

# hear by right

standards framework for the participation of children and young people

Revised Edition 2010

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National Youth Agency



Local Government Association

[www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright)

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## What's on the CD

The enclosed CD inside the front cover contains vital resources for translating *Hear by Right* from words to action. These include:

- Getting started: a brief introduction to what's on the CD
- A PowerPoint presentation on *Hear by Right*
- The mapping and planning tool to develop the participation strategy and identify priorities
- *What's Changed* tool for recording and sharing stories of what's changed as a result of children and young people's participation
- A version of *Hear by Right* in Word to enable use of key text in any participation strategy
- *Building standards* for the active involvement of children and young people to ensure their full participation in the processes, including a range of practical tools for joint work with children and young people
- *Hear by Right* briefings for Children and Young People's Trusts, schools, colleges, health, Third Sector and housing and communities.
- Participation Works resources for Community, Voluntary and other Third Sector organisations

## What's on the web

*Hear by Right* is far bigger than this book. On the website at [www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright) you will find a wealth of extra information and shared learning.

You can subscribe to the latest *Hear by Right* news.

The website includes details on getting started with *Hear by Right*, stories of how others are using *Hear by Right* and downloads of all the resources on the CD.

At the core of the website are the 'explore hear by right in detail' pages, designed to help locate shared mapping and planning examples and to find shared resources by organisation, sector or indicator.

The website also includes the 'local network map' allowing you to locate other organisations in your area who are using *Hear by Right*.



# Introduction

Welcome to the 2010 edition of *Hear by Right*. The tried and tested participation standards framework and indicators remain almost identical since the 2005 revision. Our principles are the same too: that children and young people have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect them; their participation is essential to improve services and respond to their needs; and that the shared aim of this participation should be change.

There are four main new aspects to this edition:

- How any organisation can use *Hear by Right* to show evidence of an 'adequate' level of participation by children and young people
- How to make the important distinction between What's Changing in the organisation – stories of internal change – and What's Changed for children and young people – what's better in their lives
- How *Hear by Right* is becoming more useful for community, voluntary and other Third Sector organisations as a central part of the Participation Works offer, funded by the BIG Lottery Fund (BLF)
- How all organisations and children and young people can make more practical use of the *Hear by Right* standards using the additional tools on the new CD and even more on the new *Hear by Right* shared learning website

**'*Hear by Right* gives us a common participation language within Catch22 and across many of our partnerships. It gives us the framework we need to take forward our work across Catch22 on the active involvement of young people. It gives us the HOW and a consistency of process, not just the "what" and the "why". Crucially it gives us the means of evidence which can work at a number of difference levels across Catch22 and ties in well with our Continuous Performance Improvement agenda.'**

– Elaine Floodgate, Head of Performance and Quality, Catch22

**'*Hear by Right* has made a huge impact on my work in two ways. First, it opened the way to young people's participation, becoming a corporate strategy, instead of just something the Youth Service did. Second, the recognition that young people are not a single group and that different methods and mechanisms are required and it's not a one size fits all.'**

– Robin Konieczny, Citizenship Coordinator,  
Norfolk County Active

The extension of the "duty to involve" the local community, inspected through the Comprehensive Area Assessment, as well as Every Child Matters and Aiming High, have added to central and local government push for participation. An increasing number of funders and commissioners of services demand evidence of participation as part of the conditions or service level agreement. Standards are crucial to help assess what has been achieved and to be a catalyst for further action.

The *Hear by Right* mapping and planning tool or the Participation Works *Hear by Right* self-assessment tool both allow your organisation to show evidence of your current level of children and young people's participation against the standards and to create your plan for improvement. The evidence remains self-assessed, because you are best-placed to judge what is appropriate for your organisation in your circumstances.

But 'self-assessed' also demands that children and young people endorse or add to any adult-based evidence. This ensures all stakeholders get a fuller picture and helps to safeguard against tokenism. *Hear by Right* Building Standards includes a range of resources, mostly developed by children and young people, to help their participation in the mapping and planning process.

**"*Hear by Right* is a very clear and powerful framework which allows organisations and services to use the tools at all levels. Used as part of partnership working it gives clear pathways for development from Emerging to Established and Advanced levels. Using *Hear by Right* has enabled partners to share a common language for participation and a common framework for development. Having a toolkit like *Hear by Right* aids partnership approaches to developing participation for all children and young people."**

– Sheila Lock, Chief Executive, Leicester City Council and Strategic Partnership

**'*Hear by Right* offers a robust and challenging framework for any organisation that is serious about putting young people at the heart of their services. It is proving invaluable in our work to continually improve the quality and extent of young people's active involvement with UK Youth Parliament.'**

– Andy Hamflett, Chief Executive, UK Youth Parliament

# Welcome



“Children and young people are today’s citizens. They are integral to every community. They have a right to be heard and taken seriously and their voice and influence is crucial to improve services to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes. The Children Act reflects this. Children and Young People’s Trusts are vital to help achieve this. As strategic lead, provider and commissioner, it is essential that Trusts consider and respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of children and young people and involve them in decisions that affect their lives. *Hear by Right* encourages a strategic and systematic approach to building in their participation and has our full support.



*Hear by Right* offers a tried and tested standards framework for organisations to assess and improve policy and practice on the participation of children and young people. It was developed by The NYA and LGA with local authorities and partner organisations. It is used widely by councils and other public bodies such as Primary Care Trusts, schools, the police and housing authorities and across the voluntary and community sector. *Hear by Right* is an excellent tool to use across Children and Young People’s Trusts, to map current evidence of participation practice and to plan priority developments. We commend it to you.”

**Janice Shiner, Chair, the National Youth Agency**  
**Councillor Shireen Ritchie, the Local Government Association**

*Hear by Right* is a seminal tool for helping organisations involve children and young people – one of the most important stakeholders who often get overlooked in society. I urge all organisations to review their work practices in light of this standards framework and to assess how effectively they try and involve young people.



