



growing up in the west midlands

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Children and young people's participation case studies

Nine examples of participatory practice from around the West Midlands

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Author(s):

Various contributors – see each case study

G:up (Growing Up in the West Midlands) is an open regional network of voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families.

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Introduction

Growing Up in the West Midlands Strategic Forum exists to develop the West Midlands as a region that respects and acts upon the needs, interests and aspirations of children and young people, and the voluntary and community organisations that work with them.

The Growing Up in the West Midlands Children and Young People's Strategic Engagement Group worked in 2005 and 2006 with the following aims:

- To provide a more developed culture of children and young people's strategic involvement and a body of evidence to support its values.
- To establish routes for policy makers to engage children and young people.
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As part of our work we carried out a wide range of consultation to ascertain the degree to which children and young people play an active role in the development of organisations and forums. One element of this is the following case studies which we present to demonstrate how children and young people within organisations are actively engaged in the decision-making process that impact on service delivery. We hope they will be a useful resource for sharing and learning.

The views and opinions expressed within the case studies are not necessarily representative of Growing up in the West Midlands. Similarly, the case studies are presented without comment and should not be considered to be endorsed by Growing up in the West Midlands.



Spurgeon's Child Care Schools Out! Out of School Club

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

Spurgeon's Child Care Schools Out! Out of School Club

Project Address:

Schools Out! Out Of School Club,
Spurgeons Child Care,
52 St Judes Road West
Wolverhampton
WV6 0DB

Telephone: 01902 572300

Organisation Address:

Spurgeon's Child Care
52 St Judes Road West
Wolverhampton
WV6 0DB
Telephone; 01902 572300

Tell us about your organisation:

We meet the needs of children and families through practice and the delivery of high quality services as a practical expression of the Christian faith.

Spurgeon's Child Care runs an Out of School club which is situated in the family support centre. We provide high quality child care during term time and the School Holidays.

We aim to provide a stimulating, enjoyable environment, in a safe and spacious setting where children are happy to go in the holidays.

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

This is important to us because we provide a happy, safe, warm and stimulating environment for all children to play, learn and develop freely.

We help children in our project to develop responsibility for themselves and their actions and to become competent, confident, independent and co-operative individuals.

We like to encourage children in our project to have a positive attitude and respect for both themselves and other people.

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 1

How many part time staff do you employ? 4

How many volunteers do you engage? 1

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? 40

What age group do you work with? 4 – 11yrs

Do you operate a membership system? Yes, we carry out a registration process. The project is also OFSTED-registered and inspected for safe childcare



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

Aims/objectives

To provide services based on the needs of parents and young people, Develop a young peoples council, working in partnership with the school the children attend (St Judes), plan and delver quality activity programmes for out of school and holiday playschemes and to create a fun and safe environment for children to be in.

Funding Sources

We do not receive regular funding; however we are regularly fundraising in the Out Of School Club, involving the children and Parents.

Children/young people involved

The Breakfast Club attendance on average: 6 children/young people

The Out School Club attendance on average: 16 children/young people

The Holiday Playscheme attendance on average: 15 children/young people

All young people involved in the project play an active role in the decision making of the running of the club.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

The out school club runs a young peoples council. Members of the committee are responsible for informing staff of comments children have made in the club regarding activities they would like to do, fundraising events they would like to participate in and any other issues they may have. We believe that young person/persons in charge of the committee work in a positive way because other young people in the club are able to relate to that person better. Staff take on board these ideas and hold informal discussions with the young people on how we can explore their ideas. We also have a comments board for the young people to leave ideas on as and when they wish to.

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

Wherever appropriate, children are involved in the process of planning activities so that the programme reflects their opinions, and so that children feel some ownership over their Club.

In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

The outcome for the every child matters is to help children enjoy and achieve, involves children enjoying play experiences and help them develop and achieve. Involvement and consultation helps them to develop new skills such as negotiating, sharing and understanding the perspectives of others. It helps them to understand how decisions are made, and recognises that their opinions are important.

In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

For both staff and the Club, there are multiple benefits of such an approach such as improved behaviour, a relationship with children based on partnership, a more cohesive environment and activities and decisions that children feel a sense of ownership over.



If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

As above...

Staff support, recognise and promote achievements by all children

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

Spurgeon's Child Care believes that actively promoting the participation of children in decision-making processes is beneficial to children, staff and the Club as a whole. Activities are done on a weekly basis, children are asked to forward their suggestion on the clubs suggestions board or through the young people's council. We also hold a termly consultation with all young people to get ideas of which themes and topics they would be interested in basing their activities around.

How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?

Via the young persons council, consultation sessions and daily feedback we get from the young people.

Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

The out of school club ensure that the consultation and involvement of the young people is regularly monitored and acted upon so that children are able to see that their input has led to visible outcomes. The Club and its staff are also clear about what decisions children will be involved in and attempt to offer clear explanations if and when consultation and involvement is deemed inappropriate.

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

Clubs Mission Statement:

Spurgeon's Child Care, and all its members of staff, are committed to the principle of involving and consulting children whenever decisions are made within the Club that affect them.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

The Club Leader and staff will work with children to draw up a charter and set out the expectations and responsibilities of the Club, the staff team and the children in respect of consultation and involvement.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

That the children/young people are involved in the decision making process and the children/young people have a sense of ownership in the running of the club in terms of activities and events that take place.

In your view, what impact does children's/young people's involvement in decision making have:

- For them:

Children feel ownership over their Club.

- For the organisation:

Good relationships with children based on partnership in decision making

Trident House Foyer

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

Trident House Foyer

Project Address:

Trident House Foyer

Granville Square

Edgbaston

B15 1UE

Telephone: 0121 633 2186

Fax: 0121 633 1501

Email: carolb@trident-ha.org.uk

Website: www.trident-ha.co.uk

Tell us about your organisation:

Trident's House Foyer operates in the Ladywood area of Birmingham, offering accommodation for 16-25 year olds which is integrated with training, job search and personal support. The majority of our clients have previously been at risk of homeless and require life-skills support. Our aims are to enable young people to grow, develop and thrive in a learning community, to provide a bridge to independence and a chance for young people to realise their full potential. The Birmingham services work with approximately 80 young people at any one time, this number can increase when young people from the local community may access some of the services available. We have facilities such as popular music studios, a Learn Direct centre and a resident lounge that are open to all young people and the community. We also have an extensive networking policy whereby we make links with other agencies in order to support our young people.

Our services include:

- education, training and employment assistance
- life skills assistance
- advice and advocacy
- welfare benefits/housing benefit advice
- access to emotional support and counselling
- signposting to external agencies
- tenancy and move-on support
- access to health services
- on-site support staff

Trident Housing Association aims to provide good quality, affordable accommodation with relevant and effective individual support for the service users. Trident Housing Association aims to be a person centred approach that promotes independence and integration within the community.

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

According to the mission statement of young peoples services "Trident Housing Association is committed to promoting service user involvement in all aspects of its work and ensuring service users are involved at all levels of service design and delivery. It is important to the Association that young people play a leading role in making decisions that affect their lives. The Association is further committed to promoting its core organisational values of respect, co-operation, learning and enjoyment throughout all of its services".



Youth participation is important to the organisation as young people make up a large part of the community that Trident Housing Association houses and supports. The Foyer is a home to young people and Trident believes that the Foyer should be run for and by the young people. The young people are the basis of the foyer and their participation is integral to the foyer functioning correctly. Without the young people's input the foyer would not be successful as it would not meet the service user needs.

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 4

How many part time staff do you employ? 0

How many volunteers do you engage? 1

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? 32

What age group do you work with? 16 - 25yrs

Do you operate a membership system? No



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

Trident Housing Association started 40 years ago in 1965. Trident Housing Association is one of the major housing associations working in the Midlands, managing 3,000 homes for people in need, including 1,000 homes for people with special needs. The Association employs almost 400 staff to manage its £100 million housing portfolio and to provide high quality housing and community services to more than 7,000 people. Trident is now part of the Matrix development partnership.

Trident has been housing people in need in the region for more than 40 years. The Association specialises in providing housing with care and support, meeting the needs of Chinese people, the provision of Foyers and youth services, and the creation of urban villages.

Trident House block was opened in 1980. Originally the block was built for general needs tenants. The first Trident foyer was opened in Highgate in 1997. By March 1998 there were no more spaces available in the project. Between 1998 and 2003, 5 more Foyers were developed one of which is Trident House Foyer. 32 flats within Trident House were designated for the specific support of young people. The young people who apply to the foyer are homeless or homelessness is imminent. They also need to have various support needs to be accepted to the foyer.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

It has always been important to Trident Housing Association to have service user input. As well as being a legal requirement, service user participation is pivotal to the functioning of the young people service that Trident Housing Association provides.

Listening to the service users needs and requirements is one of the main reasons that participation occurs within Trident Housing Association. We have regular advisory groups, speak easy's and residents meetings whereby the service user needs and concerns are heard. Trident recognised that there was a need for service users to be involved in how the project is run but also in regards to the staff that work within the projects.

Service users are now included on staffing interviews and have equal say in regards to what staff are employed. It has been recognised that a peer mentoring system would be beneficial to service users and to future service users. We are currently working at putting this in place at various projects. Service user participation is empowering to the service users and is always encouraged within all Trident projects.

