

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMPLETION GUIDANCE

A guide on how to evidence the impact of participation work using the **Children and Young People's Voice Impact Tool**

Last updated October 2021



BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

WHY USE THE TOOL?

As a public body, local authorities have an obligation to capture the views of their local community to help shape and improve services, and to ensure commissioning decisions are informed by the experiences, ambitions and expectations of users. Our partners are expected to contribute to this too.

When services are redesigned or decisions are made that will have an impact on children and young people, we have a duty to consult with them. For some of the more vulnerable groups in our community, this duty is strengthened even further by our statutory obligation to coproduce services with them and involve them in strategic decision-making. Wherever possible, coproduction should be the participation approach adopted, regardless of which groups or 'categories' are involved ([click here to read our co-production handbook online](#)).

For organisations where participation and coproduction is not a statutory obligation, such as those in the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector, this approach is still considered to be best practice and is a great way to demonstrate your value to customers and funders.

The importance placed upon effective participation with children and young people has grown considerably in recent years and this is being reflected in inspections, where levels of engagement with children and young people is often a key line of enquiry. Whereas in the past, simply being able to verbalise progress was sufficient, this is no longer the case.

Instead, local authorities are now expected to provide a comprehensive bank of evidence that demonstrates their commitment to participation and, as a result, the new Children & Young People's Voice Impact Tool has been designed to help us capture this information.

This document will provide guidance on how to answer some of the questions included in the form. If you have any queries about any of the questions not mentioned within this guide, contact Elizabeth Clarkson by emailing elizabeth.clarkson@blackburn.gov.uk

How to find the Voice Impact Tool

To use the online Voice Impact Tool survey, scan this QR code using a smartphone or visit forms.office.com/r/eGW6hX61M5



SCAN ME

QUESTIONS GUIDANCE

Question 8

How did you involve children and young people in the design, planning and/or delivery of this activity?

Examples of this would include children and young people having a role in:

- Deciding what, how, when, and/or where they would like to be engaged;
- Design or delivery of a participation programme, activity, content and/or its supporting resources;
- Presenting and feeding back on participation outcomes;
- Deciding and implementing next steps;
- Subsequent monitoring and evaluation activities.

The extent of involvement should be made clear - for example, did the children and young people inform, agree, direct, design, deliver or even quality assure as part of the activity?

Question 9

What did you consider or put in place to ensure the activity was attractive and accessible to children and young people?

Examples of this would include:

- Any training provided to children and young people/resources that were designed to help them to take part;
- Training provided to facilitators to support coordination and delivery;
- Venue selection e.g. based on availability of public transport links, familiarity and positive associations by the group of young people to engage, accessibility;
- Range of communication tools, assistive technology to ensure those with communication needs can fully participate;
- Incentives (examples below)

Tailoring the activity around a fun programme of activities or a particular topic or activity of interest to that group of young people, rewards, progression opportunities, free transport, instant wins – coming away with something tangible at the end.

Question 13

Who is, or will be, better off as a result of what you did?

This is the 'so what?' section of the submission. The participation activities listed in your submission will most likely have resulted in positive changes. This could include changes to an existing service or resource, the creation of a new service or resource and changes to your organisation's delivery of budget priorities. You may have also learned lessons which could contribute to the outcomes of another distinct project or wider programme of work.

Details of this will be included in question 11 of this submission. For question 13, you will need to consider how these changes have, or may, impact on children and young people.

Your response should outline the **actual difference this has made** to children and young people. What has been the benefit to the lived experience of children and young people as a result of this participation and the subsequent changes/decisions made? Who is better off and why? This could be from an individual, group or community perspective. For example:

What was learned?	What changed?	What was the impact?
Change and impact at the individual level E.g. feedback is used to influence the individual experience of a child or young person.		
Young person finds it awkward to socialise with friends due to their assistive technology	Assistive technology was upgraded to a more discreet and fully portable solution	Young person has now made lots of new friends and like taking part in activities
Change and impact at the group level E.g. feedback is used to influence the experiences of a particular age group or other cohort.		
Limited opportunities for younger children to socialise during the summer holidays	Number of activities and activity options for children aged 5-8 years increased	Increase in the number of younger children taking part in holiday club activities
Change and impact at the community level E.g. feedback is used to influence the experiences of all children and young people.		
Parks are no longer a popular place to meet friends due to anti-social behaviour	Regular patrols put in place to help reduce anti-social behaviour concerns	Increase in the number of children and young people visiting the borough's parks

Question 14

Please list evidence to be included with this submission that supports the above

Evidence is required that clearly demonstrates:

- Effective participation is taking place with children and young people (supportive, inclusive, informed by the views of children and young people);
- Information shared is acted upon (and where it can't be, the reason why is explained);
- Children and young people are kept informed on how their views are helping to instigate change and shape services;
- Benefits achieved as a result of participation are quantified;
- Children and young people are involved in the monitoring, evaluation and review of services that impact them.

Whilst there is often a place for reports and written case studies, the voices of children and young people often provide a more powerful message when evidencing participation, change and benefits realisation. As such, please consider creative evidence options such as videos, photographs and examples of art and design produced by children and young people during the course of the participation activities listed in your submission.

After submitting your response, please email any attachments you wish to be used as evidence to elizabeth.clarkson@blackburn.gov.uk

GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Children & Young People's Voice Impact Tool form should be used to report on **one** activity at a time. However, when you have submitted your response, you will be given the option to submit an additional response if required.
- Please remember not to close the browser tab/Forms page until you have submitted your response as your work will not be saved.
- If you would like a copy of your response, email elizabeth.clarkson@blackburn.gov.uk