There is a real need for organisations like schools to translate the good intentions, government guidelines and the law into meaningful and effective ways that children and young people are heard and can influence the decision making which takes place. Citizenship cannot be taught within the confines of the classroom – the principles need to be practised to make the participation and action real. I applaud the work of The National Youth Agency in helping create and sustain organisational change which will hopefully lead to a better deal for children and young people and the development of a more engaged and proactive society.

**Rajeeb Dey, first National Co-ordinator, ESSA (English Secondary Students’ Association)**

Children, apparently, should be seen and not heard. Young people, it seems, must be content with services created for them, not by them and under 18s must be content to express their views to one another, while the wider world takes no notice. If these views continue to prevail, then, sadly, not only young people, but society itself will suffer. Young people will continue to grow up disillusioned and alienated by an adult society which treats them as second class citizens. Youth and education services will continue to regularly fail the young through a lack of flexibility and an inability to respond to our needs and problems and the innovative and creative ideas so often created by young people will be entirely lost to their communities.



*Hear by Right* aims to change this situation. It acknowledges and teaches that children and young people cannot be seen but not heard. We are here by right: we must not only be seen, but must be catered for and engaged in the societies we grow up in. And we are hear by right: we must also be listened to, consulted and involved in decision making. This is not a plea to be heard. It is a right.

**Kierra Box, Co-founder, Hands Up For Peace (HUFPP) and Patron of the National Youth Agency**

# Why involve children and young people?

## Five reasons for active involvement

- Children and young people's voice and influence will lead to significant changes for them and the wider community.
- Services will be more effective, better targeted and received. This saves money.
- The health of our democratic community depends on the active involvement of children and young people.
- Local and national policies encourage and require it and our performance will be evaluated on how well we do this.
- The involvement of children and young people is key to gaining funding and sustaining developments.

And it is children and young people's right to be involved in the decisions that affect them (Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, or UNCRC). Of course, children and young people also have the right not to get involved if they wish.

## The benefits of involving children and young people

### Benefits for the organisation and its partners

- Information can be gained from children and young people as citizens and customers about their changing attitudes and needs, their views as to what constitutes quality in service provision and barriers to accessing services.
- Children and young people can bring fresh perspectives and new ideas about services, policies and democratic processes, helping tackle key objectives and promoting social inclusion.

- Services and policies can be designed, delivered and evaluated based on actual rather than presumed needs.

### Benefits for children and young people

- Children and young people can build on existing skills and develop new ones, increasing confidence and self-esteem.
- Children and young people may better understand particular organisations and how to influence them.
- Children and young people benefit from new and better services that have changed and improved in response to their needs.

### Benefits for the wider community

- There is a more vibrant local democracy through the active involvement of children and young people.
- Community cohesion is fostered through the inclusion of children and young people in local decision-making.
- There is an empowering environment that raises aspirations among children and young people and the wider community.

Whatever the motivation, children and young people are citizens living in the same areas, using the same services, with similar rights and responsibilities as other people. They have the right to be heard and involved in shaping and evaluating services that affect them.

## Some of the tasks in which children and young people can be involved

Planning and organising	Doing and delivering	Checking, reviewing and learning
Identifying needs	Designing and undertaking promotional work, including for self-initiated projects	Recording and analysing data using ICT
Mapping and assessing provision	Doing outreach work	Evaluating performance and results
Defining the key aspects of a good service	Managing own or helping to run joint projects and services	Reporting to various interested groups
Developing strategy and plans, including user-led projects	Campaigning for change in policy and provision	Gathering views from other children and young people
Defining quality and standards	Advocating for individuals or groups	Responding to comments, compliments, complaints
Planning training	Recruiting and training staff	Appraising staff
Assessing contractors/suppliers	Helping secure money and resources	Celebrating achievements and progress
Involved in commissioning	Grant-making and participatory budgeting	Reviewing budgets

## To what degree?

'Fundamentally, our aim is not to stop until children and young people's participation becomes a routine, unremarkable part of daily life,' said one local authority councillor. When one service asked what roles children and young people could *not* do – assuming the necessary training, support and information – the answer was 'none'.

In practice, children and young people's participation can vary enormously, as illustrated by Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992). This has eight rungs, climbing from manipulation, through adult-led but shared decisions, reaching towards children and young people initiating action and sharing decisions with adults.

The Ladder helps you judge the level of participation and how it can be raised if appropriate. It is also a useful metaphor as it only needs to be climbed as far up as fits the job in hand, which is not always to the top.