In 2005 the Residents Association was set up. It is chaired by a resident and all the members are residents. The Residents Association can operate as an advocacy service for other residents, they control the residents lounge which is opened to all Trident Housing Association tenants and also help devise policies and procedures

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

The projects are the service user homes and therefore the service user has the right to manage the project the way that they want to. It is the service users right to protect their home and have processes instituted that will only benefit them and the system. It is imperative to have young people involved in the decision making process in order to take the project forward and to ensure that the project is meeting the needs of the service users. By having involvement of young people, it also means that the services can be more personalised and that the service is effective for each individual. Only through adopting these principles can we ensure our practices are properly evaluated and continual improvement achieved.



In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

One of the main aims of Trident House Foyer is to help young people into education, training and employment. Learning through life experiences is recorded and monitored in different ways such as through the life skills programme, support reviews and through constant communication with service users. Many service users enter into employment and achieve 'economic well-being and independence'.

The service users are guided on how to keep their property safe and there is also a concierge that is available 24 hours in case of any safety issues. Service users also sign a tenancy agreement which maintains the safety of the tenancy.

Throughout all of Trident Housing Association, service users are offered the opportunity to do voluntary work within the association. Residents are encouraged to engage within the community and this is done by organising events, volunteer work and engaging with other service users.

In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

Over the years, Trident Housing Association has grown in projects and staff members, evidence of its growing success.

Each month service user success stories are printed in the newsletter.

An example of the success is a recent bid for the Trident House Foyer music studio. The service users requested to have the studio updated, a grant was forwarded to Connexions and was granted to the Foyer. The supporting people review for Trident House Foyer took place in May 2005. During the reviews various service users were asked questions in regards to the service. At the same point in time the Foyer Federation came to the foyer to do an accreditation. Trident House Foyer passed both reviews.

The service did a complete overhaul of the support process in response to service user feedback. The current support programme is now far more flexible and brings out young people's individualism. The young people themselves design their own agenda and choose the location of one-to-one sessions.

If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

From the beginning, Trident Housing Association knew that the benefits for the service users would include being able to take some control on the management of their own homes. Tenant participation is now a legal requirement but it has always been of the up most importance to Trident Housing Association.

By having an integral policy of involving our service users, the organisation ensures that we are continually challenging ourselves to do things better. This has helped eradicate bad practices. Invariably there are always clear benefits in the organisation pulling together with its customers, not least in formulating ideas and bids for new improved services. The service is able to monitor its success and good practices by including the young people into the management of the service.

By including young people into the interviewing process, the future staff are selected by the actual service users. The benefit is that staff will be able to select the people key working them.



How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

At Trident Housing Association, service users in all projects are encouraged to voice opinions and be part of the decision making process through various forums, questionnaires, reviews and residents meetings. Trident has service users on decision making groups and service users are free to challenge the management of their homes. The idea is to create a variety of forums that everyone can contribute to. There is also a comprehensive complaints and feedback system that enables service users to give opinions on good and bad practices.

How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?

If service users were not consulted on the management of their homes, Trident Housing Association would not be as successful as it has been.

The Residents association are regularly consulted on issues and the speak easy sessions held with the Tenant participation officer enable opinions to be heard. The opinions are then feedback to the relevant departments. If other residents feel uncomfortable in approaching Trident with complaints then the residents' panel will operate as an advocacy service. The complaints are responded to within 14 days and if the response is not satisfactory, the service user is able to appeal.

An example of where service users were heard is with the Trident House Foyer resident meetings. The service users informed a member of staff that they no longer wanted an agenda or such a formal meeting. The agenda was removed and the meeting was used as a feedback session for the service. Since changing the format of the meeting the number of residents attending the meeting has only increased and the meeting are more productive and have more results.

The number of policies and practices that are changed as a result of service user feedback is one of the Association's Key Performance Indicators. These figures are reported to this board each quarter.

Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

Youth participation in decision-making is imperative to the functioning of Trident Housing Association. Trident recognises that the service users need to have a say in the management of their homes and this is proved by the encouragement and support given to resident and tenant associations within the projects. Many processes have been instituted within the company in order to promote young people in the decision making process. Having regular contact with service users enables staff to be informed of the service user needs and requirements.

A tenant's handbook has been published to inform tenants of their rights and responsibilities. In the last 2 years, Trident has been active in developing greater involvement of customers, including the appointment of a specific senior manager to coordinate activities, but actively supported by new Chief Executive John Morris, and the senior management team. All front line staff are responsible for ensuring that service users are asked for their opinions and that the information is fed to the correct departments and utilised.

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

The resident association, based at Trident House Foyer, are a constituted group of residents. Trident Housing Young People Services have a mission statement which states "The Association is committed to promoting service user involvement in all aspects of its work, ensuring service users are involved at all levels of service, design, service delivery and that they play a leading role in making decisions that affect their lives".



How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

The key workers within Trident Housing Association are all over 18 years old. Most of the key-workers are above the age of 21 years old. The key-workers spend one to one time with service users as well as in group work.

Service users also have the ability to do volunteer and paid work within Trident Housing Association. In 2005, Trident had a service user become a volunteer at Trident House Foyer, she then became a paid key worker and has now successfully moved on to another company in the same line work.

The principle behind the Peer Mentoring programme is that the more mature young people serve as role models for young 16/17 year olds who are moving away from home for the first time.

Service users and staff regularly go on outings and activities that are of interest to service users. The service users and staff treat each other with dignity and respect. The key-worker duty is to help the young person to reach their full potential and their goals. Key-workers have regular monthly meetings and “drop in sessions” with service users that enables the service user to express themselves.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

The evidence of young people being involved in the project and organisation is that it is successful. Trident Foyer and Association has continuously grown and moved forward. The input of the young people has enabled this to happen. If the young people had not been heard, the service would have stagnated and would not be where it is today.

Trident policies are regularly challenged by service users and are changed to benefit service users. Funding is also secured to be able to provide an effective service as well as to be able to help service users reach further potential and see things in life that they may never have had the opportunity to see, for instance, many service users have not been on holiday or to a theme park and funding could and has previously been drawn down to provide these experiences.

What have been the challenges to the process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?

It has been a challenge to engage residents. There are young people who do not like to be involved or have not previously had the opportunity to voice their opinions and therefore find it difficult. The problem of engaging residents could also be increased by poor self-esteem which could hinder the voicing of opinions. This is why it is important to offer a variety of forums. Whilst not every young person will enjoy talking in a meeting, absolutely every young person carries valid opinions.

Previously there may not have been clear processes in place to enable service users to be able to become involved. Trident has changed the way in which services have been delivered and has empowered residents to start their own associations.

In your view, what impact does children’s/young people’s involvement in decision making have:

In my opinion service users can only benefit from having an involvement in the decision making process. It is empowering for service users to be involved in the management of their own homes and in the decisions that affect them.



Having the service users involved in the corporate decision making processes benefits the service as it moves the service forward in the way that the residents would like the service to go. It ensures that the service is constantly meeting the needs of service users.

The community benefits from the service that Trident Housing Association provides as the community is able to use facilities such as at Trident house foyer there is a Learn Direct centre and studio available for the use of residents and the community.

If you were to do it again, is there anything you would you do differently?

I believe that Trident Housing Association has constantly learnt from the past and that the Association has gone forward and is constantly looking forward into the future.

Perhaps with hindsight more work should have been done to present involvement as a universal part of everyone's job. Whilst this was not immediately the case, it certainly is now.

Listening to the service users is imperative and is constantly reaffirmed to staff by managers, directors and is one of the core values of Trident House Association.

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?

There are 2 reasons why everyone should promote service user involvement. One because you have to do it and secondly and more importantly, because it is the right thing to do. The reasons why you have to do it are well-documented. However in terms of the benefits it is clear that listening to the service users and delivering to their needs is the most effective way that young people will be engaged. It is not only the most effective learning tool you can have, but it is also a rewarding process as evidenced in the personal development of the client group and the professional development of the staff.

Including service users in the interview process is a great way to ensure that the selection of staff is effective. In our experience, service users always pick up on something that is missed by the staff and they have a sixth sense in assessing the value-systems of applicants. Involving young people in their own service takes the service forward into the right direction.



SAFE Project Birmingham Youth Service

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

SAFE Project Birmingham Youth Service

Project Address:

477 Stratford Road

Spark hill

Birmingham

B11 4LE

Telephone: 0121 464 8325

Tell us about your organisation:

SAFE is a youth led publication that offers young people the opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns and innovative thoughts about a range of issues that are pertinent to them.

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

Youth participation underpins the ethos of the project. The publication is driven by young people's agendas, written by young people for young people to read.

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 1

How many part time staff do you employ? 2

How many volunteers do you engage? 1

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? 20

What age group do you work with? 11-18yrs

Do you operate a membership system? No



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

The project began with a view to recognise that many young people in Sparkhill were being excluded from resources because so much funding is targeted at young people that are at 'risk'. The project realised that there was a whole tier of young people that are talented but have no real way of recognising their talents. The young people in the area also wanted to have their say in their terms, on issues that affect them politically, socially and personally.

The publication was a perfect medium for this.

Some of the aims of the project are to offer young people the opportunity to learn about specialist media packages such as Quark Express, Photoshop, editing packages and journalism. SAFE also aims to utilize a wide range of skills and experiences of the young people to educate and inform both the users of the project as well as the many thousands of young people who read the publication and policy makers.

Currently the group involved in the SAFE project are undertaking a piece of action research amongst their peers to create a toolkit or a guide for other organisations and workers who want to find out about what kind of services people want and need and how these can be achieved. This work is supported by bayc. The group have begun to hear and present their and other young people's stories and ideas and have spent some time in a residential setting to come together with an action plan for the next few months and have also collated and documented their own and others' views through video recording using time away from their normal setting. It has given them the space to really reflect on how far they have come with the project and where they could go with it.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

Youth participation within the project came about because it was recognised that young people have a lot to say about society, politics, inequalities and their own lives, which they wanted to share with other people. Youth involvement in the toolkit came about because it was recognised that young people's needs are not being met and that other organisations and workers are not doing enough to involve young people in creating change.

