

Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2021-25

For Nottingham City Children's Partnership Board

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CYP Participation Strategy 2021-25

Created to help improve opportunities for children and young people to be heard, and have more influence over the decisions which affect their lives and the world they live in.

This process is called *participation*. The words *engagement*, *involvement*, *active citizenship*, *co-production* and *co-creation* are sometimes also used to describe the same process.

The strategy is for all members of the Children's Partnership, to help us grow a culture of participation across all of our work, and make the voice of children and young people's stronger and more influential.

This is everybody's business, and everybody has a part to play.

What is gained from a good participation culture?

Sharing views, expressing opinions and articulating ideas contributes to a safe, healthy and happy childhood.

When we listen to the views of children and young people and involve them in decision-making, we can also

- learn more about what we have to do to support them to achieve good outcomes in life
- design and deliver services that more closely meet their needs
- more openly share power and responsibility with them
- help children and young people develop the skills and experience they need not only for childhood but also for their adult lives

To do this well we need to apply some principles and good practice.

Why do we do this?

The drivers for participation are numerous, and include both statutory and non-statutory imperatives, including:

- Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Organisational strategies and plans
- External inspection and best practice review
- Citywide governance and learning engagement partnerships
- Child Friendly Nottingham

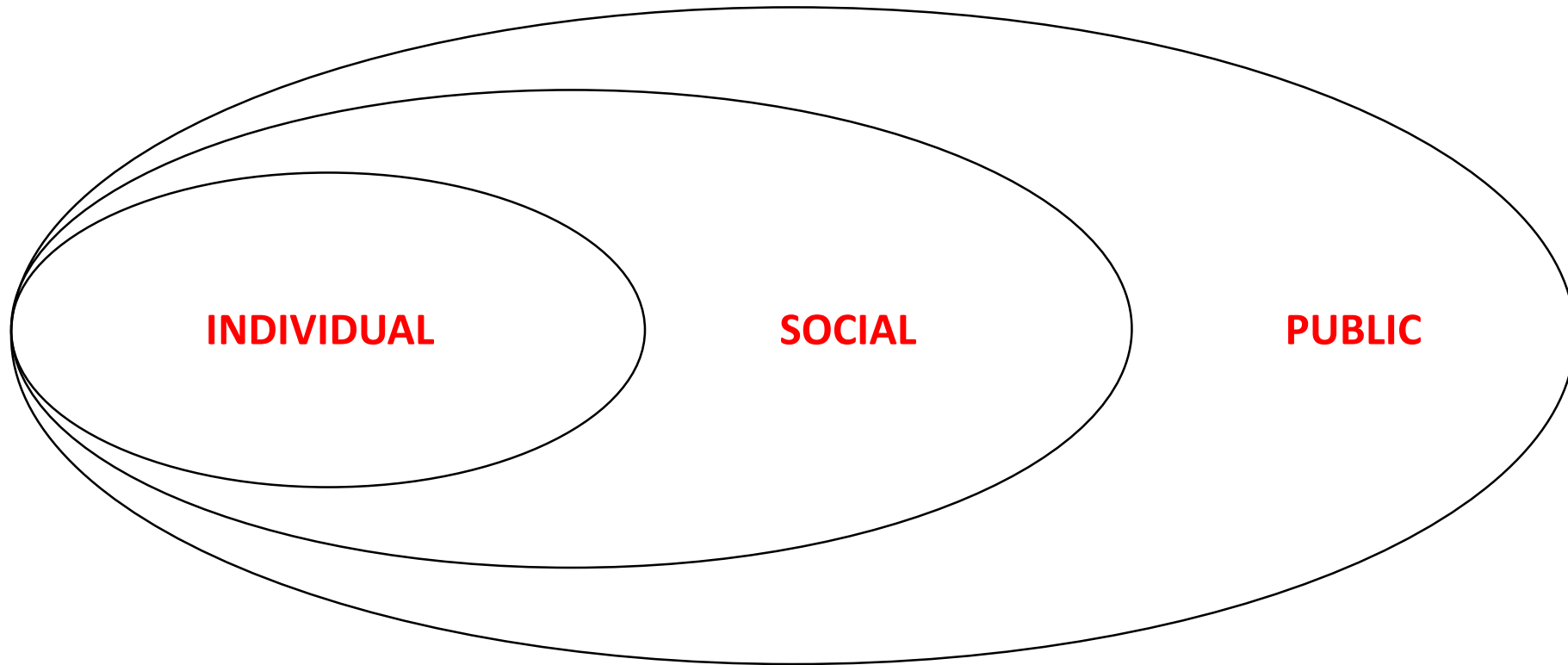
Different approaches for different situations

