for children and young people: preventing and tackling the social exclusion of the significant minority of children and young people who are experiencing poverty and disadvantage; and making sure every young person benefits fully from the services and policies designed to help them.

Achieving this step-change, and increasing the range and effectiveness of children and young people's involvement in the design and provision of government policies and services will be a gradual process, taking time and commitment. In some areas departments may need to examine how they allocate resources for policy development and communications so that, as is already the case on occasions, the different needs of children and young people in the processes are systematically included. For the most part, however, this is about a change of culture as much as a question of new resources.

Our starting point, therefore, is to set out core principles which departments have agreed to follow. The principles in this document are designed to give all government departments a solid framework on which to base their plans to increase the involvement of children and young people in policy and service design and delivery. Embedding this approach right across government will not be achieved overnight, but this document prepared by the Children and Young People's Unit makes suggestions for how the process might begin.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Denham". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

John Denham,  
Minister for Young People

<sup>1</sup> *Tomorrow's Future – Building a Strategy for Children and Young People* CYP Unit March 2001



# Guidance by the Children and Young People's Unit

## Introduction

The Government wants children and young people to have more opportunities to get involved in the design, provision and evaluation of policies and services that affect them or which they use. Ministers will be looking to their individual departments and agencies to develop robust but realistic arrangements to make sure this happens. Actively involving children and young people in this way will produce better services. Ultimately that will produce better outcomes for children and young people, as well as stronger communities, as departments and agencies across government draw on children and young people's contributions to shape and tailor services to meet real, rather than presumed needs.

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- introduce the core principles on which this work should be based;
- provide departments with some early advice and background and with signposts to additional help, so that departments can develop effective plans and
- let departments know the broad timetable for action.



The aim is to provide a common framework within which departments can develop tailored policies, action plans and effective practice to implement this important work successfully. The principles build on work already underway across government, for example in the Department of Health's Quality Protects programme and the Connexions Service. The principles are also close to those being promoted within local authorities by the Local Government Association and the National Youth Agency. Within the devolved administrations the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly are also working to increase participation.

The principles reflect Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (to which the UK is a signatory) that children and young people have a right to say what they think about matters that affect them and a right to have those views taken seriously.

This guidance is divided into the following sections:

**Section 1** What do we mean by children and young people's 'participation'?

**Section 2** Why should children and young people be involved?

**Section 3** The core principles

**Section 4** Practical issues for action

**Section 5** Next steps and action plans

**Section 6** Annex – useful contacts

## Section 1



### What do we mean by children and young people's 'participation'?

In encouraging departments to consider how children and young people should be involved we include action at a number of levels:

- **where individual decisions are being taken about children's own lives.** For example, the Children Act 1989 says that looked after children should be involved in decisions about their care package, and statutory guidance is being developed to ensure that children and young people with special education needs are where possible involved in all decisions relating to their education;
- **where services for, or used by children are being developed or provided locally.** For example, many local partnerships and local authorities have discussion groups and special consultation events to influence the design and provision of play facilities, leisure, transport and guidance services and
- **where national policies and services are being developed or evaluated.** For example, where departments are producing consultation documents and using website design to seek children and young people's views on policy proposals.

Action might involve a range of approaches. Children and young people may be consulted at the beginning of policy developments in order to stimulate thinking and ideas. Smaller numbers of children and young people might be active members in a decision making body responsible for the services, and some children and young people will even be involved in service delivery. We are using participation to cover the whole range of activities recognising that no one focus or method will be appropriate in all cases.



## Case Study Investing in children – County Durham and Darlington

The Investing in Children initiative has been in existence for nearly four years. It is a health service/local authority initiative but also involves other service providers such as local police stations, youth and community centres and schools. At its heart is the belief that children and young people can make a valuable contribution to debate about public services. Following early consultations, one of the primary issues the young people pointed out was that anyone over 14 had to pay full adult fares on local bus services. This made it very difficult for many of the young people, especially those without access to family transport, to travel to after school or weekend activities, meaning many young people were bored and isolated. Following research and representations from a group of young people involved in Investing in Children, County Durham agreed to change this policy so that full fares are now only paid by young people over 16.

Another important aspect of the initiative is a membership scheme for local services providing evidence that children and young people have influence over how services are provided. Aycliffe Village Primary School is a member of the scheme. Children at the school have been involved in identifying improvements to school premises, such as new blinds for the stuffy school library, improved strip lighting in classrooms and new picnic seating for lunchtimes. The suggestions were very much valued by the Head Teacher and staff as a means for improving the learning and play environment. At Crook Police Station (also a member) the policing of a particular estate was changed to take account of the views of young people, leading to a reduction in tensions between the police and older community residents, and young people. The power of the membership scheme comes from the fact that evaluation is based upon the testimony of children and young people themselves.

The action departments take needs to reflect the age of the children, their maturity and understanding and the extent to which their parents and carers will also be involved. The principles in this document apply to departmental policies of participation by children and young people of all ages up to 18. The younger the child, the more imaginative the practices may need to be, but we are not setting a lower age limit below which departments need not consider participation policies.

This guidance does not offer a single blue-print or a rigid model but does seek to help departments develop their individual thinking and plans.

## Section 2



### Why should children and young people be involved?

There is already a lot of evidence – for example in the case studies in this document and in the documents listed in the resources and publications index on the Children and Young People’s Unit website [www.dfes.gov.uk/cypu](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cypu) - that involving children and young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of government services brings benefits.

- **Better services.** It is accepted that the effectiveness of services depends on listening and responding to customers. Giving children and young people an active say in how policies and services are developed, provided, evaluated and improved should ensure that policies and services more genuinely meet their needs.
- **Promoting citizenship and social inclusion.** Promoting early engagement in public and community life is crucial to sustaining and building a healthy society. As successive reports from the Social Exclusion Unit have shown, listening to young people is a powerful means of persuading disadvantaged young people that they count and can contribute.
- **Personal and social education and development.** Good participation opportunities produce more confident and resilient young people. Promoting citizenship is already an important part of the Government’s education agenda, both pre-16 through the national curriculum and post-16. Departments and agencies that have a local presence can support participation projects that play their part in developing these skills.

The benefits of better policies and services provide the most immediate and powerful driver for action, and the case studies in this document describe those benefits, using a range of approaches in a range of settings.

## Case Study Connexions

Connexions is a service that offers a range of guidance and support for 13-19 year olds to help make the transition to adult life a smooth one. The service is influenced by young people's involvement. For example, the National Youth Agency was commissioned to work with a group of young people to look at ways of ensuring that children and young people have a voice in its development. The young people involved constructed a website to share the outcomes of their meeting with others [www.youthconsultation.co.uk/tywnya](http://www.youthconsultation.co.uk/tywnya). The views gathered form a significant element of a submission to Ministers on the future of the Youth Service.