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

Young people are involved in decision making within the project because it is important for them to have a say on issues that affect their lives.

The toolkit works on the basis that young people know what they want but don't have a means to articulate this to others because they don't listen. Producing a written guide for organisations and workers in the form of a toolkit was the answer to this.

In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

SAFE offers young people the opportunity to discuss and comment on pertinent issues politically, socially and personally, and the stage to do this in a safe environment that nurtures and fosters better understanding of difference. SAFE offers a fully integrated FO policy that actively discourages exclusion.



In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

SAFE is an award winning project that has been recognised for its outstanding youth participation by winning the prestigious Philip Lawrence Awards, which would not have been possible without the hard work, and decision making that was undertaken by the editorial team consisting of young people.

Consequently, SAFE has received a lot of publicity. Many other people have expressed interest in the model that SAFE uses including the head of the youth service.

If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

Although SAFE is adult initiated the ethos of the project has always been about young people's contribution and this is illustrated in the publications content. The result has been an honest and thoughtful piece of work that is written in young people 'speak' and aimed at other young people. This has meant that the reputation of the organisation as 'young people friendly' has increased. Young people are more willing to approach SAFE with ideas and issues as a result. In producing a toolkit the group knew that there would be benefits to other organisations, and particularly to individuals.

The view of one young person in the group stands out. He said that not a lot of people do stuff unless it helps the organisation, and people assume that talking to young people won't help the organisation so they don't, but actually young people can help.

The production of the toolkit was an opportunity for organisation to get help from young people want and organisations having to do the extra work to find out their views. Therefore, the group has done a lot of the work that organisations should really be doing themselves.

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

Young people are involved in every stage of the publication from determining some of the key themes to be addressed to editing the magazine.

This has been made easier through encouraging genuine participation from the young people. Young people have been able to express their ideas in whatever form they feel comfortable with. For example with regards to the toolkit young people have been using video recordings, notes on flipchart or ideas left on the whiteboard, as well as drawing pictures, emailing and using the telephone to get ideas across on the contents of the toolkit. The group producing the toolkit are not just consulted with by workers from SAFE and bayc about what they think should be in it. Instead, the young people determine the agenda, and look at what action needs to be taken and then delegate work to members of the group and to other workers.

How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?

The publication is distributed to youth centres, schools, faith organisations, councillors, colleges and other youth and community organisations.

The toolkit itself is a way of getting young people's voices heard on things that they feel passionately about. Once completed it will be distributed to organisations that can benefit from it as well as 'influential' people who can use it as a model for change.

Within the group the workers at SAFE and bayc did not assume that the young people would put across their thoughts and ideas on paper. Instead young people were asked how they would feel most comfortable about getting their voices heard. As a result, young people have used PowerPoint presentations, video recordings, interviews, questionnaires and drawing pictures, as well as writing on flipchart paper. The young people have decided that this information will then be brought together as written document for whoever is interested in young people's views to just pick and read.





Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

Youth participation in decision-making is a priority within the project. It is envisioned that young people will actively determine the future of the project with the vision of enabling the project to be totally young people led.

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

It forms part of the BCC unit plan.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

Adults within the organisation help to educate and inform young people on a whole range of issues. In turn young people educate and inform adults who are willing to listen on the issues that concern them through the publication and the toolkit.

Workers from SAFE and bayc help to support young people to highlight these concerns and to begin to rectify them in ways that young people feel it is possible. The residential about the toolkit was a clear example of working together. The whole group worked as a team to undertake the task of producing the toolkit. Everyone shared responsibilities, for example the workers provided stationery and other equipment, whilst young people came with an agenda, clear questions to ask the group and plans for the future, showcasing of the toolkit. A worker from bayc was on hand to support and advise both workers and young people during the process.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

Youth participation in decision making with regards to the publication has resulted in meeting and interviewing people like Nina Gill (MEP) and Trevor McDonald. This has been a positive experience for the young people themselves who have become more confident about what they write.

Young people have been talking to other young people about the project and this has given it a reputation as a project that lets young people express themselves. Consequently, people want to read the publication out of curiosity and interest in young people's views and more people are getting involved at all levels. The toolkit itself has given the young people the opportunities to challenge other organisations and projects to involve more young people in their decision making process. They have created a model for other organisations to follow to help them to engage with other young people. For example, the youth workers and instructors at the residential talked about how they had been inspired by the work that they had seen the young people do for the toolkit and that they would be able to take a lot of ideas away to use with their own group as a result.

Working on the toolkit in this way has not only empowered each and every individual in the group but it has helped them feel good about the fact they are making a difference to other organisations and other young people's lives.

What have been the challenges to the process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?

Funding for the publication has always been difficult and challenging. Many funding bodies do not see printing costs as a legitimate and fundable activity.



In your view, what impact does children’s/young people’s involvement in decision making have:

Young people’s involvement in decision making has given them the opportunities to be taken seriously as free thinking, mature and conscientious individuals. It has given the project a good reputation and recognition as an example of good practice of how young people can influence the shape and delivery of the project. Within the community young people can be seen as having something positive to contribute. It also helps to demonstrate citizenship.

If you were to do it again, is there anything you would you do differently?

It would be beneficial to find ways to ensure core funding for the publication.

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?

It would be useful to encompass the ethos and values of the SAFE project as a meaningful way of engaging young people. It would also be beneficial to use a guide such as the toolkit created by young people which tells other organisations how to involve young people in the decision making process, if they feel strongly about it.

It would be useful for the organisation to ask the young people it is trying to engage with what they feel strongly about and where they want to see changes happen – much like what is being done in the toolkit. Organisations need to show that they really want to engage young people and so need to actively seek out their opinions. We have learnt from the creation of the toolkit that trusting and believing that young people can make a difference has an impact on the end result. Allowing young people to work independently and to set the agenda has impacted on the high level of involvement and the end result.

The process that the group went through to do the toolkit has shown that young people have lots of intelligent and relevant ideas. This was reflected by the extremely positive response from the instructors and the youth workers the group met on the residential, and the number of people who are taking an interest in everything that SAFE is doing and achieving.

It is also important for organisations that want to engage young people in the decision making process not to underestimate the determination that young people have and the hard work they put in to complete something like the toolkit. During one the sessions before the residential, for example, the young people working on the toolkit spent a lot of time discussing what each of them wanted to change in their areas and how they would get other organisations to listen to their views. The group then decided to interview other young people to get their perspectives. They were willing to do a lot of extra work so that they could engage other young people into the process.

The fact that the group of young people were determined individuals was further exemplified by their insistence to use their activity time on the residential to further develop the toolkit. It is this kind of determination that needs to be acknowledged, praised and nurtured by organisations, if they want young people to engage in the decision making processes within their organizations.



Spurgeons Child Care- Young Carer's Project

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

Spurgeons Child Care- Young Carer's Project

Project Address:

52 St Judes Road West

Newbridge

Wolverhampton

WV6 0DB

Telephone: 01902 572300

Fax: 01902 572301

Email: Claire-edwards@btconnect.com

Website: www.spurgeonswolverhampton.tk

Tell us about your organisation:

Spurgeons is an international charity which has 99 projects and consultancies in the U.K. and several overseas. We work with children, young people and their families.

Our project works supporting young people who have a caring role within their home.

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

By involving young people in our organisation we can improve the service that we provide. Young people will have ownership and can gain a range of new skills and experiences, many of which they miss out on because of their caring role.

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 2

How many part time staff do you employ? 6

How many volunteers do you engage? 15

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? 101

What age group do you work with? 7 - 18yrs

Do you operate a membership system? Yes



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

We have been funded for the young carers service for the last 6 years. The funding is given to us from Wolverhampton City Council carers grant.

We are a young carers project working with young people aged 7-18 who have significant caring role. We aim to offer these young people and their families support by:

- Giving the young people a break from their caring role
- Offering advice on benefits and health
- Providing workshops and outings
- A chance to meet other young people

Young people are involved in decision making by consolation exercises that take place in group sessions.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

We work within the youth work framework:

- Participation
- Empowerment
- Education
- Equal Opportunities

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

By involving young people in the planning and development of the service we are providing a service that the young people want to use and enjoy.

In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

Young people have a say in the activity that they want to do.

e.g. a young carer suggested that we do a healthy eating workshop.

This linked to the physical section of be healthy.

Young people have been consulted on what they want for young carers service in future and the timescales it should happen. Choose what came first out was that they wanted more peer support.

In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

We can continually improve the service we offer. The young people will have ownership of the project and benefit from all aspects of support.

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

Our consultation exercise are taken from "the Evaluation Cookbook" and other sources from the every child matters site.

They are fun and effective and the young people enjoy taking part.

How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?

We are joining the youth council and do various things within our own project including:

Blogging with opportunities for the young people to comment and a suggest box.



Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

Yes, it is our role to support young people.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

We have a steering group

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?

To visit these web sites. To make it fun and to follow through with what you say.