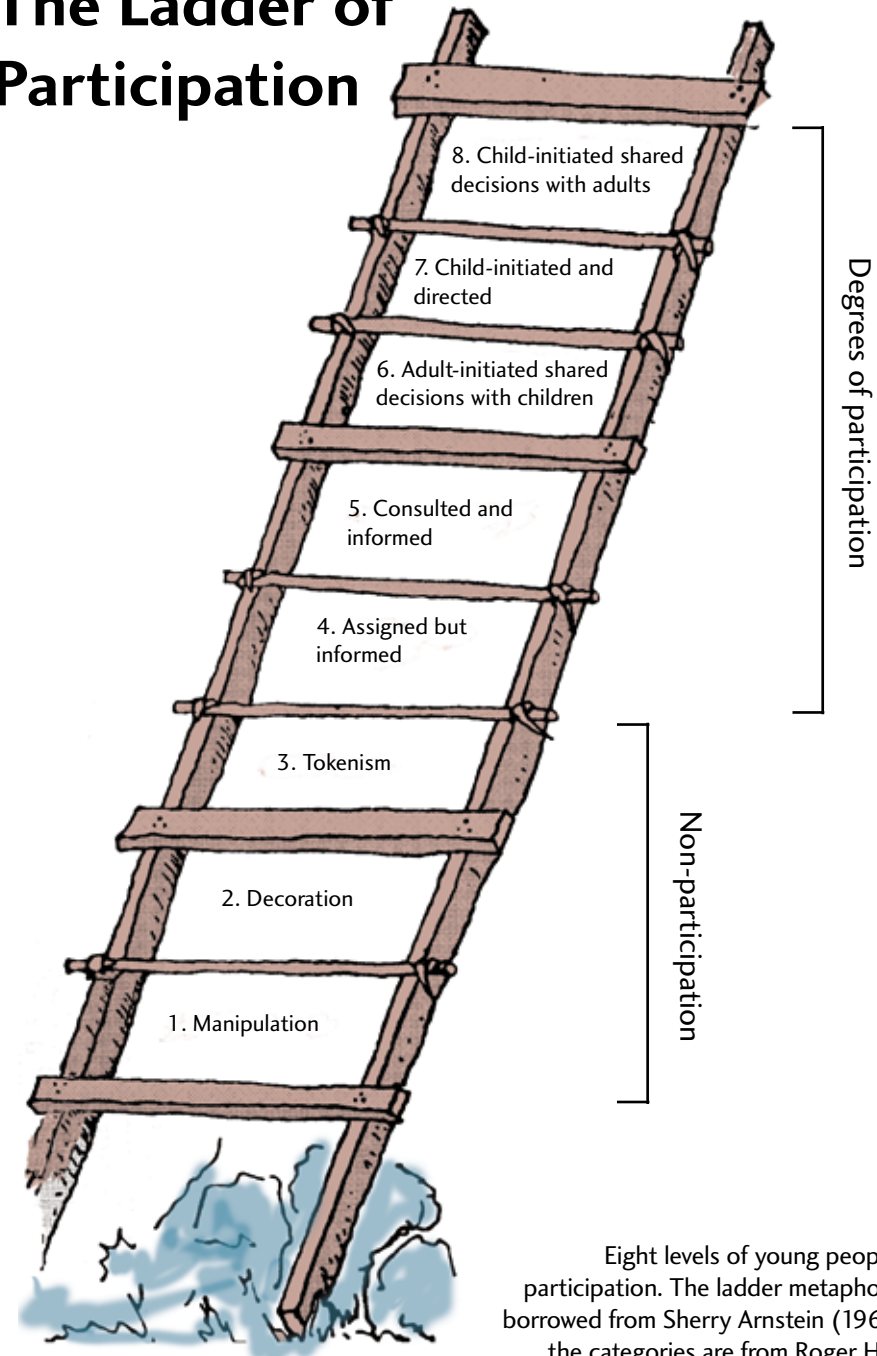
A range of approaches to participation and their relative strengths and weaknesses are set out in the *Hear by Right* briefing, *Involving children and young people: an introduction* (NYA, 2009). The briefing also highlights important ways to make sure involving children and young people is done in a safe and sound way, covering consent, protection, access, rewards and evaluation.

Further information, resources and Web links are in its companion, *Involving children and young people: where to find out more* (The NYA, 2006). Go to the *Hear by Right* web pages for these and other tools and examples, including enabling the voice and influence of younger children and disabled young people.

**'We have launched a major initiative to not only hear the views of children and young people on the services we provide for them in Richmond but also to take seriously and commit ourselves as strategic managers to follow up their powerful and wide-ranging ideas about how to include them effectively. The work of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership will help drive forward the key messages from the children and young people. I am committed to ensuring that the participation of children and young people is at the heart of all the changes we need to make.'**

**– Barbara Murray, Deputy Director, Children's Services – Head of Specialist Services and member of the Trust Board, London Borough of Richmond.**

## The Ladder of Participation



Eight levels of young people's participation. The ladder metaphor is borrowed from Sherry Arnstein (1969); the categories are from Roger Hart.

# The standards

Using the *Hear by Right* standards framework secures the sustained and effective participation of children and young people. The standards enable its continual improvement in an organisation. They can be applied to all services that directly or indirectly affect children and young people. The standards encourage inclusion of a wide range of children and young people, while urging care in choosing approaches appropriate to different ages, abilities and understanding.

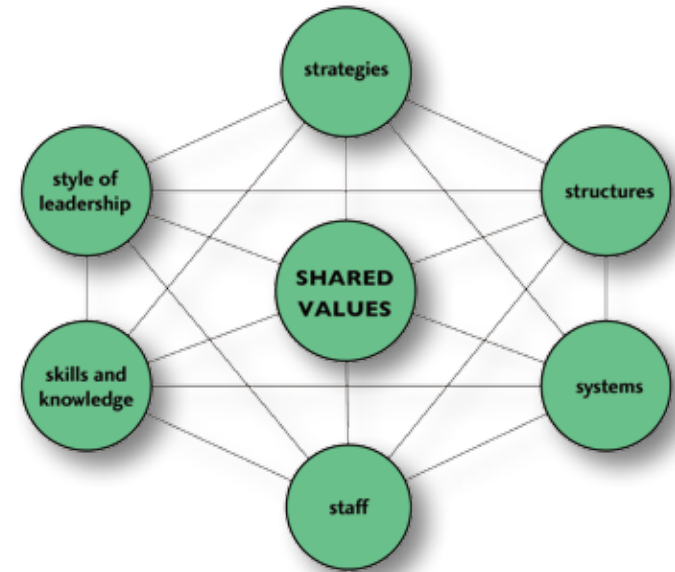
There are seven standards: **shared values, strategies, structures, systems, staff, skills and knowledge, style of leadership**. They form a practical, evidence based model of how to achieve change in an organisation, showing how each relies on the other to move forward. The **shared values** are at the core of the framework. The standards require self-assessment at three levels of performance, described as Emerging, Established and Advanced. Each level builds on the previous one. Emerging level covers the fundamental elements of participation in any organisation. There are seven indicators for each of the seven standards.