Local Connexions partnerships also involve young people in their work to improve what

they do. For example, in Coventry and Warwickshire young people have been involved in the recruitment of the Connexions Executive Director, local service manager and over 35 personal advisers. Candidates were asked to make presentations to a panel of young people and the young people's views counted for 40% of the overall assessment for each candidate. The Isle of White Connexions Service has employed a dozen young people to undertake surveys with other children and young people. The young people have completed in excess of 1000 questionnaires and will also analyse the information which was gathered to inform the council's best value review, the local sexual health advisory service and the adolescent mental health team.

## Case Study Children and young people's involvement in the work of the Children and Young People's Unit

The Children and Young People's Unit has set up a Young People's Advisory Forum to advise the Minister for Young People and the Unit, in their work. There are 30 young people aged 11-17 on the Forum. The members are volunteers nominated by small and larger children's organisations and children's participation projects, and from a mix of communities and areas of England. Some members have been helping to assess proposals from partnerships rolling out the new Children's Fund programme this year.

Other Forum members have worked with a group of young people from Derbyshire Social Services to develop consultation booklets to obtain the views of children and young people on the strategy for all children and young people that the Unit is developing. Using creative arts and technology, the young people have developed two 'fun' child-friendly versions of the adult consultation document for children (aged over 13 and 12 and under), to seek their views either via the internet, or in facilitated discussion groups.



## Case Study Children and young people's involvement in the West Ham and Plaistow New Deal for communities programme

A cornerstone of the New Deal for Communities programme is that regeneration only works when it actively involves local people. The Children's Society has been working in partnership with the West Ham and Plaistow NDC programme to give local young people a better say in NDC activities and decision-making.

Young people aged 6-16 were in April 2001 invited to an open forum entitled *Tell the police how to do their job*. Young people suggested ways in which the police could develop better relationships with young people locally – one of which was for police officers to take part in regular sports and arts activities at a local youth club. Consequently

local police feel they are developing a better understanding of the difficulties young people in poor neighbourhoods face. They have become advocates for young people with other government service contacts locally, pointing out the need for more opportunities for them to take part in positive activities and to be given alternatives if they are excluded from school. The police have assisted in organising events, such as a day trip for 50 to the police recreation ground in Chigwell and a disco. The young people have benefited from getting to know the police in a friendly environment, and to shift their perspective of them as the enemy. Whilst there is a lot more to be done all agree that the dialogue is valuable.

## Case Study Museum fever

A Lifelong Learning Partnership project with Salford Museum & Art Gallery and Salford Foyer encourages young people aged 16-24 years to get actively involved in their local museum and gallery.

A group of young people has visited museums and galleries reviewing and commenting on exhibitions and facilities. The group has designed its own website [www.museum-fever.net](http://www.museum-fever.net), and has worked closely with museum staff to research and mount exhibitions and events. The young people also created their own exhibition for the art gallery and led a costumed event for the public in Lark Hill Place. Working with a wide range of

professional artists they have developed skills in web design, photography, video editing, exhibition design and marketing. They have contributed to editions of *LifeTimes Link* and the North West Museum Service's Newsletter.

Members of the group have given presentations to staff and the Friends' Association at the museum and to other professionals at conferences throughout the country. Members of the group have also signed up to undertake NVQs in Heritage and Visitor Care. Work undertaken in the last 6 months will contribute to this qualification and to the key skills qualification which they take at Salford Foyer.

## Section 3



### Core principles

It will be for every department to determine the priorities for action, to devise their policies and to set timetables for implementation. No one single response will be appropriate to all departments. However departments are agreed on a common set of principles which both will guide their actions and provide a set of standards against which their progress will be judged. The Children and Young People's Unit will be working with the major departments with responsibility for policies and services affecting children to develop action plans to implement the principles on the following pages.

The Departments that will be developing action plans in the first instance are:

**Cabinet Office**

**Department for Culture, Media and Sport**

**Ministry of Defence**

**Department for Education and Skills**

**Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

**Department of Health**

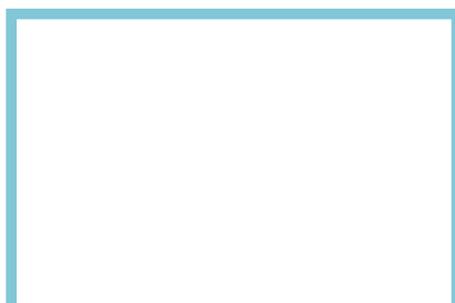
**HM Treasury**

**Home Office**

**Lord Chancellor's Department**

**Department of Transport, Local Government  
and the Regions**

**Department of Work and Pensions**



# Core Principles

## **A visible commitment is made to involving children and young people, underpinned by appropriate resources to build a capacity to implement policies of participation**

- There is visible commitment to the principle and practice from Ministers and senior management teams.
- Participation is built into the departmental or agency values and is reflected in strategic planning, delivery, resourcing, communication and business improvement activities.
- Opportunities are provided to enable relevant staff to develop the skills and attitudes to engage effectively with children and young people.

## **Children and young people's involvement is valued**

- Children and young people are treated honestly. That means that their expectations are managed and that they are helped to understand any practical, legal or political boundaries of their involvement.
- The contributions of children and young people proportionate to their age and maturity, are taken seriously and acted upon, and feedback from children and young people confirms this.
- Feedback on the impact of children and young people's involvement is timely and clear.

## Children and young people have equal opportunity to get involved

- Children and young people are not discriminated against or prevented from participating effectively on grounds of race, religion, culture, disability, age, ethnic origin, language or the area in which they live.
- Departments and agencies take a proactive approach in targeting those facing greatest barriers to getting involved (for example, younger children, children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in rural areas or disadvantaged neighbourhoods, children missing school, young people in the youth justice system, refugees, traveller children, disabled and other children with special needs or special personal or family circumstances) to ensure they are aware of and take up appropriate opportunities to have their say.
- Where necessary support and opportunities for training and development are provided to children and young people so that they can contribute effectively.
- Relevant information is available to children and young people in good time and in appropriate formats, is jargon free, culturally appropriate and accessible.

## Policies and standards for the participation of children and young people are provided, evaluated and continuously improved

- The rationale and success criteria against which progress will be measured are set out from the start.
- Children and young people are involved in reviewing lessons learned.
- Departments and agencies agree quality standards and codes of conduct for working with children and young people, and set out how confidentiality and child protection issues will be handled.