B arts/ Something for now- the children and young people's masterplan for Chesterton

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

B arts/ Something for now- the children and young people's masterplan for Chesterton

Project Address:

16 Barracks Square

Barracks Road

Newcastle-under-Lyme

Staffs

ST5 1LG

Telephone: 01782 717326

Fax: 01782 717190

Email: info@pandaemonium.biz

Website: www.pandaemonium.biz

Tell us about your organisation:

B Arts exists to offer a range of arts activities that sustain, develop and enrich communities while employing artists in work that is intelligent, thoughtful and contributes to a process cultural democracy. We seek to develop and engage people, groups and communities through their participation in the arts.

The company has been working for 20 years now from a North Staffordshire base and has a board of four trustees, a directorate of three (the same three who founded the company), three workers dealing with admin, finance and performance management, and employs a further 6 artists, youth workers, community development workers with skills ranging from Afghan rug- knotting to video production, theatre to punk guitar, lanterns to banners, and almost everything in between.

We believe that working creatively can make a real difference to all our lives, that creativity is not confined to a talented few, that working together lifts our spirits and strengthens our souls, that there are voices that are silenced that deserve to be heard.

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

There are voices that need to be heard and children and young people, of all kinds, from all walks of life are amongst those often completely ignored. It is difficult sometimes to engage with gypsy and traveller children, children living in poverty, young people at risk of crime, young people adrift from their roots or their families, young people with few basic skills, low self esteem and an involvement with the youth justice system, or who are isolated just by the nature of where they live, and so perhaps for exactly those reasons we feel compelled to work with them.

It is always difficult to talk about something that is at the centre of all aspects of our organisation. Participation is central to what we do in that:

We exist to create projects that allow artists to work with people

The structure of projects promote participation for individuals in a wider group

The content or theme of the work is often explicitly or implicitly about participation (e.g. celebrating where I live)

We work in teams and we rely on the full participation of our staff in the management and delivery of our project work, and our youngest worker is 21



Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 6

How many part time staff do you employ? 5

How many volunteers do you engage? Various

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? *

What age group do you work with? 0 - 20yrs**

Do you operate a membership system? Yes

* we have worked with over 2,060 children and young people in the last full financial year (2004/05) and over 200 children and young people were involved in Something for Now

** this age range relates to the figure given above however we work with young people up to 25, but did not monitor them as a separate group in the year in question



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

Something for now was a children and young people's consultation as part of a housing masterplan for Chesterton, an urban village on the fringe of the North Staffordshire conurbation.

In 2003 the project was commissioned and paid for by Aspire Housing, a registered social landlord, managing a large proportion of the ex local authority housing stock in the village.

B arts worked with over 200 young people and children in the village to ensure that they were able to express their opinions, ambitions and concerns for the area.

Within the project we looked at all aspects of life in the village and enabled the children and young people to design streets, services and infrastructure that met the needs of the whole community, not just stuff for them. We worked in partnership with John Rose Associates, a team of urban designers who led the project.

B arts ran a series of design, creative, video and discussion sessions in schools and youth clubs in order to gather the input from the children and the young people.

To a certain extent the children in the school sessions were a captive audience as the workshops happened in place of lessons. However, at the youth clubs the young people were given the choice of being involved or not. At each session the artists from B arts spent time enabling the children to have a clearer picture of the context of the project and some of the processes by which local planning and urban design come about.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

For Something for now the original commission for B arts was to work with hard to reach groups to engage them in the process of developing the masterplan. The definition of hard to reach groups was set by the commissioners and the urban design partners John Rose Associates, and included people for whom they felt they didn't have the right skills to engage i.e. children and young people.

We had every confidence that we could work with young people and children in the village as we had a good track record of working in partnership with local people in community arts projects previously, and a good network of schools and youth club contacts.

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

B arts has an ongoing commitment to the processes of community consultation and engagement and believes that local people deserve a high quality of engagement. The company also believes that the consultation activity in itself should be both fun and educational - a worthwhile experience never mind the outcomes. We would also want to emphasise the importance of involving young people in these processes for the following reasons:

Young people & children are often defined as part of the problem and so deserve to be part of the solution. Children and young people are traditionally ill served especially in deprived communities and so should be engaged in the design and delivery of services to them.

Consultation can contribute to breaking the cycle of deprivation and under-achievement through raising levels of ambition.

Encouraging sense of ownership amongst all local residents increases the chances of a project/ scheme's success.

The motivation to activate and enable youth participation is part of the company's core beliefs, and is evidenced in the strong history of content led youth arts work the company has. It comes from a fundamental belief that young people have much to contribute, and that their opinions and contributions are ignored, discouraged and undervalued by a wider society. We also believe that a successful society engages meaningfully with all citizens, and it is the responsibility of adults to demonstrate that children and young people have a role in a developed and just society.



In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

The project pre-dated Every Child Matters, however the underlying motivation behind the project was to engage children and young people in the design and delivery of services for them. In order to do this we encouraged them to identify which issues they felt affected them and their community most acutely. The following sets out the activities we did with each of the groups and how they link to the ECM outcomes. We didn't do every single activity with every group- sometimes we were limited by time or adapted the programme to different situations.

Workshop activity	detail	ECM outcome
Understanding the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain who we are • What we can achieve in this project • Why bother? • Who's in charge? • Who makes the decisions? How do they decide? 	Making a positive contribution
understanding the planning process, local democracy & their role	Where's better & where's worse than here? Create a continuum of places that are rubbish and places that are mint and understand why (disallowing because we are on holiday)	Making a positive contribution
making judgments about what makes a good neighbourhood, what qualities we value in the built/ physical environment	Establishing principles Establishing how we'd like it to be through remembering our own experiences	Staying safe Being healthy
understanding and expressing what human and social factors contribute to a good neighbourhood	Future street Draw a future street showing lots of detail, include yourself	Enjoying and achieving
taking part in an arts activity	Inside and outside my ideal home Draw an interior and matching exterior of my ideal home, with lots of detail and labelling	Enjoying and achieving
taking part in an arts activity	What we say about where we live Write a new slogan (Glasgow's miles better) that sums up our principles and what we hope to achieve through this regeneration. Why?	Enjoying and achieving



taking part in an arts activity	A guided tour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going for a walk to hotspots to highlight misuse or design problems. • Capture this on still cameras or video. 	Enjoying and achieving Staying safe
understanding why certain locations are more risky than others and using an arts activity to express this Planning out the problem	Using maps and plans redesigning areas where there are significant problems or issues e.g. parking, anti-social behaviour	Staying safe Making a positive contribution Enjoying and achieving
taking part in an arts/ design activity to solve community problems	If we were.... what would we need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the group into smaller groups representing a section of the community (elders, young people etc) • Identify what services and facilities the group will need in the future • Prioritise 	Making a positive contribution
Understanding the needs of others and planning services that address their needs.	Allocating resources to the most important/ urgent Voting for the top 3 Using the outcomes of the above exercise negotiate and vote down to a top 3 changes	Making a positive contribution
Deciding which action should have precedence over the others- which action is going to benefit the community the most?	What I will do On a card write down what you can do improve the neighbourhood Take it home Acknowledging that I have a role to play and finding out what I can do to make a difference	Making a positive contribution

We took the outcomes of these workshops and represented the work as a high production value CD-Rom which animated the future streets and represented the findings as structured outcomes with recommendations for action.

In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

- We can design services/ projects around genuine needs of young people
- This allows us to keep the organisation “real” – in touch with issues and relevant to the communities we serve
- This also means we can advocate on behalf of the sector, and our participants with authority
- Enhances reputation of B arts within the community- therefore we work in closer partnership, with trust and respect on both sides
- Creates effective and good value projects





If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

Context of company

- B arts motivation is to empower the disempowered; children and young people are major target group so we consciously engaged with this group
- Director team also has professional training in teaching and youth and community development work so the process occurred naturally in wider context of B arts projects and work programme
- Always seek to meet unmet need

This project

The expectations from our point of view were that there would be benefits for the project which were

- Challenging (negative) adult perception of young people
- Enabling adult population to see young people as part of the solution
- Establish shared objectives & actions with all residents
- Commitment to the actions from the people who were going to be living with them for the longest time
- Innovative thinking
- Less inhibitions in ambition and scale of change

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

Once we have engaged with them and explained the project and the context it is relatively easy for young people to express themselves- we have lots of attractive tools (video/ digital cameras/ computers) so that means they want to engage & express themselves and they do so well- they really get their message across. However, how much commitment to delivering the actions children and young people want is to be questioned. So, yes and no

How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?

We do our best to frame the work in such a way as to appeal to the greatest number of people or to attract the attention of the appropriate people. However we don't always have control.

The Chesterton masterplan, including Something for now, formed part of a bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and so would have been considered at Whitehall. On the way it has been also used by RENEW the delivery arm of Government Office West Midlands for housing market renewal in the area.

To a certain extent this is the least satisfactory aspect of the project in that we or the young people involved have had very little control over how much of what they demanded has been heeded.

We also lost control of the flow of information and continued engagement with the young people and children in the village, although this week we have been asked to attend an event (for adults) to follow up on the outcomes of the study.

So it is very difficult to ensure that voices of young people and children are really heard, although we presented them in a very interesting/ dynamic package that attracted attention in itself.

The CD-Rom was also used as a training tool in workshops with local residents looking at attitudes within the community to anti-social behaviour, and in particular to young people.

Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

Yes, up to a point

It is debatable whether it would be appropriate to have young people in positions of authority/ decision-making powers in our organisation, an adult-led charity with a turnover of over £200,000, working with a wide range of different communities and participants.

However, the projects that we deliver always contain occasions in which children and young people, in fact any participant, will have control and be asked to make appropriate decisions; choosing themes, designing the



delivery of projects, cooking the right food, contacting appropriate people, framing a picture, talking to someone they don't know, picking colours of fabric.

