

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP FORUM – 28 JULY 2010

Children and Young People's Service Plan 2011-2014
Strategy for consultation with Children and Young People

1. BACKGROUND

The East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan sets out the priorities and commitments of partner agencies to meet agreed local and national outcomes.

The Plan is for all children and young people under the age of 18, and those aged up to 21 who have ever been in care or looked after by a local authority.

This strategy describes the approach to involving children and young people in developing the priorities of the Plan for the period 2011-14.

Consultation is integral to the service planning process and to ensure children and young people are enabled and empowered to express their views, a range of consultation tools and mechanisms will be employed.

2. THE STRATEGY

Consultation will build on the participation and engagement work already established and working well in East Ayrshire;

- The Children and Young People's Representative Forum
- 4 Local Youth Forums which sit alongside the Local Community Planning Forums and Equalities Forum.
- Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People's Forum
- Have Your Say
- COGS (Continuous Opportunities for Gathering and Sharing)
- Who Cares Scotland (advocacy on behalf of vulnerable children and young people)

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People is current undertaking a national consultation, "A Right Blether " , and has published a range of child friendly, easy to use consultation materials. These will be utilized where relevant and appropriate.

Reflecting the connections across children's service planning, community planning and child protection planning and to gain maximum benefit, the consultation content will be structured to ensure relevance for strategic planning purposes.

Given the backdrop of economic recession, public sector cuts and significant societal change, it is all the more important that children's service planning is in touch with and reflects the needs and concerns of children and young people.

3. STANDARDS

The Strategy and subsequent Consultation Action Plan will reflect the National Standards for Community Engagement;

1. **INVOLVEMENT:** we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement.
2. **SUPPORT:** we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.
3. **PLANNING:** we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.
4. **METHODS:** we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
5. **WORKING TOGETHER:** we will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently.
6. **SHARING INFORMATION:** we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants.
7. **WORKING WITH OTHERS:** we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.
8. **IMPROVEMENT:** we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.
9. **FEEDBACK:** we will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.
10. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement.

4. METHODOLOGY

To ensure the consultation process is accessible and inclusive and reflects as much as possible the age range and diversity of children and young people's circumstances and views, a range of consultation tools and mechanisms will be employed.

The final mechanisms and content will be informed by the views of two consultative panels, one each of primary and secondary school aged children and young people.

It is intended to make use of both traditional methods and new technologies including some or all of the following:

- 6 specific focus groups drawn predominantly from children and young people who have particular needs.
- Online survey through schools; Community Planning Partnership website/Dialogue Youth web pages.
- Postcard survey for youth outreach services
- Accessible survey materials/ methods as guided by Heads of Special Schools and Supported Learning Units
- 8 VOXUR sessions which allows responses by short film or audio
- MP3s
- The Mosaic Approach for use with younger children by using cameras or drawings.

In keeping with the COGS model of securing children and young people's views as expressed to practitioners, the consultation process will, particularly for young children, rely on practitioner support. Specific materials will be developed to assist practitioners explain what the Children and Young People's Service Plan is and to prompt consideration of the priorities.

Consultation will be undertaken through a 3 strand approach:

- **Utilise existing consultation arrangements:**
 - Children and Young Person's Representative Forum
 - Local Youth Forums x 4
 - Student Councils
 - Year Group Councils
 - COGS feedback to date
 - Dialogue Youth
 - College Student Councils
 - Young Scot Hot 500 (EA members)
 - Equalities Forum
 - PPF Young People's Forum
 - Young Tenants Forum (if operational)

- **Targeted consultation** with vulnerable children and young people, “hard to reach” groups at risk of being marginalized and those who require accessible consultation formats:
 - Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People’s Forum
 - Children and Young People subject to child protection procedures
 - Young people who are looked after and leaving the care system
 - Children and young people accessing Child and Adult Mental Health Services.
 - Young carers
 - Young homeless (including those in Women’s Aid refuges)
 - Children and young people of travelling families
 - Children attending special schools, supported learning units and Daldorch School.
 - Those in alternative educational placements either in or outwith the Authority
 - Young people who are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgendered
 - Ethnic minority groups i.e. Young Asian Women’s group, KULOC
 - Young prisoners

- **Broad sweep consultation** intended to reach as many of the child and young person population 2-21 years as possible. Linking to relevant outcomes and levels of the Curriculum for Excellence and undertaken mainly online through:
 - Early Education and Childcare Services,
 - Primary schools
 - Secondary schools
 - Additional Support Needs Services
 - Health Services
 - Youth Outreach Services including Youth Express Bus
 - Leisure Services
 - Independent sector children’s services providers.

5. **TIMESCALE**

Consultation will take place between August and November 2010.

The Steering group will collate and report findings to the Community Health Partnership Officer Locality Group Children and Young People in January.

Given the range of consultation tools to be used and therefore the variety of formats responses might take, the final consultation report is likely to comprise of

a written report including statistical information, sound bites, video and possibly scribed representation.

6. FEEDBACK TO PARTICIPANTS

It is good practice to provide timely feedback to those who take the time and make the effort to share their views. While the Steering group can make arrangements to thank participants, it is suggested that actual feedback takes the form of a children and young people's version of the Plan, made available electronically and in accessible format.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Health Partnership Forum endorse the strategy for consultation with children and young people.