## Section 4



### Practical issues for action

If departments and agencies are to implement these principles there are practical issues to consider. This section sets out steps that departments should take or things that they will need to bear in mind when developing their policies. Further advice and case studies are available in the publications listed in the index on the Children and Young People's website [www.dfes.gov.uk/cypu](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cypu). Departments may find it helpful early on to read the short publication *Children and Young People's Participation – Lessons learnt by the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Action Zone* (available from the CYPU) which provides a useful summary of how one organisation approached the tasks of taking stock and mapping existing activity, as well as developing strategic plans for increasing the extent to which children and young people were involved in service and policy design and provision. The Children and Young People's Unit will also be discussing with departments what extra support would be useful in helping departments to develop their action plans and implement this work successfully.

### Mapping current practice and expertise

- Early discussions with individual departments show that many already have some initiatives focused on involving children and young people. Most find that there is not enough information or communication about what is going on in their departments and agencies. Departments are encouraged to map the extent of participation initiatives within their organisations or across the services for which they are responsible. Mapping helps spread good practice and provides a baseline from which progress and improvement can be assessed. Mapping current expertise in departments is also a good idea.



## Setting realistic objectives and choosing appropriate methods for children and young people's participation

- Being clear at the start about the objectives of any particular consultation or participation activity is essential. Information should be clear over how children and young people's views will be used and when decisions will be made. Honesty on all sides is needed about what is and is not likely to be influenced, and about how much decision-making can be shared with children and young people. For example, given appropriate information, children and young people can appreciate the financial issues facing those working in government. They can understand that ideas requiring more money cannot always be followed through quickly or at all.

### Case Study Involving young people in the development of the DfES citizenship website

Young people were involved in the planning and piloting of the DfES Citizenship website. Two representatives from Rushmead school (aged 12 and 17) came to the DfES to talk to the Citizenship Team about their experiences of Citizenship education and helped to inform plans for the website. The Citizenship Team also ran two workshops with young people, to look at what they would like to see on the site. The workshops were arranged as part of the South London and North London 'Your Turn' (local partnership) events involving groups of 11-15 year olds.

Once the website was developed, the DfES held a focus group of 10-15 young people

(invited from schools) in May 2001 to gauge the site's user friendliness and relevance to young people. The young people ranged in age from 7-16. On the basis of their comments, significant changes were made to the site. For example, the team added new graphics and an audio facility (which reads the text aloud) to the pupils' area of the site to make the site clearer for the very young pupils. The team also rearranged and reduced the amount of text for all young people.

Once the changes were made the Citizenship Team went back to the focus group and asked for their comments. The response was very positive. The site is now live.

- The range of approaches which departments might consider include:
  - ad hoc and routine suggestion schemes and ways for children and young people to offer compliments and complaints;
  - formal surveys and questionnaires to find out opinions, much as might be used for getting at the views of adults about national policies, current services or gaps in services;
  - consultations exercises. This might include a single large exercise; smaller discussion groups; creative consultations using drama or music, or games and activities for younger children and those more comfortable with non-traditional forms of communication;
  - involving young people directly in providing services. This might include asking young people: to produce information for other young people; to design ways to communicate better with children and young people, including using information technology and other new media; to provide 'mentor' advice and help to other children and young people; to take part in staff development and recruitment activities; or to help assess plans for implementing services or new initiatives;
  - establishing young people's advisory or decision-making bodies;
  - membership of main adult-led advisory or decision-making bodies.
- More than one approach may be needed in particular circumstances. The important task will be to tailor activity to the particular issue under consideration and outcomes being sought. For example a 'one-size fits all' advisory panel approach for each department is not appropriate. Some approaches will be more costly and time intensive – for the young person as well as the organisation. Trade-offs may be needed, between the quality of the process versus the speed, or the complexity of response needed from children and young people. Not all approaches need be costly to run – but all need sensible planning. Useful further detail on the pros and cons of the different approaches is set out in *The Active Involvement of Young People in the Connexions Service: Managers Guide and Practitioners Guide* (available at [www.connexions.gov.uk](http://www.connexions.gov.uk)) especially in the Practitioners Guide section.



## Case Study Cambridge Young Citizen's Jury

In Cambridge the Young Citizen's Jury has recently won a public involvement award for its work in involving young people in policy making. The young people conducted a needs analysis and presented their findings to the Council. They have collated a wealth of information about what young people do in Cambridge. One of the issues to emerge was that young people find it very expensive to access many of the recreational facilities, which

means they tend to congregate in public spaces and this can lead to confrontations with the police and other adults about their behaviour. As a result a new youth discount card has been issued to all young people between the ages of 10 and 18 allowing them concessional ticket prices for the cinema, leisure centres and other activities in and around Cambridge. It is hoped that this will cut down youth crime in the area.

### Building organisational capacity

- The effective implementation of policies of children's participation often requires particular skills and experience not widely found within the civil service. Staff need to be supported to think in new ways and be given the confidence and relevant development opportunities to try new approaches. Children and young people are sensitive about how they are involved in consultation and policy development, and where children are involved in an activity departments will need to adapt the style of meetings and the language used.
- Organisations with a good track record in these issues, including many led by young people themselves, can help government departments and agencies develop realistic plans and think through when and how best to involve young people whatever their ages and abilities. A list of useful organisations and the kind of support they are able to offer departments can be found at the end of this document.
- Some government departments such as the Department of Health and the Children and Young People's Unit itself have found it helpful to invite direct involvement from a voluntary organisation. Involving such organisations can help departments to kick-start activity. Although as the organisations themselves would agree, the focus should be on supporting the process and children and young people, and on ensuring that adult and organisational perspectives do not dominate on either side.
- Allocating someone with sufficient influence and the skills and interest to champion the work and these issues early on is a good idea.

## Case Study Health Action Zone – young people’s visits to GPs

Completed in June 1999, using a mix of focus groups and in depth interviews, a project by the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Action Zone, was designed to investigate young people’s views, experiences and attitudes in relation to health issues, focussing on GP/practice based healthcare services.

The research identified the following issues:

- Some under 16s thought they had to be accompanied when they visited their GP and claimed receptionists had told them this. A substantial minority of the group

thought receptionist were unfriendly, miserable, bossy and rude.

- The group demonstrated a lack of knowledge about how to access help for emotional/mental problems/stress and very few talked about STD/sexual health clinics.

One of the main ways the difficulties have been rectified has been by provision of training for receptionists. Additionally a poster has been produced for young people under 16, informing them of their right to ask for a GP consultation on their own.