The pages that follow cover each of the seven standards, with commentary, questions, indicators and ideas for evidence for each level. Evidence may be from paper, electronic, verbal records or direct observation. It may be gained from practitioners, managers and leaders, as well as from children and young people themselves.

The National Youth Agency believes that an organisation can show an adequate level of children and young people's participation by completing the Emerging level of the *Hear by Right* standards, with accompanying evidence that participation has led to change both in the organisation and in children and young people's lives. There are other ways to start to use *Hear by Right*. Some of these are described in the **How To** section at the back of the book. Find the process that best suits your organisation as you don't need to do it all at once. Make sure it's manageable and useful, but also that you include evidence from children and young people at some stage.

**The evidence for an adequate level comes in three parts**, with all three endorsed by children and young people:

a) **Scoring 2 across Emerging level indicators.** Emerging level in *Hear by Right* focuses on the essential internal ways for an organisation to deliver meaningful participation. The *Hear by Right* mapping and planning tool or Participation Works *Hear by Right* Self-Assessment Tool has a self-assessed scoring system. For the participation to be adequate, staff and children and young people should together agree that there is a minimum of '2' (meaning 'In place, but needs



improving') for all indicators at Emerging level. We believe that you are best-placed to judge what score is appropriate for your organisation in your circumstances, but 'self-assessed' also demands that children and young people endorse or add to adult-based evidence.

- b) **Stories of What's Changing in the organisation.** The *Hear by Right* map sets out evidence of children and young people's participation in the organisation. The case studies of What's Changing in the Organisation will build on this brief evidence to flesh out the true extent of the children and young people's role. There is a tool on the *Hear by Right* web pages and on the CD to offer a suggested structure for this. The case studies should include direct input from children and young people. For example, how do children and young people describe the extent of their contribution to the recruitment and selection process?
- c) **Examples of What's Changed for children and young people.** The *What's Changed* tool is also on the web pages and CD. It helps to prove how children and young people's lives are now healthier, safer, etc thanks to the effects of their participation. The evidence of this will come both from adults and, most importantly, from children and young people themselves. With regard to Every Child Matters their participation will always be 'Making a positive contribution', but in most cases it will also show one or more of the other four outcomes, which are Staying safe, Being healthy, Enjoying and achieving and having Economic well-being. Go to [www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright) for an extensive and inspiring national archive of examples.

Often children and young people’s participation in an organisation is very good, but the recording and evidencing of it is less good. The NYA believes that all stakeholders can be confident of an organisation reaching and proving an adequate level of participation by using the Emerging level of *Hear by Right*.

The self-assessment process is repeated for **Established** and **Advanced** levels. At each level, organisations need to agree a minimum score of ‘2’ for all indicators, with two stories of change in the organisation and two examples of what’s changed in children and young people’s lives. Tools to help with this are on the CD and website.

	a) <i>Hear by Right</i> scores	b) What’s Changing in the organisation – stories of internal change	c) What’s Changed for children and young people – what’s better in their lives
Emerging Level	Minimum of 2 scored for all Emerging indicators. Agreed by children and young people.	Two stories of participation, building on evidence in the <i>Hear by Right</i> map	Two What’s Changed examples framed in the Every Child Matters outcomes

**‘*Hear by Right* helped YouthBank UK to pinpoint and celebrate our successes as a fully youth-led organisation. We know there are always ways to improve and we found *Hear by Right* a flexible and helpful way to plan our future strategy.’**

– Mary Mills, former Chief Executive, YouthBank UK

**‘The British Youth Council (BYC) supports the *Hear by Right* standards as an important tool for helping young people be active citizens in their local communities. The standards help increase young people’s understanding of their local authority and partner organisations work and provide a blueprint for organisations on how to actively involve young people in all their decision-making.’**

– James Cathcart, Chief Executive, British Youth Council

# External validation

*Hear by Right* is a self assessment tool. It sets out clear expectations to ensure integrity and robustness, including the participation of children and young people in the mapping and planning process. The NYA and LGA do not offer independent validation or accreditation for *Hear by Right*. Were this of interest to organisations and partnerships, there are a number of choices, two of which are indicated below.

## ***Hear by Right* and Quality Mark for services for young people**

The participation of children and young people may be validated as part of wider organisational standards, such as The NYA’s Quality Mark scheme. The Quality Mark is an externally assessed quality assurance framework covering 11 standards to support the development and improvement in the quality management systems of any organisation working with young people. *Hear by Right* is signposted as a key tool for achieving the ‘Involving children and young people’ standard. Go to [www.nya.org.uk/qualitymark](http://www.nya.org.uk/qualitymark) for more information.

## ***Hear by Right* and Investing in Children**

The NYA and Investing in Children partnership offers external validation of children and young people’s participation leading to change. Partners agree a three stage process over three years which will lead to formal membership:

- Using *Hear by Right* to build participation across the organisation.
- Implementing a staff development programme on participation skills and knowledge, jointly developed and delivered by the partnership.
- Seeking external validation by children and young people through the Investing in Children programme, which assesses evidence of dialogue and evidence of change.

**“Portsmouth is proud to be the first Trust and council in the country to bring together in one programme the nationally recognised *Hear by Right* standards and the means of external validation of participation and change through direct evidence from children and young people – the Investing in Children Membership Scheme.”**

– Lynda Fisher, Strategic Director, Portsmouth City Council, Chair - Children & Young People’s Strategic Partnership Board



# Shared values for the participation of children and young people at the centre of the *Hear by Right* standards framework

The participation of children and young people works best with these shared values:

Shared Values	Children and young people's participation is a visible commitment that is properly resourced	Children and young people's participation is valued	Children and young people have equal opportunity to participate	Children and young people's participation is supported in the organisation by effective policies and systems
<p><b>Emerging level indicators in <i>Hear by Right</i> that support these shared values</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 The participation of children and young people is a central commitment of the organisation</li> <li>1.2 The organisation defines its shared values for children and young people's participation</li> <li>2.1 Resources and expertise are mapped for building the participation of children and young people (an audit)</li> <li>5.1 Relevant job descriptions specify skills and commitment to active involvement</li> <li>7.1 Key staff, managers and leaders act as champions for the active involvement of children and young people, with clearly identified responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Children and young people are consulted on and help review structures for their active involvement</li> <li>4.1 Policies are in place to make sure children and young people's participation is safe, sound and effective, covering consent, protection, safety, access, transport, complaints, incentives and rewards</li> <li>5.2 Children and young people contribute to the recruitment and selection and induction of key staff</li> <li>6.3 Children and young people have access to information to allow them to participate fully in issues of importance to them</li> <li>7.3 Managers and leaders in the organisation publicly acknowledge and celebrate the active involvement of children and young people and take an active part in key consultation and participation events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.3 The organisation adopts the Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognising Article 12's central role</li> <li>3.2 A range of approaches are in place, both formal and non formal, that encourage and enable the participation of children and young people on their own terms and in ways they feel comfortable with</li> <li>6.1 There is capacity building for children and young people to develop skills and knowledge to make change happen, including in negotiation, presentation and finance</li> <li>7.2 Managers and leaders support innovation on active involvement, accepting risks of mistakes and are committed to reflection and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.2 The strategic plan for active involvement is agreed and in place, with key staff, roles and resources identified for its implementation</li> <li>4.2 Budgeting and financial systems are in place for supporting the active involvement of children and young people</li> <li>4.3 Recording and evaluation systems are in place to identify and share learning and evidence of change arising from children and young people's participation</li> <li>5.3 Supervision and appraisal of relevant staff include reviewing their contribution to enabling the effective influence of children and young people on the organisation</li> <li>6.2 There is capacity building for staff to gain skills for the safe, sound and effective participation of children and young people</li> </ul>

# Standard shared values

## COMMENTARY

The active involvement of children and young people is of benefit to them, the wider community and the organisation or partnership and what it wants to achieve. It is vital to have strong agreement about the **shared values** so that there is unity of purpose, resolve to put in the required resources and commitment to make sure children and young people most often left out are included and responded to. There also needs to be honesty about what can and cannot be changed and what the limitations are due to the organisation's responsibilities. The shared values on the previous page will be a useful starting point.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ... QUESTIONS TO ASK ...

- Is there a strong commitment to involving children and young people at the heart of the organisation's values and beliefs?
- Who shares these values and how can you show this?
- Who has been involved in shaping and agreeing the shared values underpinning children and young people's participation? Have children and young people themselves been involved?
- How are a range of children and young people to be included, especially from groups who often get left out?
- What are the benefits of involving children and young people for themselves, for the organisation, its services, staff and leaders?
- Is there shared understanding of the boundaries of active involvement, who is meant to benefit and how this is reviewed?



## EVIDENCE (PAPER, VERBAL, OBSERVATION)

- Vision or mission statements.
- Policy statements.
- Minutes of meetings.
- Charter.
- Publicity.
- Recruitment and selection material.
- Media reports.
- Success criteria or performance indicators.
- **What do children and young people say about how this standard is being met? What are their priorities?**

## EMERGING

- 1.1** The participation of children and young people is a central commitment of the organisation.
- 1.2** The organisation defines its shared values for children and young people's participation (See *Hear by Right* Shared Values table).
- 1.3** The organisation adopts the Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognising Article 12's central role.

## ESTABLISHED

- 1.4** Children and young people take part in reviewing and agreeing the shared values for the active involvement of children and young people.
- 1.5** The shared values are made visible and accessible to a wide range of staff and children and young people by, for example, mission statement, charter, pledge or entitlement card.

## ADVANCED

- 1.6** Shared values are agreed with partner organisations and community groups.
- 1.7** The agreed shared values are used to set policy and review performance across the organisation and with partners.

# Standard strategies

## COMMENTARY

*Hear by Right* is essentially a useful framework for developing a participation strategy. A strategy for involving children and young people is most likely to succeed if it involves them directly in its development and review. It needs to make clear the expected balance of benefit for everyone. At the Emerging level, adults are likely to take the lead, but must be clear that there is room for change in the strategy through children and young people's input. Children and young people will soon spot tokenism and withdraw their support. Later, children and young people will take a full part in review processes. There needs to be coherence across all organisational plans and clarity that the purpose of the strategy is action for change. Strategies need to be specific about resources of time, money and people, including what is required to sustain and develop the participation of a range of groups of children and young people.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ... QUESTIONS TO ASK ...

- How are you developing the strategy? Are you involving leaders, staff and children and young people?
- Are you using the *Hear by Right* standards framework and the mapping and planning tool on the CD-Rom? Have you drawn on others' experiences from the website?
- Are there specific ways for children and young people to have an input, for example using the *Building standards* briefing and resources?
- Does the strategy have the backing of those with power to deliver and of the children and young people who are meant to benefit?
- Are the benefits to children and young people in improved services clearly expressed and measurable within the strategy?
- Are there clear timescales and resources to deliver the strategy?
- How are you monitoring and reviewing the strategy and the impact of children and young people's involvement?
- Are the various strategies linked up to maximise benefit?
- Are there any areas covered by the strategy that children and young people **shouldn't** be asked to scrutinise? Why?



## EVIDENCE (PAPER, VERBAL, OBSERVATION)

- Audit of the active involvement of children and young people.
- Publication of relevant existing strategies.
- A summary that is accessible in style, language and distribution.
- Reports from relevant seminars and conferences.
- Action plan and timetable for organisational development.
- Published strategy review document by children and young people.
- Strategies accessible to children and young people.
- **What do children and young people say about how this standard is being met? What are their priorities?**

## EMERGING

- 2.1 Resources and expertise are mapped for building the participation of children and young people (an audit).
- 2.2 The strategic plan for active involvement is agreed and in place, with key staff, roles and resources identified for its implementation.