We think this is essential to developing self confidence and the ability to make good decisions in other situations in their lives

It is essential in the context of project work and particularly community consultation work, that children and young people are engaged. These projects should work with the whole community, not just the usual suspects!

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

No, not at the moment.

We are exploring possibility of having youth observers from the Bridge, International Youth Project, our largest programme of work, attend meetings of our board of trustees.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

In our projects and activities the children, young people and artists work closely together. A good example of this is the guided video walk. In this activity for Something for now the children at Chesterton Primary School were offered the opportunity to take the artists on a guided walk to places they felt needed special attention. The necessary permissions were obtained and three Y6 pupils took two artists out to film in the area near the school. In this instance the artists were only really technicians, their job being to capture the opinions and concerns of the young people. The young people directed all of the filming, and gave a running commentary to what was being filmed.

We often like to give children and young people control, and a great degree of influence over the outcomes of the situation. We also encourage them to exercise their judgement. All of this works within a set of firm guidelines and limits, so that essential the environment is relatively safe.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

as above in Q11 & Q12

What have been the challenges to the process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?

In the case of Something for now, there was barely any commitment on the part of the partners and the commissioning group to feedback the outcomes to the participants- they were not going to come to a residents' meeting.

We overcame this by planning our own feedback sessions where we took the work back to the individual schools and groups with whom we had worked and made a presentation, sometimes to the whole school, with the other planners.

There is a concern that the real outcomes of the study with the young people were not emphasised sufficiently in the final plan for change, what the young people wanted was watered down.

There was little we could do about this at the time, but have continued to work in the area when and where we can, to provide positive activities within the community and with young people.

In your view, what impact does children's/young people's involvement in decision making have:

For them

- Self confidence,
- Increases ability to make decisions later
- As above (Q12)



For the organisation/ project

- Richer picture
- More diverse input
- More accurately reflects whole picture
- As above (Q11 & Q12)

For the community

- Increased contact with adults/elders/ intergenerational activity
- Increased engagement with whole community
- Reduction in crime and fear of crime
- As above (Q12)

If you were to do it again, is there anything you would you do differently?

Points for improvement

If we had the chance to do another major piece of masterplanning with young people and children we would use the basis we have established in this project, and essentially the same principles however there are a number of things we would do to improve the outcomes and the experience for the participants.

- Do a residential taking young people to see other examples of successful urban planning in other comparable environments
- Spend more time doing small group video walk
- Work with the young people to design and deliver more of the consultation themselves
- Build in feedback- we had assumed support for it would be there and it wasn't- negotiate this in advance with other partners

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?

Do not underestimate children and young people

We often hear: “they won’t be able to understand planning processes” or “they’re not interested”. These views are in our experience incorrect- we have seen little evidence that once children and young people understand they really can have influence/ power that they don’t want to be involved.

Therefore best practice dictates it is best to be clear about how much influence they really can have- how much can change and at what timescale.

Also do not underestimate the time or the efforts you will have to put in- meet with young people where they are, do things on their terms- or at least meet them part way- do not assume that formal meetings – just because they work for the adults you work with that this will work for young people or children.

There are lots of other ways to work seriously together and arrive at meaningful conclusions using fun and creative techniques – you might all enjoy it!

Back all of this with quality staffing and resources.

Any other comments you would like to add?

As long as you have a sound methodology then the key elements to a successful project like this one are

- Obtaining the right level of funding; demonstrating the commitment of the partners to this process
- Having appropriate staff and resources
- The commitment of partners to listen to what young people have to say

It is essential to remember we are building for the future and to do this with any hope of success children and young people have to be drawn into this process. They will be spending more time in it than us so it better be how they want it.



Spurgeon's Aftercare Services

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

Spurgeon's Aftercare Services

Project Address:

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Wolverhampton

WV2 4AW

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Email: leonard.kruczek@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Tell us about your organisation:

We have been providing services including advice, information and support to young people leaving care for the last 14 years. We work primarily with 16 – 21 year olds helping them as they move from care to independence and adult living.

We have a team of seven personal advisers and over 180 young people currently accessing and receiving services from us.

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

It is important to us that the young people we provide services for are involved in appointing staff, auditing services and focus groups etc. as their voice is important in making sure our services meet their needs

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 8

How many part time staff do you employ? 4

How many volunteers do you engage? 12

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? 183

What age group do you work with? 16 - 21yrs

Do you operate a membership system? No



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

Spurgeon's Aftercare Services came into being in May 1992 following a request from Wolverhampton Social Services to Spurgeon's Child Care to work in partnership with them to provide advice, information and support to young people leaving care in light of the 1989 Children Act.

There were originally three key workers, an administrator (p/t) and a sessional drop-in worker who were supervised by the Deputy Centre Manager who had the main responsibility for setting up the services. This way of working continued until October 2001 when the Children (Leaving Care Act) 2000 became law. The project then appointed more staff with key workers becoming Personal Advisers and the Deputy Centre Manager becoming Project Manager just for Aftercare Services. Also an extra administration post (p/t), and a computer coordinator (p/t) were appointed.

Aftercare Services provides advice, information and support to young people leaving public care and moving on to independence and adult life.

We also with the young people draw up their pathway plans and review them every six months until they are 21.

We provide training in ECDL, Life Skills and Driving Tests and Lessons.

Every young person has an allocated personal adviser who helps to find accommodation and other support services as they are needed.

We also run a "Health Centre" and Drop-in facility.

Our aim is to give young people leaving care the maximum opportunity to reach their full potential.

Our objectives are:

- Every young person to have a pathway plan they own.
- Every young person to have appropriate accommodation.
- Every young person to have opportunities to reach their educational potential and to be economically active.

Our main funding comes from Wolverhampton City Council but we also try to attract other funding to develop new areas of work.

We currently support 183 young people aged between 16 and 21

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

From the projects inception we have involved young people in evaluating and auditing our service and in the appointment of staff. They are also asked to comment on all documents and leaflets that we produce for them and they are involved with developing their own pages on our Web site.

We have since starting the project held regular sessions with young people to solicit their views about the services we provide.

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

We believe that the users of our service are the ones best placed to help us develop future services. They have a perception that is different from the staff and other agencies that we work with but it is just as important that we take their views into account.

In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

We are currently undertaking this process and we are hoping to attract funding to appoint a care experience Service User Involvement Worker to do this work with us and our client group



In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

We have a low turn over of staff, over 90% of young people are still in touch with us at 21 and we average over 95% attendance at pathway plan reviews.

If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

It has become evident that there are benefits to the organisation but I think that when we started we just thought it was good practice to involve our client group in what we were trying to develop.

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

We offer to meet transport costs or will pick young people up to attend meetings or training sessions. We will help with child care costs. We also give young people involved with any consultations gift vouchers or in some circumstances cash for giving up their time to help us and where appropriate we also supply food and drinks.

How is it ensured that children/young people’s voices are heard?

The information we receive from young people is passed on to the project steering group, social services managers, corporate parenting committee and various scrutiny panels. Feedback is also given to the young people so that they know what has happened to the contribution they have made.

Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

Our involvement in the European funded “What Makes the Difference Project” in the area of service user involvement and our aim to appoint a Service User Involvement Worker as well as some sessional workers to increase the contribution of our young people to the project clearly shows our commitment to getting young people involved. It is also one of the councils aims that the voices of our young people are heard at the highest level and we will continue to work to make sure this happens.

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

It is a requirement of our contract that we have young peoples involvement.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

As every young person has a named Personal Adviser there are regular meetings between them and the relationships that are developed mean that PA’s encourage their young people to participate in the various opportunities that are available to become more involved.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

The project has benefited by service users feeling that it is their project and that they value what is on offer to them. It has also meant that when outside funders have requested young peoples responses or direct input we have been able to facilitate them.



What have been the challenges to the process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?

It has not been and is not always easy to engage young people even with incentives in the process. In the past there was an apathy to and a distrust of the systems that were in place.

Now the main problem seems to be that young people are expecting to always get what they want and this is not always possible. This means that staff, have to be very clear about the expectations that any consultation process may deliver.

In your view, what impact does children's/young people's involvement in decision making have:

It gives them ownership the project and they therefore stay involved and receive support until they are 21. It keeps the project alive to the changing needs and views of our client group.

If you were to do it again, is there anything you would you do differently?

Look to employ care experienced young people earlier to help develop good consultation structures.

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?

Don't be afraid to take risks.

Getting staff members to accept user involvement is often more difficult than getting young people to accept it. Make sure you feedback to young people after you have asked for their contributions.

Don't expect young people to do it for nothing – could consultants cost!



First Class Youth Network

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

First Class Youth Network

Project Address:

88 Soho Road

Handsworth,

Birmingham

B21 9BN

Telephone: 07944 093 420

Fax:

Email: fcyouthnetwork@hotmail.co.uk

Website: www.fcyn.co.uk

Tell us about your organisation:

First Class Youth Network's mission statement is to 'empower the youth so their voices can be heard'. FCYN operates as a community-based organisation, which delivers services to young people between the ages of 13-25, living throughout Birmingham and surrounding areas. FCYN tailors its services towards the Black and Minority Ethnic community in particular.

The main three services delivered are outreach & mentoring, events and signposting

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

FCYN was created in order to benefit and create a positive change for young people, therefore it is imperative that young people (including children) have a strong participation and influence over the way in which the organisation is run and services are delivered.