### Involving more marginal groups and those with quiet voices

- Children and young people are not a homogeneous group. There is no single way to ascertain their views. The most excluded are, almost by definition, the hardest to reach. No one body can bring the full range of children’s views to any one table. Departments will need to decide which specific groups of children and young people to involve, and whether there are particular organisations that can help to identify children and young people willing and able to take part. Special care should be taken to include children and young people not traditionally involved, for example, younger children, children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in rural areas or disadvantaged neighbourhoods, children missing school, young people in the youth justice system, refugees, traveller children, disabled and other children with special needs or special personal or family circumstances. Plan for participants’ special needs: difficulties with physical access or written text or communication, or lack of suitable equipment may inhibit full participation. Traditional pen and paper activity can discriminate against those more comfortable in using non-traditional forms of communication or facing language barriers. Departments might consider advocacy services, translators and signers.
- Children and young people facing disadvantage and with previous adverse experience of government services may present particular challenges. Again departments could talk with organisations with expertise in reaching out to disengaged children and young people, on the best approaches and people to involve, especially in the early stages.

## Consider information and support – for adults and the children and young people

- Departments should think through what **special information** adults and young people may need in order to contribute successfully. This need not be a complex piece of work – sometimes simply drafting papers and leaflets in less complex language may be all that is needed to enable children and young people to understand and contribute.
- For more complex and especially ongoing activity, children and young people may need **coaching**, such as in how to listen, how to present views constructively, or how to research information. They may need briefing on the background issues in a way that is accessible for them. They may need assistance in contacting experts so that their impact is maximised. The high rate of turnover and changing perspective of young people as they grow older mean that this coaching must be regularly reviewed and repeated.
- **Confidentiality.** Children and young people need to be clear from the start about how the information and views they share with those working with them may be used. This should include a written protocol which children and young people can understand.
- Departments should consider how young people should receive **recognition** for their efforts. Giving them credit in a published document or a speech for their input is appreciated. Departments may also want to explore the links to be made with young people's progress files and CVs, and explore accreditation arrangements.

### Case Study Engaging younger children

Save the Children Fund and The Children's Society undertook some consultation work with children aged 2-4 years for the GLA.

Two local authorities were asked to nominate nurseries to take part in the consultation. The children were to give their views and perceptions of London and to do this they were taken on a 'sensory walk'. The children were encouraged to talk about what they saw, smelt, touched, tasted and heard as they walked along. Some of the children took photographs and drew

pictures which showed how things look from their perspective. Their comments about the traffic, litter, noise and amenities were recorded and demonstrated that even very young children can give a useful insight into how much they already understand about the services provided by central and local government ("It will be safe to cross at the traffic lights") and what they think needs improving ("I saw a lot of rubbish on the floor"). The children's views are being fed into the GLA strategy.

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- The extent of the involvement of **parents and carers** and the support they might offer will vary depending on the age and characteristics of the children involved. Keeping parents in the picture over what is planned is an important issue in responding to their concerns and expectations. However, as the case study on engaging younger children shows, there is clear evidence that even very young children can with the right methods and support make an effective contribution in their own right.
  - Departments should ensure that there are standards for effective **follow-up and feedback** within a sensible timescale. Feedback needs to make clear what is intended in the short, medium and longer term, and explain why particular suggestions or priorities could not be taken forward. Participation activity should be honestly evaluated: not all approaches will be as successful and mistakes will be made, but it is important that lessons are learned, shared and built on.
  - Finally, there will be occasions when it is not appropriate to involve children and young people in decision-making, for example because particular decisions have already been taken and cannot be reversed. Organisations should be open and honest in such circumstances.

### **Practical issues**

- So far as children's participation in national policy-making and service development is concerned, children and young people cannot easily be brought to meetings with adults in London during the school day. Weekend and school holiday activity and phone and electronic contact are important.
- When involvement activities include conferences or presentations it is important to consider whether the timing for the events is awkward for children or whether the venue is intimidating. Further considerations are the safety of transport, the costs and ease of travel, and whether accompanying adult support is needed.
- Clear criteria are needed to cover when travel and expenses may be payable. A budget and simple procedures for claiming ensure young people, who will lack personal finances, are not prevented from taking part due to financial barriers. Do not assume young people have bank accounts. Provide stamped addressed envelopes where needed.

## Case Study Youthbank

Youthbank is a new grant making initiative run by young people – providing small grants to other young people for projects of community benefit. Local committees of young people aged between 14 and their early 20s decide policy, promote the scheme locally, invite applications, assess proposals and decide what to support and how to organise follow up and monitoring. Each grant makers group is supported by a host organisation such as a Community Foundation, a local branch of the Prince's Trust, a youth project or a partnership of like-minded organisations. Since 1999 the National Youth Agency has provided lead support for the UK partnership involving Changemakers, the British Youth Council and the Community Foundation Network.

During the 2000/2001 year Youthbanks funded around 100 local young people led projects involving around 150 young people in the grant making process. Examples of projects included funding the costs of a disabled artist to work with a group of young people developing a board game based on their experience of being disabled (Bristol); funding to enable young people to plan and evaluate a ten week training programme on activities and health issues (Bradford) and lighting for a local play area (Tower Hamlets). Youthbank projects benefit both the local community, the young people who get involved in particular projects, as well as developing the skills of the young people who become local grant makers.

## Case Study Accessible playgrounds

In May this year Therese Hunt, an 11 year old member of the CYPU Young People's Advisory Forum, attended a meeting of the Havering Access Advisory Group (a local authority partnership group that looks at all access issues in the Borough). Only attending by chance that evening (her mother is on the group), Therese was asked for her views on local play facilities. She expressed disappointment that there were no play facilities accessible to children with disabilities. The group asked Therese to find out about the kind of facilities that were available, which she did and she presented her findings to the group who were joined by local councillors

and representatives from Social Services, in July. Therese found her research particularly useful as it led her to discover the council had legal obligations around the provision of disabled play facilities of which she was not previously aware. The council responded well and has agreed to include facilities for disabled children in all play grounds as they are refurbished. The first accessible play facilities are being installed shortly and Therese has had input into these. The council has also ensured that in future young people are present at Access Group meetings to ensure their views are taken on board.

## Section 5



### Next steps and action plans

#### Setting priorities

With the right training, support and information, children and young people can play a role in many aspects of departmental business and the extent of departmental strategies for participation could be very wide. In practice departments will need and want to prioritise their activities. They will want to ensure that children's participation in particular policy and service areas is proportional to the relevance of the policy to children and young people themselves. For example children and young people might engage more easily with transport issues, than with departmental resource budgeting practices. Participation might begin in some priority areas and be expanded across other departmental areas once experience and capacity has been built up.

#### Case Study Peer research project – Enterprise Careers Service London and the South East

This peer research project explored the image of the careers service both for young people who use the service and those who do not. For existing clients the aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of the service and in particular to identify good practice. The project also sought to identify why some young people do not use the service and to discover how the careers service could be made more relevant to their needs and aspirations.

Young people acted as researchers and interviewed other young people. This elicited

more accurate and honest responses from the interviewees. Users were mostly interviewed at the careers centre. Non-users were interviewed 'on their own turf' in the streets and through youth clubs, schools, colleges and other places frequented by young people.

The peer research technique was an effective way to conduct research on young people. Interesting findings and a range of responses were generated which ordinarily may have been suppressed.





## Action planning

The Children and Young People's Unit will ask all main departments to draw up an action plan for introducing and implementing strategies for involving children and young people in their work, in accordance with the core principles. The action plans should be published by the department alongside their departmental reports in April 2002, for implementation from April 2002 onward. The Children and Young People's Unit will be available to support departments in progressing this work, and will be consulting shortly on how best to do this.

Departments will be responsible for including the work and practices of the agencies and service deliverers for which they are responsible. It will be for departments to decide where to focus their efforts and to consider how much new work can be realistically planned for and delivered in the first and subsequent years. In doing so they will engage their agencies fully in discussions about when and how the latter too might get involved in this work. We expect most action plans next year (2002-2003) will include a focus on developing awareness amongst managers and staff, on mapping, and on planning and building capacity. However we would also expect to see early pilots and experiments of participation approaches.

Departments will be asked to set out:

- their strategies for implementing the core principles;
- their priorities for action and the timescale for implementing the strategies;
- how they have made a visible commitment to participation in accordance with the principles;
- an outline of specific events or initiatives envisaged and structures for involvement put in place at national or local levels;
- how capacity within the department is being developed and supported;
- plans for evaluating participation activities.

## Monitoring and reporting

The Children and Young People's Unit will monitor the implementation of departmental action plans. It will invite departments to submit periodic reports of progress with a view to publishing an annual report of participation activities in government departments and for public services. The first annual report will be in April 2003. The Unit will also seek to provide a measure of co-ordination ensuring that any new structures or initiatives which emerge in departmental strategies do not duplicate or confuse action already in train elsewhere. It will also commission further work to identify, assess and disseminate the positive benefits to policies and services from the involvement of children and young people. This will include exploring and sharing with departments effective approaches to giving children and young people real choices over some of the important issues departments are tackling in their work.

## Case Study Quality Protects

Quality Protects is a Department of Health (DoH) national initiative aimed at improving the life chances of all children in need, particularly children in care and disabled children. Participation is integral to the entire QP programme. A Code of Practice for the QP project teams has been produced, giving guidelines and practical advice on how best to work with children and young people when developing policy. There is a national QP young persons' reference group involving a group of 20 young people aged between 15 and 21 from local authorities from all over the country and many authorities have their own reference groups of young people.

DoH's Make it Happen roadshows have made a difference. For example, as a result of young people's comments made at a roadshow, DoH has published clearer advice for councils on how best they should handle 'sleepovers' and overnight stays with friends for looked after children.

Those delivering services also believe that children and young people's improved involvement in discussions, for example about their care arrangements, are an important means to provide better protection and more responsive care arrangements for children being looked after.

## Annex – useful contacts

### CYPU

Sue Corsan 020 7273 5353 [susan.corsan@cypu.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:susan.corsan@cypu.gsi.gov.uk) and Kate Sargent 020 7273 1197 [kate.sargent@cypu.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:kate.sargent@cypu.gsi.gov.uk) lead on the core principles within the Children and Young People's Unit

### External organisations

The following organisations have considerable experience of work with children and young people, or participation, or both. They are happy to be contacted and provide what support they can to departments. Please be aware that the organisations' capacity to help individual departments will depend on demand and workloads.

### Article 12

#### About the organisation

A project of the Children's Rights Alliance for England, Article 12 is run by a steering group of 20 young people aged under 18. The organisation campaigns for full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and focuses mainly on raising awareness of the UNCRC. Article 12 promotes participation, consultation and democratic opportunities for young people to learn about getting heard, having a voice and becoming active citizens. They are due to launch a Children's Rights Information Pack by Easter 2002

#### Support available

Article 12 can offer advice over the phone and signpost departments to other sources of information. They are happy to comment on good practice to look at documents, and to provide speakers.

#### Contact

Keith Harrison 01305 880059 [keith@article12.com](mailto:keith@article12.com)

### Barnardo's

#### About the organisation

Barnardo's is a large children's charity that provides services for 53,000 children, young people and their families. In its current 5 year plan, Barnardo's has expressed a commitment towards 'establishing the means whereby the perspective and participation of children and young people is embedded as

a normal and regular part of the way we work'. To this end, a number of initiatives around involving children and young people have been established. These range from dedicated Participation Officer posts in some regions, service user groups and councils in some projects and a pilot initiative – The Voice Project. This initiative is a two year pilot which aims to increase children and young people's participation on a number of levels.

**Support available**

Barnardo's can offer telephone advice and information, and good practice examples. They would be happy to contribute to the organisation and content of seminars and workshops and to provide speakers for events. They could also offer access to service users and Voice Initiative workers via Pam Hibbert (Initiative Manager).

**Contact**

Pam Hibbert 020 8498 7746 [pam.hibbert@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:pam.hibbert@barnardos.org.uk)

## **British Youth Council**

**About the organisation**

The British Youth Council (BYC) is a charity run by young people for young people; all the trustees are under 26. It is the national youth council involving young people from over 140 youth organisations and local youth councils. It represents the views of young people to government and decision-makers and promotes active citizenship, campaigning to ensure that all young people are able to participate fully within their own communities and the wider society.

**Support available**

The British Youth Council offers help and advice by phone, fax, email and in person. BYC runs a range of training courses and networking events and produces various publications. These include a series of best practice guides and Youth Index, its monthly information service about young people.

**Contact**

Bill Freeman 020 7422 8645 [bill.freeman@byc.org.uk](mailto:bill.freeman@byc.org.uk)

## **The Bibini Centre for Young People**

**About the organisation**

The Bibini Centre is based in Manchester and provides accommodation and support and advice for black children especially children in care and care leavers.

**Support available**

Bibini can help departments in the first instance with telephone enquiries. They would be happy to work in depth on issues involving black children and young people.

**Contact**

Yoni Ejo 0161 881 8558 [yni@bibiniuk.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:yni@bibiniuk.freeseve.co.uk)

## Carnegie Young People Initiative

### About the organisation

The Carnegie Young People Initiative seeks to increase the breadth and improve the quality of young people's (aged 10-25) involvement in public decision-making, and to promote opportunities for young people to express their opinions. To encourage organisations to listen to young people and involve them in decision making. Reports have been published on all UK countries. There will be reports, in the future, on other selected countries, democracy and young people, training and support needs for participation.

### Support available

Carnegie can provide advice over the phone, information about good practice, signposting to other sources of information and visits to/from Carnegie. They are also happy to look at documents, provide speakers for events etc. Carnegie also has a Young People's Involvement Group (group of around 40 young people who advise the organisation) who may be able to offer support to projects.

### Contact

David Cutler 020 7401 5460 [carnegieypinitiative@rmpc.co.uk](mailto:carnegieypinitiative@rmpc.co.uk)

## Children's Express

### About the organisation

Children's Express aims to give young people (aged 8-18) the power and means to express themselves publicly through journalism. Children research, report and write stories on subjects of their choice that are published or broadcast across the media. The focus is on peer training and reaching the authentic, unmediated voice of young people. Children's Express is currently developing a website as a classroom resource for citizenship in 2002.

### Support available

Children's Express would be able to provide advice over the phone and direct enquiries to the relevant sources. They are also willing to look over documents.

### Contact

Christopher Wyld 020 7833 2577 [c.wyld@childrensexpress.btinternet.com](mailto:c.wyld@childrensexpress.btinternet.com)

## Children's Play Council

### About the organisation

The Children's Play Council researches and campaigns for improved play opportunities for all children. It is currently undertaking a review of 70 local consultations with children about their needs and wishes in relation to their free – time activities. This will be published in conjunction with DCMS in March 2001.

### Support available

The Children's Play Council can offer telephone advice and information and sign-posting to best practice work. Issy Cole-Hamilton has considerable experience in consultation, especially with disabled children.

### Contact

Issy Cole-Hamilton 020 7843 6304 [icole-hamilton@ncb.org.uk](mailto:icole-hamilton@ncb.org.uk)

## Children's Rights Alliance for England

### About the organisation

The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) promotes the improvement of status and lives of all children in England, especially those living in poverty, through promoting the implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The organisation has experience of supporting organisations to consult, and to promote children and young people's effective participation in decision making. Its key areas of work are: public policy advocacy; provision of training to service providers and young people; and the circulation of up to date information on all aspects of children's human rights. CRAE co-ordinates the NGO campaign for a children's rights commissioner for England and supports the members of the Young People's Rights Network. The organisation plans to pilot a national translation service at the end of 2001 to translate all relevant consultation documents and Bills for 12-18 year olds.

### Support available

CRAE can offer telephone advice and information and can direct people to other useful organisations. They are happy to supply speakers for meetings and events (including members of the Youth Rights Network). They have considerable experience in participation especially on the relevant parts of the UNCRC.

### Contact

Carolyn Willow and Veronica Plowden 020 7278 8222  
carolyn@crights.org.uk veronica@crights.org.uk

## Children's Rights Officers and Advocates (CROA)

### About the organisation

CROA seeks to: promote and assist local authorities in establishing locally based children's rights, advocacy and participation services; support children's rights, advocates and participation officers throughout England and Wales; promote and disseminate good practice; train and support young people looked after to actively participate within the authorities, as trainers, evaluators, consultants etc. The organisation is currently looking at developing services for children and young people in the mental health services and young offender institutes. CROA has produced training materials and offers training to adults and young people on participation.

### Support available

CROA is keen to encourage direct consultation with young people. They can offer training in participation issues. They will answer telephone queries, provide information about good practice, and look at documents. CROA could provide speakers for events and organise visits to/from the organisation.

### Contact

Kate Gledhill 020 8748 7413 mail@croal.freemove.co.uk

## The Children's Society

### About the organisation

The Children's Society is a Christian social justice organisation that works with children and young people in England and Wales in over 100 projects. The work covers issues such as children's participation, health, safer communities, young runaways, education, youth justice, poverty and housing.

### Support available

The Children's Society is a practice based organisation. It is happy to: offer advice on the phone; provide information about good practice; signpost departments to other sources of information; arrange visits to/from the Children's Society; look at documents; provide speakers and other support for events etc.

### Contact

Sarah Hetherington 020 7841 4409 [sarah.hetherington@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:sarah.hetherington@childrenssociety.org.uk) or Bill Badham 0115 942 2974 [bill.badham@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:bill.badham@childrenssociety.org.uk)

## Council for the Disabled Child

### About the organisation

The organisation promotes and collaborates on work and partnerships between various agencies, parents and children. It provides a national forum for discussion, development and dissemination of a wide range of policy and practice issues relating to service provision and support for children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

### Support available

Council for the Disabled Child is happy to answer telephone queries and to sign-post departments to relevant resources.

### Contact

Maria Bremmers 020 7843 1900 [mbremmers@ncb.org.uk](mailto:mbremmers@ncb.org.uk)

## Health Development Agency (HDA)

### About the organisation

The HDA was created to support and enhance national efforts to improve the health of people living in England and reduce inequalities in health. Working with a range of national and regional partners and networks, it is playing an important role in assessing – and then disseminating – information about what works to improve the public's health.

### Support available

The HDA offers expert advice and guidance, support for the development of standards, and resources and training for those involved in improving public health – within the NHS, local government and the regions. They are happy to receive telephone enquiries etc.

### Contact

Marilyn Toft 020 7413 1929 [marilyn.toft@hda-online.org.uk](mailto:marilyn.toft@hda-online.org.uk)

## HDA – Schools and Young People’s Health Team

### About the organisation

The work of the Schools and Young People’s Health Team is funded by DoH and DfES. It comprises three strands – the Young People’s Health Network, National Healthy School Standard and Wired For Health.

The Young People’s Health Network (YPHN) is concerned with the health of young people in England. The network aims to encourage the exchange of information, ideas, research findings and good practice; the involvement of young people in health promotion initiatives; links with other networks and organisations to reach the widest possible audience. Training and guidance materials on how to consult, involve and evaluate the participation of young people in health promotion activities are being developed.

The National Healthy School Standard (NHSS) is currently quality assuring the services on a range of health related issues offered to schools and their local communities by local education and health partnerships. Local healthy schools programmes managed by these partnerships provide evidence to a team of national assessors to demonstrate that they have met the requirements of the Standard. Local programmes are encouraged to involve children and young people both at a local planning level and in consultation on policy development in schools, as well as in taking responsibility for aspects of school life and the environment. Support is offered to local programmes by the national team based at the HDA on this issue in the form of support materials, newsletters and regional events. The NHSS is also working alongside the YPHN in delivering the work on evaluating the impact of young people’s participation.

Wired For Health [www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk) offer a series of websites for teachers and young people at Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 on a range of health issues. It is currently building a database of good practice including examples of young people’s participation both in and out of school.

### Support available

Could offer briefings, seminars, advice and guidance as well as information on and examples of good practice, especially in the area of young people’s participation and health inequalities, for in and out of school settings. Both YPHN and NHSS have a network of contacts that could be utilised for the rollout of projects and initiatives.

### Contact

Mark Jennett 020 7413 1868 [mark.jennett@hda-online.org.uk](mailto:mark.jennett@hda-online.org.uk)

## National Association of Teachers of Travellers

### About the organisation

The National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT) is proactive in areas of education, record and transfer systems, distance learning and new technology, secondary education, early years education for mobile children, circus children's education and structuring national and international networks. The focus is on improving the education of Gypsy and Traveller children by liaising at local, national and European levels. It has an important role in facilitating the sharing of ideas and good practice. Over the years the network of teachers, through the support of NATT, has progressed in providing professional support and a system of continuity of schooling for children as they travel. The aim is to draw attention to the educational rights of Gypsies and Travellers where they are not being met and seek justice.

### Support available

NATT can offer telephone advice and provide information about good practice, as well as signposting to other sources of information. They would be happy to arrange visits to/from NATT, to look at documents, and to provide speakers for events.

### Contact

Marion Rowlands 01454 862620 [rowlandsmarion@yahoo.com](mailto:rowlandsmarion@yahoo.com)

## National Black Youth Forum

### About the organisation

The National Black Youth Forum (NBYF) is a children and young person led organisation that exists to protect and promote the rights of children and young people of Asian, African and Caribbean heritage in the UK. The organisation aims to promote good race relations between these groups and wider society by combating discrimination in all its manifestations.

### Support available

The Forum is young people led and is able to offer departments young people as advisors or speakers. The Forum is also happy to offer telephone support and advice to departments.

### Contact

Robert McFarlane 020 8741 4054 x103  
[infodesk@nationalblackyouthforum.org.uk](mailto:infodesk@nationalblackyouthforum.org.uk)

## National Children's Bureau

### About the organisation

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) promotes the interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives. Current work focuses on: promoting participation and young citizenship; ensuring effective care, education and support; communicating positive attitudes and images; enhancing health and well-being; celebrating diversity and valuing difference. NCB ensures the views of young people are listened to and taken into account; plays an active role in policy development and advocacy; promotes multidisciplinary, cross-agency partnerships, identifying and developing good practice; disseminates information to all interested parties; undertakes high quality research. Knowledge is mainly shared through the growing network of members who come from various statutory and voluntary organisations as well as private individuals. The NCB advises, evaluates and trains local government as well as other organisations on a range of issues affecting young people. Advice is also given to central government and to the All Party Parliamentary Group of Children and Young People. NCB works closely with regional and national government to assist in the development of policies and practices that service the interests of children. They aim to involve children and young people in this work wherever possible.

### Support available

NCB can offer telephone advice, visits to/from the organisation, support for events including speakers, looking over documents, signposting to other sources of information. The NCB has a young members programme and depending on demand may be able to provide access to children and young people for events and consultation.

### Contact

Kathleen Cronin 020 7843 6092 [kcronin@ncb.org.uk](mailto:kcronin@ncb.org.uk)

## National Children's Bureau – Rural Forum

### About the Organisation

The aim of the Rural Forum is to bring together a wide range of organisations to ensure that young people (aged 0-18) in rural settings across England are heard, and to foster awareness of the rural dimension in government policy development at all levels and influence policy and practice with those planning services for young people in rural areas. Currently the Forum is developing a Youth Forum event for the Food Standards Agency and enhancing young people's participation in rural decision-making, including work with the *Experts in their Fields* video. A number of seminars are proposed over the next six to eight months to address a range of rural issues including the impact on young people following the implementation of the Rural White Paper; social exclusion and minority young people in rural England and public transport for rural young people. These will draw in members across the sectors including young people themselves.

**Support available** The Forum is happy to take telephone queries, meet with departments, look over documents, speak at events etc.

**Contact** Andrew Brown 020 7843 6327 [abrown@ncb.org.uk](mailto:abrown@ncb.org.uk)

## **NCH**

**About the organisation** NCH is a children's charity whose aim is to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable children and young people. It runs projects for young people in a variety of areas including disabled children, children in and leaving care, families in need of support, children who have been sexually abused and young people with drug, alcohol and substance abuse.

NCH runs a partnership programme with the National Association of Youth Theatres which uses the youth arts to give young people a voice. The programme works with a new group of young people every year and therefore avoids the risk of professionalising young people whilst spreading the opportunities provided by the programme as widely as possible. At a project level NCH is committed to involving children and young people in the design and operation of services.

**Support available** NCH can offer advice on the phone and information about good practice, and can signpost departments to other sources of information. They are happy to facilitate consultation opportunities between government departments and the young people with whom the organisation works.

**Contact** Amanda Allard 020 7704 7122 [amandaa@nch.org.uk](mailto:amandaa@nch.org.uk)

## **NCVYS (National Council for Voluntary Youth Services)**

**About the organisation** The NCVYS is an independent national organisation that represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations. Its membership comprises national voluntary youth organisations and local and regional Councils for Voluntary Youth Services. The organisation aims to ensure development and recognition of a vibrant, sound and diverse voluntary and community sector that involves, empowers and meets the needs of all young people. Youth participation is a key area of work. The organisation employs a Youth Participation Officer. The NCVYS recognises and encourages the involvement of young people at every level of its work. The organisation influences policy by representing the view of the voluntary youth sector to decision makers on issues that have an impact at a local, regional and national level.

**Support available** NCVYS can provide telephone advice and support. They have experience of organising seminars and working with government officials to discuss issues of concern.

**Contact** Esta Orchard 020 7422 8636 [esta@ncvys.org.uk](mailto:esta@ncvys.org.uk)

## **NCVCCO (National Council of Voluntary Childcare Organisations)**

**About the organisation** NCVCCO exists to ensure the well-being and safeguarding of children and families through maximising the voluntary sector's contribution to the provision of services. NCVCCO provides an information service through print and on the web. The organisation consults its members on Government policy proposals across a broad range of issues and represents members (or provides members with the opportunity to represent themselves) in discussions with departments. There are currently over 100 members. NCVCCO works with a broad range of government departments.

**Support available** NCVCCO provides a print and web based information service, and can signpost to other sources of information and practice, drawing on the specific expertise of its members. With the overview perspective the small staff team can often identify potential speakers, or can contribute directly to conferences and seminars.

**Contact** Ian Vallender 020 7833 3319 [ian@ncvcco.org](mailto:ian@ncvcco.org)

## **National Early Years Network**

**About the organisation** The network promotes the interests of children aged 0-8 by providing practical support to and acting as a voice for early years services across the public, voluntary and private sectors. Members include Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, Local Education Authorities, nursery schools, social services and childminders. Key areas of work are: running a national training programme; publishing a list of practical publications written by practitioners for practitioners; hosting policy and practice-related seminars and events; offering advice to national policy makers on early years issues; and giving a voice to early years practitioners and the children and families they work with. NEYN produces a quarterly journal with up to date coverage of news, best practice and policy issues and views about current contentious issues.

**Support available** NEYN is an organisation with a large membership but a small staff team. Nevertheless, it would be happy to receive telephone enquiries from departments, and to signpost people to good practice examples and other sources of information.

**Contact** Eva Lloyd 020 7607 9573

## **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**

**About the organisation** The NSPCC is a charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. It operates over 180 projects in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in co-operation with other agencies and organisations including children's charities, social services and the police. Projects include support for abused children, support for children in court, work with schools, and a free confidential 24 hour child protection helpline. The NSPCC have set up Young People Advisory Groups (YPAGs) to involve young people in the policy and practice development of the NSPCC's work and in the design of community and local authority services.

**Support available** NSPCC offers telephone advice, information about good practice, publications, signposting to other sources of information. They can also provide: visits to projects, consultation on documents produced by departments, speakers for events and opportunities for participation with young people.

**Contact** Sarah Webb 0117 966 4290 [sarahwebb@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:sarahwebb@nspcc.org.uk)  
Mitzi Wakefield 07866 543525 [mwakefield@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:mwakefield@nspcc.org.uk)

## **A National Voice**

**About the organisation** A National Voice is run by and for young people who are or have been in care. They are a mixed group from all over England. The organisation aims to get rid of the poor image of young people in care, to stop mistreatment of young people in care, and to have an effect on government decisions about the care system.

**Support available** A National Voice can provide advice on the phone, information about good practice, signposting to other sources of information. They can also provide access to groups of children and young people.

**Contact** Maxine Wrigley 0161 953 4011 [office@anv.u-net.com](mailto:office@anv.u-net.com)

## **NYA (National Youth Agency)**

### **About the organisation**

The NYA aims to advance youth work to promote young people's personal and social development and their voice, influence and place in society. It provides resources to improve work with young people and its management encourages innovation and best practice and secures standards of education and training for youth work. Recently it has focused on advising government departments and local authorities on how to effectively engage young people in decision-making about local democracy and public services.

### **Support available**

The NYA can offer advice over the phone. They also offer information on good practice, and will signpost to other organisations or sources of information.

### **Contact**

Harry Wade 0116 285 3776 [harryw@nya.org.uk](mailto:harryw@nya.org.uk)  
Lynne Evans 0116 285 3742 [lynnee@nya.org.uk](mailto:lynnee@nya.org.uk)

## **The Refugee Council**

### **About the organisation**

The Refugee Council is a registered charity that gives practical help to asylum seekers and refugees, advancing their rights both in the UK and abroad. The children's section of the Refugee Council comprises the Panel of Advisors for unaccompanied refugee children and the Cedars which is a semi-independent hostel for young asylum seekers. The panel is funded by the Home Office to help the children through the complexities of the asylum process and in accessing appropriate statutory and non-statutory services. Central to the work is the belief that the refugee children are children first with an absolute right to care, protection and respect. Apart from casework for the most vulnerable children they have developed a drop in service in Brixton to help the children contact statutory service providers such as social services as well as offering them a number of other facilities including food, health advice and the Red Cross family tracing facility. The panel of advisers currently provides a service to children across the UK.

### **Support available**

The refugee council is well placed to offer support to those responsible for providing services that are accessed by refugee children. They are happy to take telephone queries and to signpost to other refugee organisations and sources of information.

### **Contact**

Lucy Bryson 020 7582 4947 [Lucy.Bryson@refugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:Lucy.Bryson@refugeecouncil.org.uk)

## Save the Children

### About the organisation

Save the Children, England programme (part of SC UK) has prioritised the general promotion of the rights of children and young people and, in particular, their involvement in decisions that affect them over the planning, design and delivery of services. There is a particular focus upon the most marginalised groups and on the issues of child poverty, refuge and asylum, education and violence.

### Support available

Save the Children can offer direct support to facilitate the involvement of children and young people in consultations, reviews, evaluation and other management tasks. The organisation can refer departments to a wide range of practical examples of good participation practice in the UK and Europe. It also has working partnerships with a range of children and young people led organisations that are expert in areas such as social exclusion, discrimination and citizenship and are willing to provide advice, training and similar activities.

### Contact

John Errington 0113 242 4844 ext 210 [j.errington@scfuk.org.uk](mailto:j.errington@scfuk.org.uk)

## United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP)

### About the organisation

The UKYP is an apolitical organisation composed of representatives aged between 11 and 18 elected by their peers from across the UK. It is run by a small team operating through a registered charity, Democracy for Young People. The board of trustees is made up of young people, national organisations and parliamentarians. The UKYP gives a voice to young people which enables them to be involved in a democratic process at a national level whilst empowering them to take positive action in their local communities. It actively encourages the involvement of all young people regardless of background. The first Youth Manifesto was published in Spring 2001. It is currently planning for the next round of elections (from late October to January 2002). Groups meet regularly based on regions and themes. The next national sitting is due to take place in Leeds at Easter 2002. An advisory group has been formed which gives interested organisations an opportunity to become involved. The UKYP is currently providing monthly inputs to the Connexions Service National Unit and is presenting evidence to The Home Affairs Select Committee on Drugs.

### Support available

UKYP can offer input, views, focus groups, speakers etc on any issues or policy developments that are of interest or concern to young people. Through its members (MYPs) and supporters, UKYP is able to draw on young people from all parts of the country and from all backgrounds and communities.

### Contact

Peter Clarke 0121 202 2355 / 01252 844241 / 0790 167 0727  
[ukyp\\_1@hotmail.com](mailto:ukyp_1@hotmail.com)

## Who Cares? Trust

### About the organisation

The Who Cares? Trust is a national charity in the childcare field. Its aim is to improve public care for young people in the UK living in foster and residential care along with central and local government as well as the voluntary sector and young people themselves. A range of development programmes for professionals and carers in local authorities to improve practice in education, health and well-being and preparation for independence have been created, with young people's involvement, to improve the opportunities and image for children in public care. The Who Cares? Trust produces a number of publications including a national publication for children in public care that is purchased by most local authorities in the UK. This includes contributions from children. There is also a telephone Linkline service and CareZone – an interactive online service for children in public care. Both of these initiatives deliver information to young people on a number of issues including education and health.

### Support available

The organisation is happy to provide advice and support over the telephone. They would also be prepared to arrange visits and speakers (including young people if appropriate).

### Contact

Jenny Robson 020 7251 3117 [mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk](mailto:mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk)



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