

Children & Young People's Participation Strategy

2021–2024



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION MEAN TO US?



“Participation is the involvement of people in the decisions and processes that affect their lives, including sharing information, consulting, managing, making decisions and taking action”.

– Quote by Tearfund

OUR ENGAGEMENT MODEL

How children and young people want us to work with them


Children and young people across the borough have told us how they would like to be engaged in participation work...




ADVOCACY
To be provided with advocacy to assist children and young people in putting forward their views



SUPPORT
To be provided with support so all children and young people can be fully supported in participation activities




VENUE
To have a safe and fun environment to participate




INFORMATION & ENGAGEMENT
To be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans



EXPLANATION
To be informed of the outcome when children and young people have been consulted with



RESPECT
To be treated with dignity and respect



UNDERSTANDING
To understand what is happening, to be heard and understood, and to have their views and thoughts acted on

HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO BETTER...



Values and attitudes

We will:

- Treat children and young people with respect and dignity
- Use a variety of communication methods to engage children and young people with differing learning styles
- Embed relationship based practice at the heart of our delivery strategy



Knowledge, skills and processes

We will:

- Recruit experienced staff with a passion for making things better
- Develop a bespoke Young Inspectors model to add further Quality Assurance value
- Develop the Investors in Children accreditation via a network of Participation Champions



The doing of what we think and feel

We will:

- Use social media to share information about things for children and young people to do
- Make sure the venues we use are comfortable, safe, friendly and welcoming
- Introduce a Young Inspectors scheme, so that young people can inspect the services they receive in Blackburn with Darwen

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?



Children and young people will see....

- improvements made as a result of their contributions
- an increase in children and young people taking part in participation activities
- people making healthy choices
- more young people enrolling in education or training when they leave school
- more young people with good jobs and high aspirations for their futures



Children and young people will say....

- how their thoughts and ideas have helped improve things
- they have lots of different things to do that they enjoy
- they feel confident in their abilities to make decisions and know where to go for help
- they are happy to go to school or college and learn lots when they are there
- they work in a job they wanted, or are confident they'll get the job they want when older



Children and young people will feel....

- they are listened to and their thoughts and opinions matter
- safe, welcome and included
- they get the right support
- they have lots of opportunities available to socialise, to learn, to achieve and to be healthy
- they are prepared for getting older and becoming an adult
- they are having fun
- they are learning

THE PARTICIPATION PATHWAY

We see participation as a journey that all children and young people should get to take, to help make their lives the very best they can be. The 'no entry' stops are often given as examples of participation and whilst there is always a need for good communication, communication alone is not participation. Stops 2 and 3 represent 'tick box' consultation.

Stops 4 to 7 are examples of genuine engagement moving from the bottom, 'consultation', to the very top, participation which is completely 'child and young person led'. In Blackburn with Darwen we want to deliver participation opportunities that fall between stops 4 to 7.



STOP 1: COMMUNICATION

Just sharing information with children and young people i.e. no input.



STOP 2: DIRECTION

Adult-led activities in which children and young people do as they are told without understanding the purpose of the activity.



STOP 3: TOKENISM

Adult-led activities in which children and young people may be consulted but with minimal opportunities for feedback, or feedback is not taken seriously.



STOP 4: CONSULTATION

The project is designed and run by adults, but children and young people understand the process and their opinions are gathered and treated seriously.



STOP 5: CO-PRODUCTION

Adults, children and young people working together to influence the support and services on offer during the design, delivery and review stages.



STOP 6: CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON INITIATED

Children and young people plan and select their own activities and adults participate rather than lead on them.



STOP 7: CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON LED

Children and young people lead on projects and events. Adults may observe and assist, but they do not interfere with the process or play a managerial role.

VIEW THE FULL STRATEGY ONLINE

To view the full version of the strategy, scan this QR code using a smartphone or simply visit www.blackburn.gov.uk/participation



SCAN ME