The strategy aims to empower children and young people to participate in decision-making across a range of contexts, depending on where and when they want to have their voice heard.

- at individual level
- in social environments
- in more formal group settings and meetings

In all contexts we should be able to demonstrate through clear evidence the impact their voice has on shaping decisions made about their life, and on improving services and organisations.

Different contexts for participation



Developing our participation culture

We've been doing this work for some time, so we have a good base from which to grow our participation culture.

- Annual Participation in Governance programme, with a calendar of standing group meetings in place to make sure we hear the voice of children and young people
- Consultation and co-production is a regular feature of this work, covering a broad range of themes, accessible by all partners
- CiC Council work informs the Corporate Parenting Board, influencing service improvement, better systems to evidence participation, and workforce development
- Growing use of digital and virtual tools to widen access and respond to needs of users
- Strong platforms for participation in citywide learning engagement partnerships
- Board partners have embedded participation in their programmes, for example Small Steps Big Changes

Aims of a whole-partnership approach

- Better understand how to support participation of vulnerable children and young people and improve practice
- Increase the range and depth of participation activity - more opportunities, leading to greater impact
- Increase use and availability of technology to improve virtual participation
- Instil a greater sense of responsibility by all partners, at all levels, making participation culture integral to the success of their mission
- Apply participation values and principles to all aspects of Children's Partnership work, and give it high priority throughout our work
- Enable partners to better share planning and resources for participation, to increase the capacity to respond to demands for participation work

To improve opportunities for the participation of children in need of help and protection, we will:

Bring oversight of internal processes for participation by Children in Care, SEND and Children in Need under a single management process, sponsored by senior officers within Children's Integrated Services.

Better link children and young people's voice to practice improvement by improving feedback and recording on case file and increasing auditing, increasing involvement of CYP in 'practice weeks', and improving internal diagnostic activity.

Strengthen links to SEND participation providers, refresh the Your Voice for Care Leavers group, and develop opportunities for participation within Youth Justice Service, following inspection.

Develop creative models within the Reviewing Service to encouraging meaningful participation in reviews and better recording, feedback and action

Use the voice of young people to shape culture and language of care, through joint work between practice forum and CiC Council

Review advocacy contract arrangements to try to maximise the participation resource for Child Protection cases

To improve our partnership culture of participation to give young people a voice in decisions that affect them, we will:

Set up a Partnership level steering group, to enable partners to share practice and oversee progress of the Participation Strategy and own actions for their own improvement initiatives

Improve the range of participation process available to vulnerable children and young people, including more options for virtual engagement using digital tools and platforms, and improving the level of workforce support for this

Strengthen oversight and reporting arrangements for commissioned work including SEND and Young Carer participation

Continue to strengthen the role of partners in delivery of our shared corporate parenting responsibility.

Strengthen partnerships for participation, including links to schools through DSL Network around voice of the child and work with VCS to support wider representation and diversity of voices

Support and promote participation-based approaches in citywide learning engagement partnerships, including the Challenge Cultural Education Partnership, Festival of Science and Curiosity, and RSE Day

Support and contribute to the development of Nottingham's Child Friendly City plan

Support the Workforce Strategy objectives for co-productive partnership working and work with regional local authority partners through the East Midlands Regional Participation Leads Group, contributing to the Regional Improvement Plan

Report annually to the Children's Partnership Board on the outcome of the strategy, and celebrate the work done by children and young people to influence decision-making across the Partnership

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