Powys Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy 0-25

2011 - 2014

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 12

You have the right to say what you think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect you and for adults to listen and take it seriously.
Who we are

Powys Children and Young People’s Partnership (CYPP) is a group of organisations working together to improve the lives of children and young people in Powys.

“Like a polo it’s all about the whole”
Definitions...

Strategy
A plan of action. This strategy is designed to achieve particular goals or objectives.

Objective
What the Partnership intends to achieve.

Goal
A dream with a plan and a deadline.

Outcome
The result or effect of an action or event which results in an improved state of wellbeing for a group or individual.

Aim
The purpose of doing something; what somebody is trying to achieve.

Action
The process of doing something.

Participation
“Participation means that it is my right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing any action that might affect me.

Having a voice, Having a choice.”

In 2005, the Welsh Government held a competition asking young people to sum up the meaning of participation and the above was the winning entry.
Our Aims

With this strategy we want to ensure that the children and young people of Powys have the opportunity to contribute, and to have their voices heard and their views taken into account in decision making on all issues that affect their lives.

The partnership has a shared vision that all children and young people living in Powys.

- Reach their full potential. (improve and be the best they can)
- Have access to the services they need.
- Those services value and respect them and promote their health, wellbeing, learning and development.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring that everyone knows that children and young people have the right to participate when decisions are being made that affect them.
- Developing structures to enable children and young people to influence decision making.
- Supporting organisations, families and carers to involve children and young people in decision making and the planning of services, particularly when informed consent is required.
- Ensuring that there is a commitment to effective participation.
- Monitoring the outcomes for children and young people achieved through involving them in the process.
- Promoting a shared understanding of the Participation Standards and how these will impact on the work of organisations.

The National Children and Young People’s Participation Standards for Wales are a set of seven standards which help organisations follow good practice when involving children and young people in decision making at all levels. They are clear and accessible and using them ensures that participation is an effective part of everyday practice.
The boxes below show the Partnership’s commitment to the Standards

Information

Information that is easy to understand for everyone. Adults working with children and young people know what is going on and are open, honest and clear.

**We Will:**
- Broaden information provision to children and young people and extend participation opportunities for 0 – 25 year olds.
- Involve children and young people from the outset of an initiative to ensure ownership and continual participation.
- Use a variety of methods, being mindful not to exclude the marginalised and hard to reach.
- Train staff and volunteers with responsibility for engaging with children and young people.
- Ensure children and young people have enough information to make informed choices and decisions.
- Provide information and advice for families and carers to support children and young people.

Children and young people choose to be involved (or not) to work on the things that are important to them.

**We Will:**
- Ensure children and young people are given the opportunity, where appropriate, of making an informed choice of whether they wish to participate.
- Promote the use of a Participation Protocol Form to help organisations think through and plan time for informed participation. (included with the standards Appendix 2)
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to voice and promote their opinions.

Encouraging views from all.

**We Will:**
- Ensure participation involving children and young people happens regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, language, or disability.
- Ensure children and young people are not prevented from participating through poverty or social disadvantage.
- Be proactive in ensuring participation is representative.
- Establish clear channels of communication to ensure participation in key decision making processes.
- Ensure staff have the relevant training to encourage views from all children and young people.
- Encourage children and young people to participate through the language of their choice.
- Ensure families and carers have the relevant support to enable young children and young people with special needs to participate effectively and in a fun way.
Respecting opinions and views expressed

**We Will:**
- Treat children and young people’s views and experiences with respect.
- Ensure that children and young people feel that their views have been listened to and will be acted upon.
- Work with children and young people to do something about the things they tell us are important.

Children and young people enjoy and benefit from participating.

**We Will:**
- Make sure participating is a positive experience that is empowering and builds confidence and skills.
- Work in ways that are safe, fun and enjoyable.
- Clearly communicate the benefit of participating to all.
- Promote children and young people’s achievements and active participation.

Providing feedback so that individuals are aware of the impact of their participation.

**We Will:**
- Provide feedback, as soon as possible, to those who have been involved in participation.
- Provide feedback that is relevant and is easy to understand.
- Acknowledge and explain the reasons behind decisions, especially where it has not been possible to take on the views of a person or group of people.

Continuously evaluating the way we work with children and young people in order to improve.

**We Will:**
- Make sure children and young people’s views inform and drive forward the way we work.
- Ensure that evaluation of participation is undertaken and lessons learned are incorporated into future plans.
- Provide training and support for individuals working with children and young people in participation.
- Establish, a central register of engagement with young people in order to evaluate activities, support the sharing of good practice and provide evidence of meeting the Participation Standards.
How to make it happen

In order to provide evidence of meeting all the standards, a central register of engagement with young people will be maintained detailing who has been engaged, what resources were committed and what was achieved as a result. As well as gathering information to support the standards these records will also help to evaluate activities and support the sharing of good practice.

CYPP partners are committed to working towards improving the participation of children and young people in planning, making decisions, and reviewing any actions that may affect them. To be effective a Strategy must include an action plan. Each partner will write their own action plan, in doing this, it is hoped to have actions that are relevant, achievable and measurable. The action plans will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they keep abreast of new developments in policy and strategy and remain relevant. This will enable new priority areas to be added if and when they emerge during the three year period and remove from priority status any areas where sufficient progress has been made.

Training and support around the National Participation Standards and writing action plans will be available through the CYPP Participation Group.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Participation group along side nominated young people’s groups are to monitor progress against actions and support with areas of concern.

These groups will also review the strategy to ensure it is in-line with current developments.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**Article 3**

All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

**Definitions...**

**Consultation**

Sometimes consultation is confused with participation, but they are not the same thing. Through being consulted, children and young people are able to voice an opinion or give feedback about a service or policy which has already been determined.

**Participation**

Although there are different levels of participation, it tends to be a more active approach, calling for direct involvement in planning, decision-making and implementation of policy and processes and delivery of a service. Participation implies degrees of ownership and empowerment, and offers opportunities for those participating to develop responsible attitudes and skills.

Both these approaches have a place. As children and young people are those most likely to be affected, they are able to contribute unique viewpoints as to how decisions are working on the ground.
Approaches to participation

There are varying degrees of participation which can be applied to different circumstances:

- **Consulted and informed**
  The project is designed and run by adults, but children are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their views are taken seriously.

- **Assigned but informed**
  Adults decided on the project and children volunteer for it. They know who decided to involve them and why. Adults respect young people’s views.

- **Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults**
  Children have the ideas, set up projects and come to adults for advice, discussion and support. The adults do not direct, but offer their expertise for young people to consider.

- **Child-initiated and directed**
  Young people have the initial idea and decide how the project is going to be carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.

- **Adult initiated, shared decisions with children**
  Adults have the initial idea, but young people are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Not only are their views considered but children are also involved in taking the decisions.

There is no one right approach, but these varying degrees of participation can be used to achieve different ends. The partners within the CYPP work with a wide range of children and young people of all ages and with different needs and abilities, therefore the methods used should be appropriate. Children and young people need to be provided with all the appropriate and necessary information and support to enable them to form and express opinions and to understand the consequences of those opinions.

Families and carers play a crucial role in helping children and young people get their voice heard, particularly for the younger age group and those with special needs. It is important families and carers have information, support and advice to ensure their children and young people can fully participate and their participation is effective and fun.

Participation is a process, and it may take time for an organisation to develop and embed a culture of listening to and involving children and young people in decisions that affect them, and to assess the benefits of this approach.
Benefits of participation

Actively seeking the participation of children and young people brings many benefits, not only for them but for organisations and the communities too.

Benefits for children and young people

- Personal, social and political development through practical experience and the opportunity to learn how to exercise responsibility
- Direct improvements in their own lives and life chances e.g. improved services
- The possibility to protect themselves and challenge abuses of their rights, either directly or through informing a responsible adult
- Enhanced self-confidence and self esteem
- An opportunity to acquire and expand their skills, including problem-solving, negotiation and communication skills
- Familiarisation with group and democratic processes, including understanding different points of view, the need for compromise and a sense of responsibility for group decisions
- A sense of purpose and competence in their own lives - a belief that they can make a positive impact on their own lives and on the lives of their peers, family and community
- An opportunity to learn and practice the skills of responsible and active citizenship

Benefits for organisations

- Enhances relationships
- Increases the organisations relevance to children
- Children and young people bring a fresh perspective and innovative ideas
- Improves the organisation’s ability to achieve outcomes
- Assists organisations to effectively target funds
- Enhances an organisation’s credibility and reputation
- Offers organisations a wider variety of perspectives
- Improves organisational systems
- Helps build capacity and sustainability within an organisation.
Benefits for families and the community

- Children become innovators and creators within the community and not just users
- Communities become more aware of how valuable it’s children and young people are, and of their needs
- Community is valued by children and young people when they have a sense of ownership and involvement
- Children become more aware of local democracy
- Improved parenting and relationship skills

“Participation is a process rather than an event”.

Participation top tip

KEEP THINGS CLEAR

Participation is most successful when children and young people

Can Do – they have the resources and knowledge needed to participate
Like To – feel they are being listened to
Enabled to – they are supported to voice their opinions
Asked To – their opinions are sought by official bodies or voluntary groups
Responded To – they see evidence that their views have been considered

(Adapted from Listen and Change. Participation Works 2007)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Article 17
You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.
The Powys perspective

Powys Youth Forum provides the opportunity for young people to express their views and opinions on the issues that affect young people across the county and to be part of the decision making process.

Youth groups and school councils are invited to send their representatives in October of each year. Four young people are elected by the youth forum members to represent Powys at Funky Dragon. The forum holds a number of residential a year but focus groups may meet in addition to work on specific issues.

The forum discuss issues brought forward from various groups and each year identify a prominent topic for a ‘Spotlight’ debate. After researching the issue findings are presented to relevant service providers, councillors and professionals. Recent Spotlights have been on Safe places to hang out and School Councils.

After each residential members of the forum feedback to their groups, members also meet with the school councils of the special schools in Powys to exchange information. A report from the residential goes to the CYPP.
**Good Practice examples**

There are a lot of great examples of children and young people’s participation across the county, below are just a few of the projects that young people are actively engaged in.

**Junior Local Safeguarding Children Board**

Eat Carrots, be Safe from Elephants is a group of 11-18 year olds that work with the Local Safeguarding Children Board to identify issues around safeguarding that are of concern for children and young people in Powys. The group, coordinated by Powys Advocacy Service developed and launched the young person’s guide to the anti bullying strategy. The plan was drawn up with partners such as the youth service, the police, schools and health professionals and lays out steps to stamp out bullying across the county. The Anti Bullying Plan can be found at www.lscb.powys.gov.uk.

**Community Safety Partnership**

The community Safety Partnership (CSP) run an annual on-line survey which everyone is encouraged to complete. Children and young people are involved in designing the questionnaire to make sure it is easy to read and fill in. The CSP attends Powys Youth Forum once a year to gather views about crime and disorder issues of most concern to young people. These views and concerns are then included in the process of deciding the priorities of the CSP.

**Commissioning services**

Young people contributed to the procurement of the school counselling contract by providing feedback of the tenders. Their views and concerns were taken on board to inform the final decision. Powys Youth Forum members were involved in developing the internet based counselling service (Kooth.com) this included:

- Face to face discussions with the Business Development Director of Xenzone Ltd who run Kooth.com.
- Raising issues regarding the access to and confidentiality of using the service in schools. These issues were raised at the Secondary Headteachers Conference and consequently remedied.
Early Years

Early Years Foundation Team provided 0 - 3 year old settings in Powys with a video camera in order that children could video aspects that they liked and disliked. This information is included in the quality of care report for each setting and submitted to the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to evaluate services and inform future provision.

Children’s Services

The 16 + team working with care leavers regularly invite young people to be part of the interview panel when recruiting for positions within Children’s Services. Recently they have helped in the recruitment of Personal Advisors and Team Managers. They take control of their own young persons panel, asking questions of the applicants, and are then part of the decision making process. They also have a young person who attends Powys County Councils Corporate Parenting Group which co-ordinates the corporate parenting activity for the council.

Pupil participation

Ysgol Penmaes, the special school for 3 – 19 year olds in South Powys, seeks the views of each and every pupil and student through a wide range of means, including the School Council. The school holds a bi-annual pupil and student self-evaluation day when their views are extensively sought. A variation on ‘two stars and a wish’ is used to help pupils identify what is ‘Outstanding’ and ‘OK’ and to ask what they would like to change. Pupils use the forms in class groups and individually, responding in writing, by dictating answers to staff, choosing from a range of symbols and sticking them onto the sheets or demonstrating in person.

Estyn commented “Many features of the self-evaluation arrangements are outstanding.

The development of leadership and responsibility roles for teachers, teaching assistants and pupils is outstanding and has resulted in all staff and pupils feeling that their contributions are valued.”
Youth Service

A youth editorial team, the Website Wafflers, works with the Youth & Family Information service on the Youth Information website. They meet once a term to provide feedback on the structure and content of the website. Group members, aged 11-16, also create articles and support promotion and wider consultation within schools.

All Partner agencies

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Local Resource Solution Panel (LRSP) models have been designed to engage children, young people and their families in the early intervention and prevention agenda. The CAF facilitates a conversation and helps to build productive relationships between the practitioner and the user. In addition CAF and LRSPs can only be used if the individual gives their full consent. Consent issues are explored in the CAF and LRSP training. In addition self referrals are accepted and children, young people and their parents and carers are offered the opportunity to attend an LRSP panel to discuss their own case.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Powys NHS CAMHS involve young people and families in the annual review of their services. Young people are contacted directly by phone or in person in order to gather their views and experiences of the service. This information is fed in to the audit and helps shape the future of the service.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 42

You have the right to know your rights!

Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them too.
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the first legally binding international document to give children and young people civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. In 1989, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old often need special care and protection that adults do not. The leaders also wanted to make sure that the world recognised that children have human rights too. The UN Committee examine how well Governments are protecting children’s human rights every four to five years and make recommendations on where improvements need to be made.

‘Getting it Right’ is the Welsh Governments five year rolling action plan setting out key priorities and actions in response to the Concluding Observations of the UN committee on the Rights of the Child 2008. [www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk](http://www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk)

The Welsh Government is committed to listening to the views and opinions of children and young people. The Children’s Rights Measure in Wales places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) from 1st May 2012 to 30th April 2014, when deciding about making, reviewing or changing policies, or about proposed legislation. And from 1st May 2014, the duty will apply when Welsh Ministers exercise any of their functions.

The Children Act 2004 places specific duties on authorities to promote effective working relationships and improve the well-being of children and young people. All counties in Wales have established Children and Young People Partnerships, (CYPP) and produce specific plans saying how they will take forward the Welsh Governments 7 Core Aims which are based on the articles of the UNCRC.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**Article 2**

All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.
The National perspective.
In order to take forward participation at a national level, the Welsh Government supports a Participation Consortium.

The Participation Consortium was formed in 2003 by the Welsh Government. It works at a national level to develop capacity and practice in terms of the participation of children and young people in decision-making in Wales.

By working together the Consortium ensures co-ordination and the sharing of good practice, avoids duplication and acknowledges diversity.

The Participation Consortium received funding to establish a Participation Unit in 2004.

Current membership includes:
Black Voluntary Sector Network, Cardiff
Black Youth Network, Children in Wales, CWVYS, Funky Dragon, Framework for Partnership Co-ordinators, NSPCC, Tros Gynnal, Voices from Care, Save the Children, WCVA, Canllaw, Youth and Pupil Participation Division (on behalf of WAG), the Children’s Commissioners Office, Youth Forum Workers, Youthlink Wales, Barnardos, CAFCASS, Carnegie Young People’s Initiative, CEWC

by Save the Children on behalf of the Participation Consortium, is steered by the Consortium, and acts as its delivery ‘arm’.

“ It’s chaos but cake makes it better”. 
The Participation Unit’s work falls into 6 themes

1. National Standards and Kite-marking
2. Training
3. Information and good practice
4. Involving children and young people.
5. Inclusion
6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment

The National Children and Young Persons Participation Standards for Wales

The Children and Young People’s Participation Consortium and the Participation Unit developed National Children and Young People’s Participation Standards. These are quality standards that can provide a means for measuring and assessing how well an organisation participates with children and young people.

After children and young people piloted the standards across Wales they were endorsed by all members of the Welsh Government’s Children and Young People’s Cabinet Sub Committee and were launched by the
Minister for Education Lifelong Learning and Skills at a seminar in January 2007.

The Participation Unit has developed a self-assessment tool to accompany the Standards, which emphasises the importance of good practice and allows organisations to measure their own performance. Progress made against these standards can then be assessed and following a successful inspection, by trained young people, a Kite Mark achieved.

For more information on the self assessment and kite mark visit: www.participationworkerswales.org
Draig Ffynci /Funky Dragon (The Children and Young People’s Assembly for Wales)

Funky Dragon is an independent peer-led organisation which aims to give 0 – 25 year olds the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues that affect them. Working closely with the Welsh Government and county youth forums enables Funky Dragon to influence decision making at different political levels.

Each county forum is offered four places for young people on the Grand Council. It is up to each forum to democratically elect their representatives. Representatives are asked to commit to a 2 year term with the Grand Council.

Each countywide forum is responsible for carrying out its own election process, the only conditions Funky Dragon puts on the process are:

- The young people involved are aged between 11 and 25
- The election must be a fair and democratic process
- Only young people are able to vote
- One young person should represent the statutory sector e.g. youth clubs, social services etc
- One young person should represent the voluntary sector e.g. local charities, uniformed group, young farmers etc
- One young person should represent special interest groups
- One young person should represent school councils

Powys has four representatives elected by their peers from Powys Youth Forum.

Grand Council representatives get the chance to meet with Assembly Ministers to question them on issues that are affecting young people across Wales and to discuss how young people can effect change at a national level. The Funky Dragon AGM happens once a year in the Welsh Assembly’s building in Cardiff.
Our Rights Our Story (OROS)

In February 2006 Funky Dragon received funding to carry out a piece of research into the views of young people in Wales, to inform the United Nations Committee how the rights of children in Wales are granted. The views of over 12,000 young people were gathered through a national survey, workshops and interviews with special interest groups. A steering group of Grand Council members were involved in developing the questions and activities, recruiting staff and analysing the results of the work Our Rights Our Story is the report written by the steering group. Additional funding was received for extra research into the views of over 2,500 children aged 7-10 and a separate report was produced called:

‘Why Do People’s Ages Go Up Not Down?’

Work has now begun to produce the next report Funky’s United Nations Challenge (FUNC) which will be presented to the United Nations Committee in 2013.

More information on all the work Funky Dragon does can be found on:
Draig Ffynci/ Funky Dragon website www.funkydragon.org.uk and on the under 11’s website Funky Dragon Junior Draig Ffynci Bach. www.funkydragonjunior.co.uk

“Participation - it’s about a partnership, not just one side having all the power”
Keith Towler is the Children’s Commissioner for Wales. His job is to speak out and stand up for children and young people. He has a team of people who work with him to make sure:

- Children and young people are kept safe and that they know about and can access their rights.
- Children’s and young people’s rights as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are protected.
- There is an increased understanding of children and young people’s rights and the work of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales.

They also:
- Tell everyone how the Commissioner can help if children and young people don’t get their rights.
- Work with, and on behalf of children and young people to achieve positive and lasting changes in their lives.

The Advice and Support service is for children and young people, and the people who care about them, to have someone to turn to when they run out of all other options when dealing with a problem. The Investigations and Advice Officers take calls, text messages and read emails and letters from children, young people and adults, who have been trying to solve a problem and feel like they aren’t getting anywhere. The officers are not counsellors but they work with children, young people and adults who are involved to help them find a solution. If they can’t help then they will try to identify an organisation that can. All the ways you can get in touch with the Commissioners office are on the “Useful Contacts”.

Pupil Voice Wales is the Welsh Governments web site with useful information, resources and training materials for nursery; primary; secondary; grownups; pupil referral units and special educational needs schools, along with contact details, and links to related sites and examples of good practice.
Useful Contacts

CYPP Youth Participation Officer
Email: children.youngpeople@powys.gov.uk
Tel: 01597 826058  www.cypp.powys.gov.uk/youthforum

www.participationworkerswales.org.uk
The PWNW (Participation Workers’ Network for Wales) supports practitioners and organisations to promote participation through their work with children and young people. A section of the website has been specifically designed to help practitioners, policy makers and managers through the steps to take before, during and after completing a self-assessment against the National Children and Young People’s Participation Standards for Wales and achieving a National Participation Kite-mark.

www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk
Web Site with useful information, contact details, links to related sites and examples of good practice.

www.funkydragon.org.uk.
Children and Young People’s Assembly for Wales including information on participation workers and forums across Wales

www.funkydragonjunior.co.uk
For children and professionals working with children with details of current work and projects being done in Wales.

www.powys.gov.uk/youth
Find out about youth service activities, get signposting information to a range of support services, check out what’s on in Powys.

www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk.

Childrens Commissioner for Wales - www.childcomwales.org.uk
Freephone: 0808 801 1000  Free text: 80800 (start your message with COM)
Email: advice@childcomwales.org.uk
Freepost:  Children’s Commissioner for Wales, Freepost RRGL XLYC BHGC, Swansea SA7 9FS

www.travellingahead.org
This website supports young Gypsies and Travellers in Wales to have a voice and a say on decisions that affect them. The young people can discuss important issues, learn more about their rights and upload media content. For professionals there is a toolkit which contains resources to support them in their work with young Gypsies and Travellers, information on culture, rights and policy context.
Acknowledgements

Powys Youth Forum
Jane Harries - Pupil Participation Project Officer
Mererid Lewis - Participation Unit