Evaluating of services, in particular, requires the majority of the input from young people as the service users, in order for FCYN to be able to shape the future for the organisation and tailor the services to the young peoples needs and desires

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 0

How many part time staff do you employ? 0

How many volunteers do you engage? 27

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? 900+

What age group do you work with? 13 - 25yrs

Do you operate a membership system? Yes



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

First Class Youth Network was birthed in 2004, as a result of five, young enthusiastic people combining their ideas, passion and skills. The five founder members – Leon Moses, Nathan Dennis, Melissa Shervington, Nkrumah Sinclair and Joanna Grant all derive from inner city areas within Birmingham and all have a personal testimony to share with young people, as an inspiration to change their lifestyles and mind sets. Each founder member has a strong passion to create a positive change for young people, who are growing up in disadvantaged environments – living ‘the struggle’.

Based on personal positive and negative experiences gained by all five individuals, throughout their personal journeys in life, each person felt empowered and able to engage with young people, in order to share these experiences and help them to identify better lifestyles for themselves. Being young certainly was and still is an advantage, in terms of being able to relate to other young people and identify with their personal needs and desires.

As a result of combined ideas and visions within different capacities, the five founders decided to set up an organisation and named it ‘First Class Youth Network’...

FCYN has three main services, which are as follows:

- Organising & delivery of events

FCYN delivers youth debate shows on a bi-monthly basis ‘The Struggle Debate Show’.

These events provide young people with the opportunity to collectively unite and discuss issues, which they feel are affecting them, within an open forum. Each debate show has a significant topic (e.g. teenage pregnancy). Issues such as discriminatory behaviour and social exclusion are addressed and awareness is raised within the young people, in a positive manner. The provision of these events meets the needs of young people, particularly deriving from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

- Outreach & Mentoring (drop in sessions)

FCYN has a ‘Street Team’ also known as the Outreach Team, which consists of approximately 18 young volunteers. These young people operate on an organised and geographical method, when targeting areas throughout Birmingham, whereby significant groups of young people have been identified. These young people may be classed as anti social, unruly and troublesome by local residents and authorities within the area. FCYN outreach workers are trained to connect with these young people and befriend them within their own environment, with a goal to make a positive difference in their lives. This can also be classed as peer mentoring.

The outreach workers also promote FCYN events and other positive youth events, on behalf of other organisations within the network.

The volunteers, along with other members of staff within the organisation, also deliver peer mentoring sessions with young people, who access these services on a ‘drop in session’ or appointment basis. These sessions are delivered on a weekly basis at a local venue.

- Signposting & Referrals

Following a drop in session or other form of contact made with a young person who has accessed a service from FCYN, this young person may then be referred to another recognised organisation within the network, for further help and support in relation to their requirements.

For example, a young person may express a strong interest within the music production industry and wishes to undertake some training within that field. This would not be a service which FCYN can offer directly, yet a partnering organisation would be able to assist, therefore, the young person would be referred to that organisation. However, contact with that young person would not be terminated at that point, ongoing support is then offered for an agreed period of time.



The main aims and objectives of FCYN are:

- To break social barriers faced by young BME people
- To provide a networking centre for young people (debate shows), where young people can express themselves and improve their social skills
- To create a positive change & future for young BME people

FCYN has received minimal funding to date, in the form of small grants, totalling £7000.

These grants were awarded by WIN 'Working in Neighbourhoods' (£5000) and B'ham City Council 'Community Chest Fund' (£2000) – to whom we are very grateful.

Several other applications have been made to a variety of mainstream funders, yet have been unsuccessful.

This has been a great concern for FCYN, due being unable to plan future services, not knowing whether funding applications will be successful. However, FCYN has the passion and drive to achieve and continues to strive as there are many young people throughout Birmingham who clearly need support and direction which FCYN can deliver. FCYN aims to become independent and able to self sustain within the future as being reliant on funding has been identified as a definite barrier to success.

Young people are either involved within FCYN as volunteers or service users. Every member of staff within the network is aged 25 and below, therefore, the entire service is managed and delivered by young people.

Young people who are solely service users, are involved on a membership basis. FCYN currently holds a database of 900+ young people, who have signed to become a member, either at an event, via the website, via email, whilst being interviewed on 'the streets' etc.

FCYN considers all of these young people as having a involvement in the organisation, many of them regularly attend the events, utilise the youth forum on the website and make general contact with FCYN on a regular basis.

In addition to the outreaching and peer mentoring work, which many of the volunteers do, other roles within FCYN are also conducted on a voluntary basis, by the team – such as ushering, registering, completing membership & evaluation forms with young people at events etc. Selected volunteers also assist with general administration work on an ongoing basis, for example, sending bulk mail-outs to the database of members. The team of volunteers regularly attend meetings held on a monthly basis, and also have updated progress meetings on a one to one basis with a member of the management team. The progress of these volunteers is monitored and support is continually offered, in the form of mentoring and training. It is a requirement for these volunteers to undertake regular self-development workshops, in order for them to remain focused and continue to strive towards their goals and aspirations. This is an effective method of support for these young people. The FCYN management team regularly consults with the team of volunteers and other young people, with a desire to gain their personal thoughts and feelings about FCYN and the services delivered. FCYN encourage these young people to have involvement and contribute ideas towards the organisation.

As detailed above, there are a variety of ways in which FCYN management involve young people in the organisation.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

As FCYN was created by young people, in order to benefit other young people – child/youth participation has always existed and will continue to exist on an ongoing basis.

FCYN originally consisted of five founders members, all of whom were and still are classed as young people. This team of managers then expanded to implementing a further team of four young managers, due to the growth of the organisation and the demand.

During this process, a team of volunteers was created, which grew rapidly and was then reduced to 27, following interviews and training sessions.

Young people have always been the focal point of FCYN; the events delivered are aimed at encouraging young people to collectively discuss issues which they feel are affecting them. This enables them to hear what other young people think and feel, with the opportunity to identify solutions and move forward in a harmonised manner.

FCYN constantly seek to encourage young people to participate with each other, with an aim towards breaking down current barriers amongst BME young people in particular, as these barriers contribute towards violent conflict, which affects the community as a whole.





What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project? FCYN strongly believes that when working towards achieving a positive change for young people, it is imperative that these young people are involved in the process and consulted with at every stage. Research carried out by FCYN clearly demonstrates that young people are more willing to participate and listen, when they have been involved in the decision making process. Having a significant voice, which is heard and recognised by others, enables these young people to feel more valued and powerful as individuals – which then determines better outcomes from projects, events and service delivery throughout, due to young people having a strong involvement and influence over how the organisation is run. FCYN aim to ‘empower the youth’ and the only way to achieve that is to involve them.

In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

Each of the Every Child Matters outcomes have been addressed through debates and discussions held with young people. The ‘Enjoying and Achieving’ outcome in particular has been linked with work carried out with young people, as FCYN constantly encourage the service users (young people) to enjoy positive elements of their lifestyles and strive towards achieving their goals and aspirations through self-development.

In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

The entire success gained by FCYN to date, has been related to youth participation in decision making. As described earlier, young people are the key players and service users within the organisation, each of the services provided are implemented and received by young people, therefore, without their involvement, none of this would be possible.

Decisions made within the organisation, from a strategic and development aspect, are made by the directors and board members, who are all young people!

Decisions made, in terms of tailoring the services, to meet the service user’s needs, are influenced by feedback and suggestions gained from the young people who are actively involved and benefit from the services delivered by FCYN.

FCYN aims to empower the youth, so that their voices can be heard – this then strengthens and enables the young people to become more actively involved, in terms of decision making within their communities.

If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

This is not applicable to FCYN as the organisation is youth initiated, due to being created, designed and delivered by young people.

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

FCYN enables young people to be involved in the decision making process in a variety of ways. Young people can apply to become volunteers; this team meets on a monthly basis and are given the opportunity to give feedback and thoughts on proposed changes and ideas for the organisations. All feedback given is considered and taken seriously.

Young people, who are generally FCYN members, are able to forward suggestions and offer personal opinions based on the services provided by FCYN, in various ways – for example, via the forum/feedback questionnaire on the website, via email, in writing, by telephone, during events, by attending a drop in session (held weekly) and speaking to a member of staff in person.

FCYN are always open to suggestions and general feedback, as this shapes the future for the organisation.



How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?

The Youth Debate Shows 'The Struggle' is the perfect arena in which to achieve this. The objective of the debate shows, is to ensure that young people's voices are being heard and that positive changes are made within their communities, as well as having an influence on the shaping of government agendas and policies for young people, as a result.

Other ways of documenting young people's 'voices' in relation to their feelings, thoughts and needs, is achieved by compiling reports based on the discussions held and opinions captured from young people. These reports are then presented to relevant agencies and boards, such as Birmingham Youth Service & City Council etc.

FCYN regularly capture young people's thoughts and feelings, on a particular issue, and then ensure that the information obtained is given to the relevant agencies who are able to create a positive change for young people and are able to meet their needs.

This is then followed up and FCYN continue to highlight the needs of young people and present documentation to confirm the need.

Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

Yes, youth participation in decision making is an extremely high priority within FCYN.

As explained previously, FCYN is managed and delivered by young people, for young people, therefore decision making by young people is critical as these decisions create and shape all aspects of the organisation.

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

Yes, it is formalised and recognised in all formal documents for the organisation, i.e mission statement, constitution, business plan, policies & procedures etc.

The services provided are aimed at young BME people between the ages of 13-25, therefore, all aspects of the service delivery are directed to this group of people, all documents for the organisation reflect this fact.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

As the organisation is managed by young people, it is generally young people working together with other young people, as opposed to adults.

Although, 'adults' are incorporated into the work carried out by FCYN – for example, by sitting on the panel at an event and offering their knowledge and feedback to an open forum.

As FCYN is a network of organisations, when 'signposting' young people to other organisations, which are generally run by adults, this process needs to be managed effectively and consists of young people working alongside adults, in order to deliver an effective service for young people and achieve this process.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

Youth participation, in terms of decision making within FCYN has determined all of the benefits and positive outcomes gained.

Whilst enabling young people to make relevant decisions within the organisation, these young people feel empowered and 'part' of the organisation, taking ownership and feeling proud to be a member and part of an innovative and positive network.



This has demonstrated real success, as young people in receipt of the services provided actively engage and partake in all aspects of the service delivery, which many of them have contributed to and shaped for the benefit of other young people. This then encourages more and more young people to partake and become involved. This in itself is a very positive outcome as young people are continually encouraged to become a part of something positive and change their lifestyles, influenced by other young people.

What have been the challenges to the process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?

The initial challenge, with regards to involving young people, was gaining the trust and confidence from them and encouraging young people to become involved.

However, this was quickly overcome, due to young people recognising the fact that the staff within the organisation were of a similar age and had similar experiences and therefore able to relate to them effectively. FCYN does not feel that this is still an issue or a challenge as young people continue to engage in a natural and organic manner.

The only challenge, in terms of being able to actively involve young people in decision making, is the lack of resources within the organisation, to be able to achieve this outcome in a variety of ways and perhaps offer incentives to young people, for making positive contributions to FCYN.

In your view, what impact does children's/young people's involvement in decision making have:

- For them – the impact is great as it empowers young people and enables them to feel of importance and take ownership for their roles and contributions towards the organisation
- For the organisation – the impact the vital, as it shapes and determines the future for the organisation and all aspects of service delivery
- For the community – the impact is also very great, due to young people being actively involved in making a positive impact and creating a difference within the communities in which they live.

If you were to do it again, is there anything you would you do differently?

The services/projects provided by FCYN are delivered on an ongoing basis, and are also evaluated on an ongoing basis. The information gained from the evaluation process is incorporated into the future planning for the organisation.

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?

FCYN would advise other organisations to incorporate young people's contributions into the entire decision making process, for services directed at young people being the service users and beneficiaries. FCYN would encourage organisations who deliver services/projects for children and young people, to employ young people and provide them with relevant positions which enable them to directly engage with other young people. This is due to experience and research demonstrating the fact that 'young people engage with and effectively relate to young people'.



YMCA England (Midlands)

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

YMCA England (Midlands)

Project Address:

7 South Street, Melbourne

DE73 8GB

Telephone: 07905 260557

Email: jim.jenkinson@england.ymca.org.uk

Website: www.ymca.org.uk

Tell us about your organisation:

The YMCA is a leading charity committed to supporting and holistically developing all children, young people, particularly in times of need.

There are 146 local YMCAs throughout England working in over 250 communities, represented nationally by YMCA England. There are 10 YMCAs in the West Midlands in each of the districts of the Region, who have their own networks within the children, young people and families' work. West Midlands YMCAs accommodate over 700 young people every night, provide over 2000 personal and social development opportunities and over 350 childcare places every week. They each affiliate to the National Council of YMCAs (YMCA England) and are coordinated at Regional level (Midlands) via the Regional Executive Officer and a Regional Committee.

This Committee and the YMCAs developed a Regional Strategy in 2004 and youth governance is one of six regional strategic objectives.

The YMCA in England is part of a global organisation, which has a presence in 122 countries with 14,000 YMCAs and 45 million members worldwide. The World Alliance of YMCAs enables the YMCA to share good practice and therefore, we can draw on Youth Governance good practice taking place around the world.

The YMCA has been at the forefront of development in youth work and services for young people. From its foundation in 1844, it has developed into a large, professional organisation, which reaches out to over 1 million young people each year. YMCAs were traditionally city/town centre-based operations, but now are reaching in to new communities, diversifying all the time, but continuing to focus on the hardest-to-reach and disadvantaged young people. Many YMCAs are also providing community facilities and services for a wide range of people.

YMCAs are among the largest providers of child-care in England and offer a wide variety of services including, crèches, school and homework clubs, pre-school playgroups, and junior sports.

At the YMCA, we support children as they journey towards adolescence, by providing activities that stimulate and challenge them, and encourage them to feel a sense of achievement.

YMCA work is diverse and responsive to local need and committed to working in partnership with others. Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

Putting children/young people at the "centre" of the YMCA is part of the organisation's ethos and vision.





YMCA Midlands has a regional strategic objective “Effective governance & leadership with an emphasis on youth”. It is in the process of developing a regional youth forum, which will enable young people to have an active voice in the YMCA’s governance locally, regionally and nationally. Previously YMCA England has run a “Participation in Management” project and an “Exclude Me In” project, which aimed to achieve greater involvement of young people in their organisation’s management / community.

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 1
How many part time staff do you employ? 0
How many volunteers do you engage? 2
How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? 6
What age group do you work with? 16-30yrs
Do you operate a membership system? No



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

In June 2004 the Midlands Region of YMCAs drafted their Regional Strategy and one of the key objectives was:

Effective governance & leadership with an emphasis on youth

In order to implement this two youth work placement students at YMCAs in the Region took on the task of creating a development plan and recruiting young people from across the 16 YMCAs.

A Youth Governance Group is now formed consisting of approximately 6 young people aged 18 – 26 years old and is meeting regularly, their most recent achievement was to help plan and deliver the Regional YMCA Annual event on 12th September. They will be presenting to our Regional Chairs & CEOs Conference on their role in Governance and some will be speaking at our National Conference to over 400 people.

Given the emphasis and desire to see young people more directly involved in the governance of the YMCAs and the Regional Committee, the Regional Executive Officer began to ask how the wider voluntary youth sector could benefit from our experience and support us to develop further. Hence, our involvement in Change Up.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

It was developed as a key strand of the YMCA Midlands Regional Strategy - "Effective governance & leadership with an emphasis on youth".

A recognition that the diversity of YMCA Boards of Management needed to be improved.

As part of the wider social policy context to increase the contribution of young people.

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

Putting children/young people at the "centre" of the YMCA is part of the organisation's ethos and vision.

This will help develop the young people's skills and experiences.

The YMCAs will encouraged to create more opportunities for young people to be involved in their governance structures and hopefully make changes accordingly.

30% of the charities find it difficult to attract young people to serve as trustees

Diversity on the trustee board is important. A charity with a diverse board of trustees is more likely to:

- engage effectively with the community it serves;
- respond effectively and equitably to the needs of its users;
- increase accountability and public confidence in its work

In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

Positive Contribution – by engaging in governance issues, learning new skills and having new experiences, which will assist in better equipping that young person for the future.

Lifelong Learning - as above

Enjoying & Achieving – it is a fun project for the young people and their achievements are recognised

Being Healthy – YMCA work is centred on holistic development; Mind, Body & Spirit. Therefore, the young people can benefit enormously through improving their self-esteem and confidence.

In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

It's brought YMCAs closer together

It's enabled the YMCA to participate and lead on youth governance regionally





It's influencing national YMCA strategy – increasing young people involvement in governance is a resolution at our National Assembly on 24-26 March.

Young people will be speaking to the resolution at National Assembly.

If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

Yes, it was initiated by adults, but it is very much a win-win scenario for the reasons stated earlier.

The organisation will be able to better meet the needs of it's client group as it will have regular meetings with them and genuinely listen to their views, which will affect decisions made.

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

We can make it easier by making resources (funds, equipment, people) available for them to be involved
We challenge existing structures and stereotypes.

We encourage young people to see that being involved in governance can be interesting, fun and above all make a difference!

How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?

By having a Regional Strategic objective – with a direct link to Regional YMCA CEOs Forum.

Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

It is our project and thanks to the Strategy and the project it has a growing priority locally.

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

It is part of an agreed Regional Strategy

The group has a constitution.

The group has had a delivery plan.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

Well in partnership – young people generally feel listened to and are allowed to take the lead on things like the Annual Regional Event.

Locally there is much more work to be done to introduce inter-generational work.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

Younger people attending Regional & National Events

Young people on Boards of Management

Young people being more confident and speaking at National Events.

Boards of Management are discussing how they can attract younger people

What have been the challenges to the process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?

Distance – travelling across the Midlands for meetings – we move meetings around the Region to help others at least attend some meetings

Young people's understanding of governance (and staff's!) – don't use the word!

Young people's transitory lifestyles – no real solution, except continue to encourage new people to join the group



Participation costs for YMCAs who have not budgets for this type of activity – encourage them to set a budget for the future!

In your view, what impact does children's/young people's involvement in decision making have:

- For them – it gives them increased self-confidence and self-esteem plus new skills
- For the organisation/project – it make the organisation re-consider how it is managed and makes it consider a new recruitment strategy for Board Members
- For the community – it will be better served as more young people from the community will be involved in the decision making processes

If you were to do it again, is there anything you would you do differently?

Start with speaking to young people and listen to how they would address the issue

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?

Allocate sufficient resources (funds, people, time, etc)

Young people to set objectives

Don't set expectations too high

Explain in their language what you are talking about



Spurgeon's Child Care

Section 1 – Background Information

Name Organisation/Project:

Spurgeon's Child Care

D'Eyncourt Out of School Club

Project Address:

D'Eyncourt Out of School Club

Mullet Road

Wednesfield

Wolverhampton

WV11 1DD

Telephone: 07986683506

Organisation Address:

Spurgeon's Child Care

52 St Judes Road West

Tettenhal

Wolverhampton

WV6 ODB

Telephone; 01902 572300

Tell us about your organisation:

We meet the needs of children and families through practice and the delivery of high quality services as a practical expression of the Christian faith.

Spurgeon's Child Care runs an Out of School club which is situated on the School Site at D'Eyncourt Primary in a mobile classroom. We provide high quality child care during term time and the School Holidays.

We aim to provide a stimulating, enjoyable environment, in a safe and spacious setting where children are happy to go in the holidays.

Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?

This is important to us because we provide a happy, safe, warm and stimulating environment for all children to play, learn and develop freely.

We help children in our project to develop responsibility for themselves and their actions and to become competent, confident, independent and co-operative individuals.

We like to encourage children in our project to have a positive attitude and respect for both themselves and other people.

Staffing/Membership:

How many full time staff do you employ? 1

How many part time staff do you employ? 4

How many volunteers do you engage? 1

How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project? Approximately 80 children on record

What age group do you work with? 3 – 12years

Do you operate a membership system? Yes, we carry out a registration process. The project is also OFSTED-registered and inspected for safe childcare



Section 2 - The Case Study

Tell us more about your organisation/project:

D'Eyncourt Out of School was launched in April 2003. The Club offers parents children places for Out of School Care. Offering children a selection of creative and sporting activities and a light tea snack during the sessions. The Sessions run at affordable prices offering support to parents needing guidance to claim Working Family Tax Credit.

Due to the popularity of the Out of School Club. We launched our first Playscheme in the Summer of 2003. Offering children play opportunities during the coming holidays, enabling them to engage with other children. Spurgeon's Child Care offers outings and days out to places where some children haven't had the opportunity to visit before.

In 2004 Spurgeon's launched their Breakfast Club offering a before school club for working parents, offering the children a breakfast selection and activities to start their day at school.

Aims/objectives

To provide services based on the needs of parents and young people, Develop a young peoples council, working in partnership with the school, plan and deliver a quality activity programmes for out of school and holiday playschemes.

Funding Sources

The Early Years new Opportunities Fund provided us with the set up costs and funding for the first three years of the project. We have now completed out last year of funding. The Out of School Club is now developing regular fundraising events involving children/young people and parents of the project.

Children/young people involved

The Breakfast Club attendance on average: 20 children/young people

The Out School Club attendance on average: 28 children/young people

The Holiday Playscheme attendance on average: 20 children/young people

All young people involved in the project play an active role in the decision making of the running of the club.

How did child / youth participation in your organisation come about?

The out school club runs a young peoples council. Members of the committee are responsible for informing staff of comments children have made in the club regarding activities they would like to do and fundraising events they would like to participate in. We believe that young person/persons in charge of the committee works in a positive way because other young people in the club are able to relate to that person better. Staff takes on board these ideas and hold informal discussions with the young people on how we can explore their ideas.

What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?

Wherever appropriate, children are involved in the process of planning activities so that the programme reflects their opinions, and so that children feel some ownership over their Club.

In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

The outcome for the every child matters is to help children enjoy and achieve, involves children enjoying play experiences and help them develop and achieve.

Involvement and consultation helps them to develop new skills such as negotiating, sharing and understanding the perspectives of others. It helps them to understand how decisions are made, and recognises that their opinions are important.



In what ways has child/youth participation in decisions making been related to the success of your organisation?

For both staff and the Club, there are multiple benefits of such an approach such as improved behaviour, a relationship with children based on partnership, a more cohesive environment and activities and decisions that children feel a sense of ownership over.

If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?

As above...

Staff support, recognise and promote achievements by all children

How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision making processes within the organisation/project?

Spurgeon’s Child Care believes that actively promoting the participation of children in decision-making processes is beneficial to children, staff and the Club as a whole. Activities are done on a weekly basis, children are asked to forward their suggestion on the clubs activity suggestions board, club comments book or for young club members to draw a picture of the activities they would like to do. This is the responsibility of the member of the club council to forward these ideas onto a member of the club staff.

How is it ensured that children/young people’s voices are heard?

Via regular group based discussions and Q and A sessions and Questionnaires and other regular feedback on activities

Is child/youth participation in decision making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.

The out of school club ensure that the consultation and involvement of the young people is regularly monitored and acted upon so that children are able to see that their input has led to visible outcomes. The Club and its staff are also clear about what decisions children will be involved in and attempt to offer clear explanations if and when consultation and involvement is deemed inappropriate.

Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way. Or in the process to being formalised? (i.e. consisting. mission policy etc.)

Clubs Mission Statement:

Spurgeon’s Child Care, and all its members of staff, are committed to the principle of involving and consulting children whenever decisions are made within the Club that affect them.

How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/project?

The Club Leader and staff will work with children to draw up a charter and set out the expectations and responsibilities of the Club, the staff team and the children in respect of consultation and involvement.

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision making to the organisation/project?

That the children/young people are involved in the decision making process and the children/young people have a sense of ownership in the running of the club in terms of activities and events that take place.

In your view, what impact does children’s/young people’s involvement in decision making have:

- For them

Children feel ownership over their Club.



- For the organisation
- Good relationships with children based on partnership in decision making
- For the community



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Appendix 1 blank form

Background

The Growing Up in the West Midlands Strategic Group was established in February 2005 and had 6 members. It now has over 60 members from almost as many organisations and networks, and has become known as The Growing Up in the West Midlands Strategic Forum.

Our Purpose

Growing Up in the West Midlands Strategic Forum exists to develop the West Midlands as a region that respects and acts upon the needs, interests and aspirations of children and young people, and the voluntary and community organisations that work with them.

In broad terms it is our intention to support the sector to:

- connect and cooperate
- include and expand
- exchange and develop

We aim to generate a sound basis for a sustained strategic influence and enhanced delivery of services at local and regional levels through the creation of sustainable systems, structures and strategies that make effective use of technology.

Change Up

We intend to make the region a flagship and to develop and record our activity with a view sharing our practice through local and national networks both within our consortium and beyond. We have recently been successful in our bid for Change Up funding, and have secured £200,000 to help us realise our ambitions.

This is a hugely exciting opportunity to give children and young people and the voluntary organisations working with them the profile and influence they deserve within the region. Change Up will enhance our capacity to coordinate and support the work of the voluntary sector and enhance partnerships with statutory bodies.

As our proposal outlines, the work will be far-reaching and varied - workforce development, governance, ICT, participation, outreach and diversity, sustainable funding, the Regional Youth Work Unit, Children's Trusts and commissioning are among those things on the agenda.

Children and Young People's Strategic Engagement Consultation

The Children and Young People's Strategic Engagement Group outcomes are to:

- To provide a more developed culture of children and young people's strategic involvement and a body of evidence to support its values
- To establish routes for policy makers to engage children and young people

As part of our work we are carrying out a wide range of consultation to ascertain the degree to which children and young people play an active role in the development of organisations and forums. One element of the consultation aims to provide a range of case studies as exemplars of good practice to share throughout the region.

We are inviting you to provide a case study which demonstrates how children and young people within your organisation are actively engaged in the decision-making process that impact on service delivery.

Process

We are seeking a number of organisations to profile in terms of their positive child and youth participation, and would like to invite you to be one of the case studies. Our belief is if we know what better practice looks like and can pull together its essential elements then models of good practice can be developed and shared.



Please note, you are under no obligation to take part in the research. Should you agree to participate you have the right to ask any questions about the case study, and to comment on a draft of your case study before we put it on the website.
 THANK YOU for taking the time to complete the case study.

**Child and Youth Participation CASE STUDY:
 Section 1 - Background Information**

Name of Organisation/Project:	
Address:	Telephone: Fax: Email: Website:
Tell us about your organisation:	
Why is child/youth participation important to your organisation?	

Staffing/Membership

1	How many full time staff do you employ?	
2	How many part time staff do you employ?	
3	How many volunteers do you engage?	
4	How many children/young people are involved in your organisation/project?	
5	What age group do you work with?	
6	Do you operate a membership system?	Yes/No



Section 2 – Your Case Study

7	<p>Tell us more about your organisation/project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History How did it start What it does Aims/objectives Funding Sources How children/young people are involved How children/young people are supported to be involved
8	<p>How did child/youth participation in your organisation/project come about?</p>
9	<p>What are your reasons for involving children/young people in decision-making within the organisation/project?</p>
10	<p>In what ways (if at all) did you link the design of your participation process to the five Every Child Matters outcomes</p>
11	<p>In what ways has child/youth participation in decision-making been related to the success of your organisation?</p>
12	<p>If adult initiated – when deciding to involve children/young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation/project? What were they?</p>



12	How do you make it easy for children/young people to be involved in the decision-making processes within the organisation/project?
13	How is it ensured that children/young people's voices are heard?
14	Is child/youth participation in decision-making a priority in your organisation/project? Explain.
15	Is youth participation formalised within your organisation/project in any way, or in the process to being formalised? (e.g. constitution, mission, policy etc.)
16	How do children, young people and adults work together in your organisation/ project?
17	What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of child/youth participation in decision-making to the organisation/project?
18	What have been the challenges to the process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?



19	<p>In your view, what impact does children's/young people's involvement in decision-making have:</p> <p>For them</p> <p>For the organisation/project</p> <p>For the community</p>
20	<p>If you were to do it again, is there anything you would you do differently?</p>
21	<p>What advice would you have other organisations looking to engage children/young people in decision-making processes within the organisation/project?</p>
22	<p>Any other comments you would like to add?</p>

THANK YOU for providing us with your case study.
Please return to: