

Halton Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2014 - 2017



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1. FOREWORD

The members of INVOLVE are pleased to present the Halton Children and Young People's Participation Strategy.

In November 2013 the INVOLVE group came together to promote and improve participation of children, young people and their families. The strategy comes at a time of change when difficult decisions will need to be made around children, young people and families' services. Therefore, it is more important to involve those most affected by these decisions. We believe that by partnership working between professionals and children, young people and parents brings together different viewpoints and develops new and creative ways of working.

This strategy has been completed through a partnership of young people, parents and professionals. We have worked hard over the past six months to ensure this strategy is not just an interesting read but a useful resource on how to involve.

By Halton INVOLVE



2. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PARTICIPATION?

Participation is not just about asking questions and it is certainly not about ticking boxes – it is about an embedded process between children, young people and decision makers; who consistently work together to improve services and provision. It is about a culture of **respect, involvement**; and **change**, where everyone's views are important.

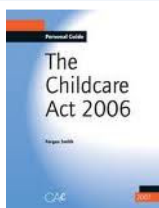
Every child and young person is a member of society. Organisations provide services for people living in that community or society so it's important that they are involved in the provision of services. Parents, carers and families also play a vital part in the development and delivery of services. This will ensure that a service is developed reflecting local needs and hopes and supports families to access the service.

In Halton we will seek to work around the lives of children, young people and their families, whatever their background, circumstances and abilities. Halton Children's Trust recognises that all children, young people, parents and carers are experts in their own lives, and have a good contribution to make.

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3. REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION

- **Social inclusion** - A socially inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met. Participation is a large part of this including people in decisions about their own communities and embracing difference in opinions and views.
- **Personal development of children, young people and parents** - Participation and involvement in communities, projects and decision making can increase skills and confidence, otherwise known as transferable skills.
- **Develops great Ideas and new ways of working** - Children, young people and parents offer a different perspective, a valuable resource in developing services and provision.
- **Increased political engagement** – Young people in Britain are less likely to participate in elections than older generations. Only 37% of eligible 18 to 24 year olds voted at the General Election in 2005. By involving children, young people and parents it is thought that this will increase trust and knowledge as well as the number of younger voters.
- **Legal and moral rights** (*shown below*)



“To have regard to the views of young children in the design, development and delivery of early childhood services”

“school governing bodies in England and Wales to involve children in the development of school behaviour policies”

The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child

Article 12, states children and young people should be involved in any decision they are affected by in accordance with their age and maturity



Children's Services Authorities are required to consult with children and young people when developing the **Children and Young People's Plan** (Children Act 2006)

Young people should be active participants in the commissioning, design and delivery of services (**Public Service Agreement: PSA 14**)



At every stage of the child's journey, the inspection will evaluate the effectiveness of:

- The focus on the interests of the child
- How well all partners take account of children's wishes and feelings and the extent to which this informs their care.



Children and Families Act 2014

This Act brings changes to the law to give greater protection to vulnerable children, better support for children whose parents are separating, a new system to help children with special educational needs and disabilities, and help for parents to balance work and family life.

4. BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Involving children and young people and parents/carers in decision-making makes good sense but can become difficult for a variety of different reasons. These may include:





- Children, young people and parents/carers not knowing how to get involved.
- Lack of staff, resources, motivation or time within your organisation or project to involve children, young people and parents/carers
- Communication barriers such as; language, cultural differences and disability.
- Lack of skills to listen, and work with children and young people and parents/carers.
- Lack of knowledge on safeguarding and concerns over ethical considerations of involving children, young people and parents/carers.
- Working flexibly with children, young people and parents/carers. For example: access, time, venues.
- Lack of confidence in knowing how to involve children and young people and parents/carers meaningfully.
- Lack of awareness of the benefits to be gained.
- Over enthusiasm by workers who believe they know what is needed and how it should be delivered due to their experience.

5. PARTICIPATION IN HALTON

The involvement of children young people and their families in the process of policy changes and commissioning decisions is vital in developing policies, services and provision that is more relevant, more effective and more sustainable.

In Halton meaningful involvement is achieved through a variety of coordinated pathways, which ensures two way communications between children, young people and families and decision makers. This offers support in making active involvement and participation embedded in everyday practice from front line services to strategic decision making.

The pathways are; Halton Children’s Trust, Halton Family Voice, INVOLVE and the Children and Young People’s Voluntary Sector Forum. (Explained below)

 <p>Halton Children's Trust ...Working together to make the difference</p>	<p>Children’s Trust</p> <p>Halton Children’s Trust was established in 2008 and is a partnership of all public and voluntary sector organisations, in conjunction with representatives of parents, carers, children and young people, working together to meet the needs of and improve outcomes for all children, young people and families in Halton.</p> <p>http://www.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/</p>
 <p>Halton Family Voice "WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER"</p>	<p>Halton Family Voice</p> <p>Halton Family Voice is a forum group which links into Halton Children’s Trust to represent Halton Parents ‘VOICE’ on a wide range of agendas and topics. The Group itself meets once a month and welcomes members from all parents or people with parenting responsibilities within Halton. It includes membership in the form of representatives from many of the local parent or carer groups including the children’s centre voice groups. This creates a structured network or pathway of two way communication, gaining a true representation of Halton Parents.</p> <p>http://www.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/index.php/halton-family-voice/</p>
 <p>INVOLVE</p>	<p>INVOLVE</p> <p>INVOLVE is a ‘participation advisory group’. That acts as a critical friend to Halton Children’s Trust and its partners on participation. The group also acts in an advisory capacity on how best to involve parents, children and young people in decision making processes.</p> <p>http://www.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/index.php/participation-group/</p>
 <p>Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum Halton</p>	<p>Children and Young People’s Voluntary Sector Forum (CYP VSF)</p> <p>The forum promotes the involvement of the voluntary and community sector in the development of local and national policy affecting children and young people. It is an open and inclusive forum that represents and supports voluntary and community sector organisations that deliver services to children and young people and their families.</p> <p>http://www.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/index.php/voluntary-sector-forum/</p>

How are decisions made?

In Halton decisions about children, young people and families services are made through Halton Children's Trust and are based on need. Halton Children's Trust outlines its key priorities through the Halton Children and Young People's Plan. <http://www.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/index.php/children-young-peoples-plan-2014-2017/>

Halton's Children & Young People's Plan 2014-17 is the overarching plan for all partners within Halton Children's Trust, and the services they provide for children and young people in Halton. It describes how partners will work together to improve outcomes, setting out the long term vision for improving their health and wellbeing.

The priorities of the Plan are:

Working together to deliver services in a joined up way to make sure children and their families get the right help at the right time (*Early Help & Support*)

Working together to plan and fund outcome focused services for children and families that deliver high quality services that are value for money (*Integrated Commissioning*)

Working together to focus services towards the needs of our most vulnerable children, young people and families to 'close the gap' by improving health, education, social and cultural outcomes.

How does this strategy fit in with the wider picture?

The Halton Children and Young People's Participation Strategy sits under Halton Children's Trust and is informed by the Trust's overarching Halton Children and Young People's Plan 2017 ([link](#)), leading on the Plan's involvement element. The strategy also has strong links with the Halton Strategic Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy ([link](#)), promoting the four levels of engagement:

- **Information Giving:** Keeping people informed of activities, decisions and events.
- **Consultation:** This involves a dialogue between parties who listen to each other. Consultation means the right to be heard, not the right to influence or decide.
- **Deciding Together:** The local community are involved in making decisions with the partner organisations on what will be done, with the agencies taking these forward.
- **Acting Together:** Decisions are made by partnerships between local people and agencies of the strategic partnership. The people involved in making the decisions also take part in carrying them out.

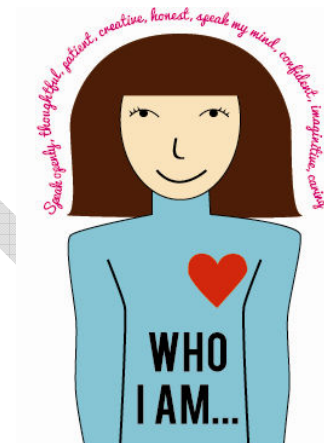
Where we are now

Participation is often a journey and should be recorded as a story with a beginning, middle and end. Explaining how it came about, who's idea it was, the process and action and the outcome. Here are some of the recent good practice examples of participation in Halton

Young Addaction

Young Addaction recently changed the name of a programme from Hidden Harm, which supports individuals who are experiencing issues around parental or family substance misuse.

Engagement with young people accessing the service found that young people felt that the name Hidden Harm was not user friendly. The young individuals within the group discussed that they would like a name change, they did not like the message the name 'Hidden Harm' was promoting. The young people working as a group rebranded the service naming it 'FAME' (Family Actually Matters to Everyone). The young people designed and changed the name, logo design and rebranded the programme.



The programme had a huge launch and has now seen a success in more young people and families engaging with the service and becoming more involved.

Halton Family Voice - Upton Dad's Group and Ditton Voice

Through parents at Ditton parent's voice and Upton dad's group there has been a borough-wide dog safety campaign organised by Halton Safeguarding Children Board. Upton dad's group wanted there to be good advice when bringing home a new baby into a home with a dog. Parents thought there should be practical advice to ensure the safety of the baby and children, but also that would allow the dog to still be a part of the family. Ditton parent's voice wanted information concerned about strange dogs out in public when with their children and how to deal with them. The campaign by Halton Safeguarding Children Board will see a road show in main shopping areas of Runcorn and Widnes as well as ongoing work with community safety and midwives to ensure the messages and information is consistent. Parents were involved in the idea and also with the production of the video advertisement for the roadshow.



CCG - Urgent Care Voice Event

The two groups gave their experience of using the present Urgent Care system and gave ideas of how it could be better. Information gathered from this event and other events were written up as a report to inform the design the future services and centres.



Since the event centres are being developed at the existing Walk in Centre at Widnes Healthcare Resource Centre and the Minor Injuries Unit on the Halton Hospital site.

The centres will operate from early morning until 10 at night with medical staff on site during the opening times. Both centres will be kite-marked with NWS enabling paramedic staff to use them as an alternative to A&E. The Centres will build upon the current services available at the Walk in Centre and Minor Injuries Unit that currently deal with minor illnesses and injuries - without the need to register or make an appointment.

Tier 2 Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service

From September 2013 to March 2014, there were several focus meetings with the Canal Boat Adventure Project and other partners. There was a consultation on service delivery and improvement on the CAMHS (Children Adolescent Mental Health Service) Tier 2 service. The groups and individuals the CCG had met during the consultation period shared what was good and not so good in their experiences of using these services. These focus groups will influence how the service is delivered in the future. There will also be the opportunity for young people on the interview board to look at the choice of provider and services.



Halton Speak Out's Bright Sparks Project

The Bright Sparks project supports young people with additional needs to share their views and ideas about services provided for them and to be involved in decision making in their borough. It is commissioned by Children's Services in Halton and the chair of the Bright Sparks Group feeds the views and ideas of young people back to the Halton Children's Trust Board after the group has gathered them.

During the last few months, our Bright Sparks Groups has been involved in urgent health care consultation, developing the new Halton Transition Booklet, improving the Cheshire Police website for young people, a sexual health consultation and checking the quality of short breaks.

A group of 'Kitemarkers' also check out venues, services and facilities in Halton to see if a young person with disabilities would have a good experience when visiting or using them. They award the Bright Sparks Quality Kite mark Award to those that meet the criteria the young people have developed. This is helping to improve services for young people in Halton and is allowing us to work alongside managers who have welcomed the Kitemarker's feedback.



Halton Youth Cabinet & UK Youth Parliament Group

Halton Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament Group are an elected group of young people who meet to discuss debate and take action on the issues that matter to young people. In late 2013 the group administered the UK Youth Parliament Make Your Mark Survey. Working with schools throughout the borough the group managed to collect over 2800 votes across the borough and gaining one of the highest turnouts of any area in the UK.

The results went on to help decide which topics the UK Youth Parliament have adopted as national campaigns. Locally the survey saw overwhelming backing for a call for better work experience. Youth Cabinet have subsequently taken this as a starting point for a more in depth consultation around this topic and launched online and paper based surveys around this topic.

In July 2014 Youth Cabinet members started chairing a Young People's Opportunities Development meeting to disseminate their results and challenge opportunity providers across the borough to do more to provide quality work experience opportunities. They are also hoping to be able to present a paper to the Council's Executive Board calling for them to embed work experience and takeover opportunities into council services and commissioning processes. [Watch this space for future developments...](#)

Special educational needs and disability (SEND) Youth Event

INVOLVE advisory board were asked for advice on how to involve and inform children and young people on the SEND reform. INVOLVE suggested that a fun and interactive event would be the best way to do this. On Friday July 4th a highly successful event for young people and families was held at CRMZ in Widnes. The event was organised by Halton Carers Centre and Halton Borough Council with support from across Halton Children's Trust.

A lot of the planning for the event was done by young carers themselves, through the 'Spoken and Heard' group and some members of the group were able to volunteer on the day. They acted as leaders for workshops and had their own workshop in the afternoon, where young people and families could ask questions and seek advice.



The event was run across two sessions, with a host of fun activities for children at both. The morning was aimed at primary school ages specifically, with the afternoon aimed at secondary schools, sixth forms and Colleges. Both sessions were well attended, with young people enjoying face painting, decorating pots, planting, podcasting and much more. More information about the event can be found at; <http://www.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/index.php/special-educational-needs-event-organised-by-young-people-a-great-success/>

Children's Trust Board meetings

A parent representative from Halton Family Voice has been attending Halton's Children's Trust Board for a number of years. In February 2014 the time of the meeting was changed to ensure young representatives could also attend. Three members from INVOLVE attended and will continue to attend as representatives. They will present on participation and remain a critical friend where involvement of children, young people and parents are concerned.

6. GOALS: WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

These goals identify what we will aim for over the coming years on participation



WHO should be involved?

Involving children, young people, parents and carers in decisions making is not just about Halton Children's Trust - it's about everyone who's work has an impact, either direct or indirect on children and young people's lives. This means all sectors – voluntary, statutory, private and community. All people who want to be involved should be given the opportunity to participate.

Public-stakeholders
Family
workers
Youth-workers
Young-people
Grand-parents
Carers
Parents
Children

How can we be involved?

Young people and parents said they would like to be involved through:



When involving you need to identify and to be clear exactly what you want to involve children and young people in and the required outcomes.

- Be clear and open with children and young people as to the level of influence that they can expect to have in the services that are provided for them.
- Once you have set your objectives, consider a number of options and methods, see advice from INVOLVE. Ask young people where and when they want to meet - ask them to advise YOU
- Make sure the timing is right you need to factor in enough time to actively engage and involve children, young people or parents. However, if the process is lengthy and drawn out people may become disillusioned and lose interest.
- Be prepared for mistakes, acknowledge you are learning and accept criticism
- Acknowledge that initiatives and projects can be established by children and young people themselves.

- It is vital to feedback to the children or young people you are working with how their information has impacted. If you don't they will be less willing to get involved in the future

We aim to follow the standards set by the National Youth Agency which gives a good basis for involving children, young people and parents. This can be found at: <http://www.nya.org.uk/quality/hear-by-right/standards-and-indicators>

You can INVOLVE through:

Many of the ideas below can be used together to show different stages of a project or piece of work, all of these methods can be designed or shaped by children, young people or parents

1. **Surveys** – these can be completed through paper or online questionnaires, cool walls, sticky notes wall, comments boxes, social media, community events, vote with gum. Questions should be either designed by young people, parents or edited by them so that the language is accessible.
2. **Focus Groups** – a form of interview involving a particular group of children, young people or parents either targeted or representative
3. **Representatives** – involving key representatives who speak on behalf of a collective group to your event, meeting or discussions. You need to make sure these young people are linked up and will speak to other children, young people or parents. They may need training or support to take this role, as well as looking at times, date and venue for the meeting. Training available via INVOLVE group.
<http://www.participationworks.org.uk/files/webfm/files/resources/k-items/participationworks/formalmeetings/Formal%20Meetings%20web%20low%20res.pdf>
4. **Peer Researchers** - Research by young people is a relatively recent concept, which has the potential to offer young people a voice within the research field, this research can be utilised to get an understanding of key themes or areas. See the children's research centre - <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/childrens-research-centre/research-children-young-people>
5. **Peer analysts** – looking at data and getting the picture behind the data
6. **Young /parent interviewers** – for the young people and parents to be an equal part of an interview panel training and support may need to be provided. <http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/43263/the-right-choice.pdf>

- 7. Young inspectors/ kite markers/Mystery shoppers** - Young people or parents trained to inspect facilities, services and venues to assess how fun, inclusive and user-friendly they are. There is the opportunity for the reports produced by the inspectors to influence future service design or changes. Currently delivered by Canal Boat Adventure Project
<http://www.youngadvisors.org.uk/where-are-we/north-west> and Halton Speak Out <http://haltonspeakout.wordpress.com/>
- 8. Peer educators** - young people and parents to run training aimed at professionals or to peers on key subjects and/or priorities
<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/improving-services/peer-education/main>
- 9. Creative methods** – the production of video recording, podcasts, art work, story writing and telling, poems, photography
- 10. Listening through play** – a creative way of listening to children through games, play and art.
- 11. Youth/parent conference/ event** – a conference or event where participants are informed on the subject and can give their view. This could also be organised by a smaller group of young people or parents
- 12. Youth budget** – an amount of money given to young people’s panel to decide what they do with it. <http://www.nya.org.uk/quality/hear-by-right-2/hbr-by-region/east-midlands/YouthBank-UK>
- 13. Young Commissioners** – Young people trained to work along with commissioners on contracts and service specifications
- 14. Take over day-** allow children, young people to run services and provision and meetings for a day
http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/takeover_day
- 15. Hand the project over** – let the parents or young people undertake their own project with a brief of what the aim is.
- 16. Speed/circuit meeting** – question and answer session on a circuit with key decision makers to put forward their view and suggestions

We need to involve in an inclusive way

Children, young people and parents with communication difficulties

If your participation process involves children with disabilities, you need to adopt an “ability approach” rather than focus only on their impairments.

You will need to consider that:

- there is a range of disabilities – physical, intellectual and psychiatric
- Some children with disabilities need the support, care or interpretation of adults or other children, such as a sibling or a young adult who works with them.
- You can support the participation of children with disabilities by:
 - recognising that some children with disabilities may choose to be in groups with others of the same age or gender
 - including children with disabilities in decision-making on the same range of topics as other children
 - providing information well in advance and in appropriate formats
 - working with people skilled in communicating with children with disabilities eg: blind and deaf children use Braille and signing
 - encouraging participation within a physically and emotionally safe setting
 - Identifying any physical barriers and removing or minimising them.

Children, Young People and Parents from different faiths and cultures

Although professionals are well aware of “non-discriminatory practice”, in some areas like Halton with low levels of diversity, children, young people and parents from different faiths and cultures can be quite isolated within their communities. The 2010 Equality Act General Duty requires public bodies, when carrying out their functions, to have “due regard” when making decisions and developing policies, and to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all 9 protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having “due regard” to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having “due regard” to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages.
- Take steps to meet different needs.
- Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

Young children

All staff directly working with young children, whether in early years, health or social sectors have a vital role to play in listening and responding to the voice of the child. Listening to young children is an integral part of understanding what they are feeling and what it is they need from their early years' experience. It is key to providing environments in which all young children feel confident, safe and powerful, ensuring they have the time and space to express themselves in whatever form suits them.



An active listening culture is needed when working with young children, which nurtures day to day listening and provides opportunities for young children to make decisions about matters that directly affect them. The voice of the child should be used to inform the design, planning and delivery of services, together with the voices of practitioners and parents.

An active listener:

- Tunes into the child to understand and interpret the messages they convey
- Recognises the many ways their key children communicate
- Is the one to whom the child can express their feelings and interests
- Ensures the triangulation of voices is heard and acknowledged to
- Provides the best service for the child

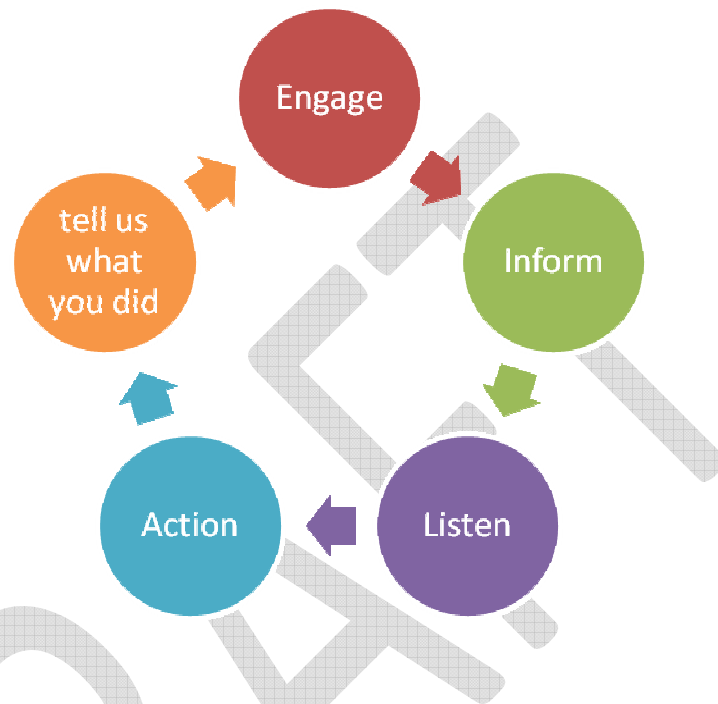
More challenging, perhaps, is the concept of children and babies actually influencing decision-making in their settings. The children in our centres are often not at an age or stage where they can give their opinions verbally. It requires a change of mind set to recognise what they are saying and how they are saying it, and to translate this into strategic planning the following reminders can help:

- Recognising a child's many visual and verbal languages.
- Assigning space for children's voices to be heard.
- Making time for children's voices to be heard.
- Providing genuine choices.
- Subscribing to reflective practice.

How will we do it?

Participation is everyone's responsibility

In order to involve there is a process to follow as shown in the diagram below. In order for this to work there needs to be a genuine desire to involve children, young people and parents in decision making, rather than something that has to be done.



All partners of Halton Children's Trust need to:

- Train those less experienced in engagement and participation
- Keep up to date with participation developments in other areas and countries
- Map out participation and evaluate regularly
- Create opportunity to share experience and practice
- Build a resource base of creative participation that can be used by Halton Children's Trust and its partners

Halton is committed to participation

INVOLVE's commitment

The Participation and Change group will act as the steering group for participation and engagement activities. It will be established as a Halton Children's Trust advisory group to oversee the implementation of this strategy and challenge participation processes to ensure the continual development.

Children and young people are experts on their own lives and they are the best people to speak about their life experiences. The Participation group will support children and young people to be involved in decision making processes and ensure that they are provided with a range of opportunities to have their say.

Integrated Commissioning Commitment

The active involvement of children and young people in service design, delivery and review is at the heart of the commissioning process. Those children and young people who use services, and the families and carers that support them are best placed to provide informed opinion about how well services are performing, how effective they are and how they could be improved to better meet the needs of local people.

For more about the commissioning framework [click here](#)

Policy commitment

We will ensure that in all of our work to develop policies, plans and strategies in Halton for all agencies and services within Halton Children's Trust offers the opportunity for all to be actively involved at every stage. This will be in the development, design and launch of each. At the end of each piece of work we will ensure that all agencies and services let young people, parents and carers know how their involvement has influenced the policy, plan or strategy, the difference it has made to services and how young people, parents and carers can continue to be involved in the future.

Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum Commitment

Halton Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum is open to all voluntary sector organisations in the borough working with children and young people; including full time, part time and uniformed provision. Organisations with CYP VSF

are expected to fully commit to the overall ethos. We have a commitment to provide opportunities and empower children, young peoples and parent/carers to ensure meaningful involvement at all levels within our organisations and services.

Riverside College Commitment

Riverside College is committed to consulting young people on all aspects of the organisation, including teaching and learning, facilities, support services and overall strategic direction. Educational involvement includes the need for every individual to be included in shaping their own learning experience. There is significant importance placed on learner voice activities which enables learners to make a positive contribution to the quality improvement processes within the College to enhance student success.

Halton Schools Commitment

Although every school community is unique, in Halton schools, the pupil, parent/carer voice and participation are an integral part of the ethos. There is universal acceptance of the rights respecting agenda with a focus on responsibility. Children and young people take initiative, have ownership and are empowered. It is recognised that parental engagement in learning is the key to securing and raising achievement and there is dynamic and meaningful consultation. There is a strong commitment encouraging, enhancing and extending the involvement of everyone in our school communities to promote participatory environments, enriching educational opportunities, experiences and life prospects.

Cheshire West Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Service Commitment

We are committed to involving the young people and their parents/carers known to the service by including their views and involvement throughout all stages of their contact with us. We are dedicated to giving young people and their families the opportunity to feed directly into the process using a number of different methods. We believe that feedback is vital in both to inform and involve the young person but also to improve service. All feedback processes are discussed at Youth Offending Service management level, analysis of the feedback is fed back to all Youth Offending Service staff and young people and parents/carers concerned, ensuring the continual improvement of our service.

Bridgewater Commitment

Bridgewater community health care trust is a local provider of community health services to children young people and families in Halton. Our services include midwifery, health visiting, school nursing, children and adults community nursing, therapies, medical dental and audiology services. As a local provider we are committed to involving the local community in the development and improvement of services. We achieve this through our parent and young people partners programme, in the development of information and publicity materials and including young people on selection panels when recruiting key staff for roles in children's services. We strive to involve young people by working in partnership with them, delivering training packages to improve communication and interaction to young people. Bridgewater is fully committed to the involvement and participation of young people. We offer the opportunity for young people and their families to be trust members of Bridgewater and shape the health care trust they want to see in their community.

Police and crime commissioner for Cheshire's Commitment

As Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire I am committed to ensuring that the views of children and young people are incorporated into my Police and Crime Plan and that these views are used to shape policy and policing practice. I have appointed a Youth Ambassador to champion youth issues and ensure that young people have a point of contact to register their views. I am committed to listening and working with young people on issues that affect them relating to all aspects of crime. I will work alongside young people to make sure that information, procedures and policies are relevant to their needs.

Halton Children's Centre Commitment

Halton children Centre actively encourage parents and children to give their views, ideas and thoughts, using their local knowledge to support the growth and development of children's centre services . Parents and children will be listened to, be respected, have ideas and views shared with Advisory Boards, have opportunities to share experiences in a safe and welcoming environment. We will give parents and carers the opportunity to feedback on annual satisfaction surveys and use age appropriate tools and resources to ensure children participate and reach their full potential.

7. ACTIONS AND MEASURES

Halton Children's Trust Participation Utopia would look like:

- The workforce has a strong understanding of true participation and involvement of children, young people and parents.
- Those who are participating are the most relevant to do so and are representative of the population of Halton's Families.
- The pathways and opportunities to get involved are publically visible and widely promoted.
- Active participation is celebrated with the sharing of good practice examples.
- Involving children, Young people as equal partners in decision making should be embedded at all levels and in every day practice.

In order to assess improvement of participation we will:

- Annual review of strategy collating evidence of participation
- To work with data and customer intelligence in order to evaluate levels of public involvement in the decisions made by Halton's Children's Trust.
- Develop Halton self-assessment tool of participation that can be utilised by services and provision and feed into future data.

8. TESTIMONIAL

Gerald Meehan

I take great pleasure in presenting to you the Halton Children's Trust Partnership Participation Strategy. This Strategy will be a key document for building upon each partner agency's knowledge, experience and commitment in engaging children, young people and families in participation over the next three years. This is because young people themselves, parents and key engagement officers have led the development of the Strategy throughout. The Strategy is a great example of participation that is now seen throughout the work of Halton Children's Trust.

I would like to thank all whose continued efforts to develop children and young people's participation help improve services and empower their communities to influence decision-making. I am confident that this Strategy will guide and strengthen participation from children and families in Halton in our work.

Councillor – Ged Philbin

This Strategy provides a framework for the delivery of participation through services across Halton Children's Trust. The Strategy sets out clear aims to increase levels of participation and engage children and young people in local democracy, build young people and family's capacity and influence across all of Halton Children's Trust's work while at the same time offering ways to develop young people's skills to lead activities in their communities and increase the positive perception of children and young people. Our ambition is to embed participation in everything we do and to make it every body's business. By engaging, listening and involving children and young people when making decisions we can ensure that services are effective, efficient and meet the needs of the communities they serve.