## ESTABLISHED

- 2.3 Children and young people contribute to developing and reviewing the strategic plan for active involvement, agreeing objectives, boundaries and benefits.
- 2.4 Other plans in the organisation are complementary and refer to the active involvement strategy.

## ADVANCED

- 2.5 The strategy identifies and includes key local partnerships to promote children and young people's active involvement.
- 2.6 The strategy includes resources to sustain, develop and regenerate children and young people's involvement.
- 2.7 The strategy develops links between local and any regional or national structures and initiatives for children and young people's active involvement.

# Standard structures

## COMMENTARY

Structures to set up and sustain active involvement need to be accessible to a range of children and young people, avoiding over-reliance on a small group and responding especially to those most often left out. Structures need to be flexible and open to regular rebuilding and renewal. While advisory groups and committees have their place, they can be intimidating and may not always lead to change. Many successful models are more local or task specific, where children and young people's involvement can be more relevant, engaging and fun. Whatever the structures, they must be rooted in **shared values** and be explicit about how much power is shared in the context of the needs and constraints of the organisation or partnership.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ... QUESTIONS TO ASK ...

- What structures will best serve the interests of all involved, particularly excluded children and young people?
- Have children and young people been asked what approaches best suit their needs and how, where and when they choose to take part?
- What structures already exist inside or outside the organisation that support the active involvement of children and young people?
- Which children and young people tend to be included and excluded from participating? How can this be responded to?
- Are there approaches outlined in the briefing *Involving children and young people: an introduction* that may be relevant?



## EVIDENCE (PAPER, VERBAL, OBSERVATION)

- Information from reference groups of children and young people.
- Reports with recommendations from relevant professionals who work with excluded children and young people.
- Audit of active involvement of children and young people in community organisations and specific services.
- Who's not here? – a review by children and young people and adults of who is and who isn't involved, with steps agreed to make structures more flexible and inclusive.
- **What do children and young people say about how this standard is being met? What are their priorities?**

## EMERGING

- 3.1** Children and young people are consulted on and help review structures for their active involvement.
- 3.2** A range of approaches are in place, both formal and non formal, that encourage and enable the participation of children and young people on their own terms and in ways they feel comfortable with.

## ESTABLISHED

- 3.3** There are structures that make sure a range of children and young people's views are built in to decision-making.
- 3.4** Links with other relevant organisations are established and maintained to ensure the inclusion of diverse groups.

## ADVANCED

- 3.5** Children and young people are joint partners in decision-making and scrutiny structures.
- 3.6** Children and young people have effective representation on local cross agency partnerships that affect them.
- 3.7** Links with a range of regional and national organisations and initiatives are established, maintained and resourced.

# Standard systems

## COMMENTARY

Setting up structures for children and young people's involvement is in some sense the easier task. Challenging established adult systems and ways of working, power and attitudes may be harder to tackle. Yet, if we don't, progress will be short lived and attempts at active involvement will be ineffectual, frustrating and damaging. Systems are needed to support and sustain activity and record outcomes. Organisations may want to involve children and young people at short notice. But care should always be taken to consider the impact on them and to ensure practice is safe and sound, thinking through children and young people's consent, safety, access, rewards for involvement and support needs.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ... QUESTIONS TO ASK ...

- What systems and procedures are needed to make sure participation is conducted in a safe and sound manner?
- Are they in place and shared and reviewed with children and young people and partner organisations?
- How are inclusive practices and policies promoted, for example on refreshments, venue, communication and timing of meetings?
- How is involvement acknowledged and rewarded?
- Can you prove the impact of children and young people's participation on decision-making and on the services they use?
- What review and evaluation systems are there? For example, are you using *Hear by Right's* tools for recording what's changing for the organisation and what's changed for children and young people as endorsed by children and young people themselves?
- Have you shared your learning and evidence of change, for example on [www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright)?



## EVIDENCE (PAPER, VERBAL, OBSERVATION)

- Records of consultations with children and young people in developing policy and procedures, including those about access.
- Policy on remuneration known by children and young people.
- Identifying specific spend on active involvement.
- Protected budgets for use by children and young people themselves.
- Published suggestions, compliments, complaints and appeals procedures for children and young people.
- Examples of what's changed, with evidence from children and young people themselves.
- Feedback from different interest groups.
- Celebration of successes and appropriate accreditation.
- **What do children and young people say about how this standard is being met? What are their priorities?**

## EMERGING

- 4.1** Policies are in place to make sure children and young people's participation is safe, sound and effective, covering consent, protection, safety, access, transport, complaints, incentives and rewards.
- 4.2** Budgeting and financial systems are in place for supporting the active involvement of children and young people.
- 4.3** Recording and evaluation systems are in place to identify what changed because of children and young people's participation.

## ESTABLISHED

- 4.4** Communication systems are in place for recording, reporting and celebrating children and young people's active involvement (for example, newsletters, web, radio, articles, awards evenings).
- 4.5** Children and young people and partners are involved in reviewing and updating relevant policies and systems.

## ADVANCED

- 4.6** Children and young people help decide appropriate rewards for their active involvement and/or have direct control over identified budgets.
- 4.7** Commissioning and agreements with partner organisations reflect the commitment to active involvement.

# Standard staff

## COMMENTARY

Staff support and contribute to the development of practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people in decision-making. Many will need only to appreciate the benefits to support change, though some may be reluctant to share power. Recruitment and selection, induction, supervision and appraisal are all important ways to help bring about change in an organisation. Having dedicated and accountable staff to implement the active involvement strategy is vital, combining direct work skills with children and young people with strategic impact. These posts will need to be resourced adequately. Children and young people will take an increasing role in recruitment and induction processes.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ... QUESTIONS TO ASK ...

- How do you make sure staff really do support the active involvement of children and young people?
- Do participation workers understand and make the most of their roles? What do you do when they don't?
- How can you best involve children and young people in recruitment and selection and induction?
- Where can you get sufficient resources to ensure adequate dedicated staffing for active involvement work?
- Which partners are best placed to support children and young people's participation across the organisations, partnerships or in the community?



## EVIDENCE (PAPER, VERBAL, OBSERVATION)

- Relevant job descriptions and person specifications include promoting children and young people's participation.
- Recruitment and selection and induction involves children and young people in key appointments relevant to them.
- Induction processes for key staff and leaders.
- Staff appraisal specifically covers active involvement work.
- The *Hear by Right What's Changed* tool can be used with staff for planning and supervision of participation work leading to change.
- Promoting active involvement in key organisational publications.
- **What do children and young people say about how this standard is being met? What are their priorities?**

## EMERGING

- 5.1 Relevant job descriptions specify skills and commitment to active involvement.
- 5.2 Children and young people contribute to the recruitment and selection and induction of key staff.
- 5.3 Supervision and appraisal of relevant staff include reviewing their contribution to enabling the effective influence of children and young people on the organisation.

## ESTABLISHED

- 5.4 Recruitment information and induction of all staff and managers identify the importance of the voice and influence of children and young people for the organisation.
- 5.5 Young people are volunteers or employed in the organisation, for example as trainers, researchers or mentors.

## ADVANCED

- 5.6 Children and young people take an active part in the recruitment, selection and induction of a range of staff and managers across the organisation or partnerships.
- 5.7 Children and young people take an active part in the induction of elected members or trustees.

# Standard skills and knowledge

## COMMENTARY

Building the skills, knowledge, confidence and capacity of children and young people is crucial for their participation to make change happen. Access to information they can understand is also important for them to be able to make informed choices and decisions. For adults, training and support is also essential to overcome the stumbling blocks of how to begin and how to manage change, to share power and to work effectively to reduce the risks and maximise the benefits. One valuable additional result of such training will be a wider change in adult perceptions of children and young people.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ... QUESTIONS TO ASK ...

- Is there capacity building for children and young people? Is material such as *Act by Right* used to help them make change happen? (See Top ten useful resources on the inside back cover).
- How can adults be helped to listen to and learn from children and young people?
- What is the best way to involve children and young people in the design and delivery of training?
- How will children and young people get information they need to participate?
- How important or possible is it to reduce jargon in agendas, papers and discussions involving children and young people? Or is this the language they need to learn?
- How can decision-making be more inclusive and accessible to less confident or experienced and younger people?
- How can expectations be both realistic and challenging, without patronising or overloading children and young people?



## EVIDENCE (PAPER, VERBAL, OBSERVATION)

- Budgets for training and capacity building.
- Training programmes for members, trustees, staff and children and young people.
- Evaluation of training undertaken.
- Children and young people involved in developing, delivering and evaluating training.
- Training developed, delivered and evaluated with partners.
- Accreditation scheme and records about children and young people's active involvement.
- Policy on children and young people's access to information.
- **What do children and young people say about how this standard is being met? What are their priorities?**

## EMERGING

- 6.1 There is capacity building for children and young people to develop skills and knowledge to make change happen, including in negotiation, presentation and finance.
- 6.2 There is capacity building for staff to gain skills for the safe, sound and effective participation of children and young people.
- 6.3 Children and young people have access to information to allow them to participate fully in issues of importance to them.

## ESTABLISHED

- 6.4 Children and young people help plan, deliver and evaluate active involvement training to staff and leaders.
- 6.5 Children and young people help develop the capacity of other children and young people to participate.

## ADVANCED

- 6.6 Children and young people help design and deliver training and capacity building to partner organisations.
- 6.7 Consultancy and mentoring arrangements that support children and young people's active involvement are in place.

# Standard style of leadership

## COMMENTARY

Leadership is always vital, especially during a time of change. Promoting the participation of children and young people means change in an organisation's culture and requires leadership with courage and clout among staff, elected members, trustees and children and young people themselves. While dedicated staff will be needed to establish and develop good working practices with children and young people, support at a senior and executive level will be essential to champion the cause and build in the structures, systems and resources for maximum impact. As active involvement gets bedded in, leadership style will become increasingly based on partnership and cooperation, among elected members or trustees, staff, partners and children and young people.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ... QUESTIONS TO ASK ...

- What is the best style of leadership to help one-off examples of involving children and young people get established in the decision-making fabric of the organisation?
- How can champions show enough leadership without letting everyone else off the hook?
- How will the organisation demonstrate to children and young people that it is serious about their involvement?
- Will leaders hold firm to their commitments when the pressure is on, things go wrong and finances are tight?
- Will the organisation demonstrate to partners the benefits of the active involvement of children and young people?
- How will leaders manage conflicting views among children and young people, staff, elected members, trustees and partners?
- Are young people leading projects with appropriate support?



## EVIDENCE (PAPER, VERBAL, OBSERVATION)

- A high profile champion, with clear remit and enough seniority to manage change.
- An annual report identifying and celebrating progress in promoting children and young people's participation.
- Published service level agreements or compact with partner organisations that reflects commitment to children and young people.
- Joint events and training with partners promoting children and young people's active involvement.
- Positive publicity and media coverage.
- Minutes of meetings explaining leadership decisions.
- **What do children and young people say about how this standard is being met? What are their priorities?**

## EMERGING

- 7.1** Key staff, managers and leaders are effective champions for the active involvement of children and young people, with clearly identified responsibilities.
- 7.2** Managers and leaders support innovation on active involvement, accepting risks of mistakes and are committed to reflection and learning.
- 7.3** Managers and leaders in the organisation publicly acknowledge and celebrate the active involvement of children and young people and take an active part in key consultation and participation events.

## ESTABLISHED

- 7.4** A leadership programme for managers and children and young people is established, based on the principles of active involvement.
- 7.5** Children and young people have a range of opportunities to meet senior staff, elected members or trustees to be included in decision making and promote active involvement.

## ADVANCED

- 7.6** The organisation demonstrates to partner organisations an open style of leadership, collaboration and shared objectives on the active involvement of children and young people.
- 7.7** Leadership of specific projects and appropriate services involves both children and young people and adults.



# Top ten tips and resources

## *Hear by Right* from words to action

**Getting started:** *Hear by Right* is a useful and flexible tool and process. What suits your organisation or partnership best?

1. Go to [www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright); see how others have made the most of it. Explore all the resources on the Web and CD.
2. Get the early agreement and backing from leaders, staff and children and young people by using, for example, the PowerPoint presentation and *Hear by Right* Briefings.
3. Make sure there is someone with clear responsibility to drive the process.

### **Developing a strategy for children and young people's active involvement**

4. Take time to find and decide on the approach that best suits your organisation as you don't need to do it all at once. Make sure you include evidence from children and young people at some stage. See the **How to use *Hear by Right*** section below.
5. Involve children and young people on their own terms, using the *Building Standards* tools to help them set their participation priorities and map and plan agreed actions with staff and managers. See the film clip on the web from Nottingham which shows the process in action: [http://hbr.nya.org.uk/resources/getting\\_better\\_deal\\_nottingham](http://hbr.nya.org.uk/resources/getting_better_deal_nottingham)
6. Use the *Hear by Right* mapping and planning tool on the Web and CD to map your evidence and plan your strategy.
7. Run some short workshops with leaders, staff and children and young people to give the mapping and planning a flying start. Contact The NYA for support as needs be.
8. Base your participation strategy on the evidence from your *Hear by Right* map and plan. Use relevant text from the Word version of *Hear by Right* on the CD to underpin your strategy.

### **Sharing and celebrating achievement of development and change for children and young people**

9. Record successful evidence that participation has led to change both in the organisation and in children and young people's lives using tools on the CD.
10. Use [www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright) to share information, plans and stories more widely.

## *Hear by Right* and Participation Works

The National Youth Agency is using *Hear by Right* as a key contribution to Participation Works. Participation Works is a consortium made up of six national agencies who are experts in children and young people's participation. The main work, contracted by BLF, delivers workshops, training and consultancy sessions and practitioner networks to community, voluntary and other third sector organisations. The NYA has produced the Participation Works *Hear by Right* self-assessment tool. This is a Participation Works-branded edition of the original *Hear by Right* mapping and planning tool containing exactly the same standards framework. The two are interchangeable. Third Sector organisations that complete the Participation Works self-assessment tool will be fully able to compare and contribute to the wider Children's Trust *Hear by Right* map and plan.

# hear by right

## standards framework for the participation of children and young people

Revised Edition 2010

*Hear by Right* offers tried and tested standards for organisations across the statutory and voluntary sector to assess and improve practice and policy on children and young people's participation. This edition and accompanying resources take account of children and young people's trust arrangements, increased partnership working and the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people. It sets out clear and effective measures to safeguard against tokenism.

The *Hear by Right* standards framework is based on the 7 S model of organisational change: **Shared values, Strategies, Structures, Systems, Staff, Skills and knowledge and Style of leadership**. It relies on self-assessment across three levels: Emerging, Established and Advanced. Each level builds on the last. This ensures children and young people's involvement is built in and not just bolted on.

The electronic mapping and planning tool on the CD sets out the standards and indicators in table form for easy completion. This helps to develop the active involvement strategy based on clear evidence, self assessment and agreed priorities. *Building Standards* are tools developed with children and young people themselves to involve them directly in the mapping and planning process. The *What's Changed* tool helps record and evaluate what has changed because of genuine dialogue with children and young people.

ISBN: 978 0 86155 343 3

Price: £12.50



Reading *Hear by Right* put a big smile on my face. To me, it was like I'd been given a new job description, as it gave me added direction to do my job more appropriately and effectively.

– Trevor Carthy, Young People Co-ordinator, Black Country Connexions

The participation of children and young people is both a challenge and an essential part of the life of all organisations that affect children's lives. *Hear by Right* is a really accessible step by step guide for organisations to use to ensure that this happens.

– Barbara Hearn, Deputy Director, NCB

The Citizenship Foundation has always endorsed the NYA/LGA standards expressed in *Hear by Right*. Indeed, *Hear by Right* has done much to inform the emergent but still insufficient focus on children's rights, student participation and learner voice across a range of contexts: local authorities, schools and colleges, service providers. The active involvement of young people in local democracy is vital if such democracy is to be effective today and sustained tomorrow. The *Hear by Right* standards support the work of all involved in this field. Long may this work continue. We all depend on its success and, in citizenship education, we are inspired and informed by the lessons that it offers.

– Tony Breslin, Chief Executive, Citizenship Foundation

CWDC is in the business of making a positive difference to the lives of children, young people, their families and carers. The participation of children

and young people in the planning and delivery of our work is a key way for us to make sure that our role as a Sector Skills Council and workforce reform organisation is well grounded. We are working with children and young people to help create a world class workforce that supports them better and that they would want to be part of themselves! *Hear by Right* has been really helpful for us in identifying where to start and what to do next!

– Deirdre Quill, Director, Integrated Workforce, Children's Workforce Development Council

The DCSF is committed to embedding participation of children and young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of services that affect them at a national, regional and local level. *Hear by Right* offers an excellent set of standards and a highly practical handbook which will enable organisations to embrace participation as part of their everyday work.

– Tom Jeffery, Director General, Children and Families, DCSF

The Cabinet Office believes strongly that children and young people are equal citizens. Our experience is that their voice and influence is essential to secure sustained improvements in their neighbourhoods and communities. Too many good ideas fall by the wayside. *Hear by Right* is an important and proven tool to make sure that children and young people's participation is here to stay.

– Phil Hope MP, Minister of State in the Department of Health and Minister for the East Midlands

[www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright)