

Participation of children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset

This document demonstrates how staff in Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) encourage the participation of children and young people aged 0-19 years of age (up to 25 if they have a disability or are included in the Looked After Cohort including Care Leavers)

This includes those staff who work directly with children and young people or who commission or manage staff, services and organisations whose work either supports or impacts on the lives of children and young people.

We also recognise that in many instances the participation of parents and carers is also key to ensure improvements to services.

Click on the embedded icon's for further information

Vision and Values

Since 2000 B&NES has been signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 12 states that:

'children and young people have a right to be involved in all decisions that affect their lives'

Our Vision

Children and young people will be well prepared for adult life, and we will listen to what they tell us, so they can influence change.

Our strategic objectives for children and young people are set out in the B&NES all age Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 -2030 under

Priority 1 'Ensure that children and young people are healthy and ready for learning'
<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/document-and-policy-library/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy>

Our delivery plan sits under this strategy and the implementation plan shows how we will focus on children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing

Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2024 -2030
<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024%20-2030%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%27s%20Plan.pdf>

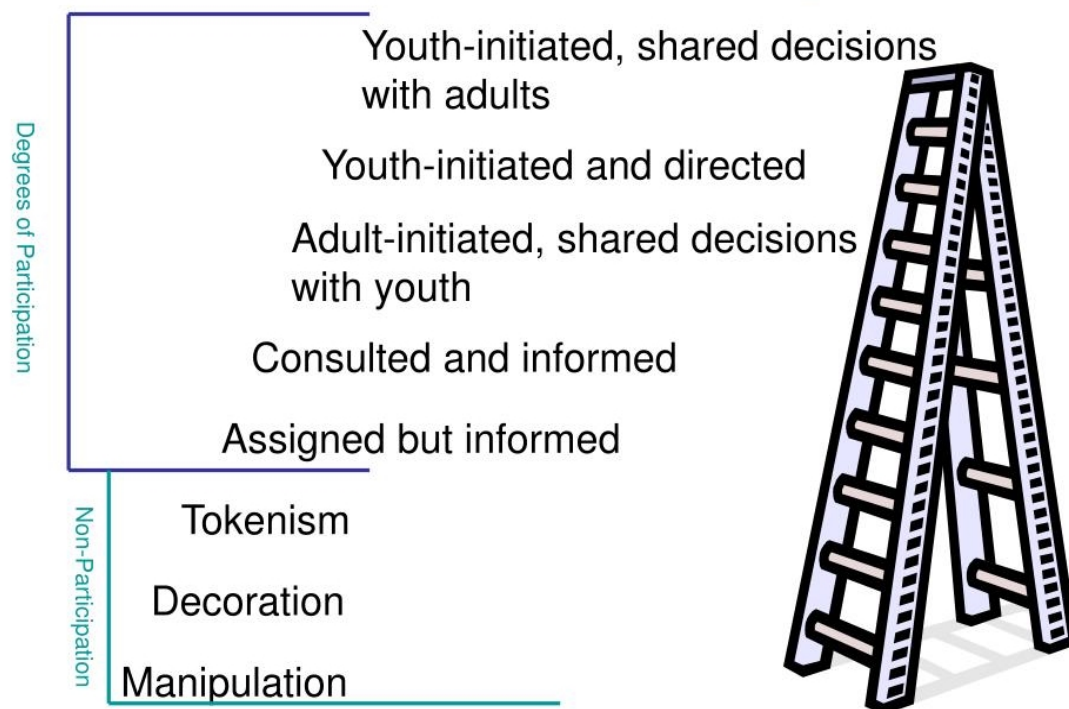
Participation in B&NES

In B&NES, we are committed to the active participation of children, young people and their families wherever possible. However, we recognise that children, young people and their families may want to engage at different levels with services that affect them. Some may wish to be *informed*, some may wish to be *consulted* while others may wish to be actively *involved* in both decision making and service delivery.

Roger Hart professor and children's right academic produced the **Ladder of Participation** for UNICEF in 1992.

The ladder describes eight ascending levels of decision-making agency, control, and power that can be given to children and youth by adults. ... It is important that all young people have the opportunity to learn to **participate** in decisions which directly affect their lives.

Ladder of Youth Participation



Staff within B&NES who are making decisions that will have an impact on the lives of children and young people, should have the skills, time and resources* to enable them to ensure that the 'Voice of the Child' is clearly heard and is evidenced in the work they do.

* This toolkit below is a useful and practical resource on how to deliver Participation.



B&NES Participation
Toolkit 2024 2025.pdf

Our Participation Promises

We promise that all children and young people will be listened to by the adults working with them.

When we meet with a child or young person, we will keep these five promises

Our promises

We will respect
you for who
you are

We will listen
to what you
say

We will share
our decisions
with you

We will help you
understand
decisions that we

We will let you
know what will
happen next.

**The adults working with you want to do the best job.
You have five 'rights' to help you feel more confident
to ask questions , so that they can support you.**

Your rights

The right to be
treated fairly

The right to have
a say.

The right to
make some
choices.

The right to
information you
can understand

The right to know
how your views
were used.

Widget Version



Updated Participation
Promise Landscape (T

Participation is important for the children and young people who are receiving services from B&NES. Only they have the insight into their own needs. They have the right to influence their care, the services they receive and to be given the opportunities to do so.

Participation brings many benefits and has been shown to improve outcomes.

Benefits for children and young include:

Increasing their self-worth, self-esteem and confidence

Being able to take control of their lives and influence the decisions being made about their lives.

Developing skills such as negotiation, problem solving, raising awareness of their needs and the needs of others.

Making positive contributions and long-term changes.

Benefits for adults include:

Gaining an insight from children and young people so that their needs can be met.

Changing our perceptions about ourselves as adults.

Shared decisions making.

Benefits for B&NES include:

Services becoming more responsive to the needs of all children and young people

Gaining fresh perspectives and new ideas about how services can be delivered.

Being more effective in delivering the right services.

Benefits for the community include:

Seeing children and young people as active and engaged citizens.

Where children and young people are heard they can influence what happens within their communities.

This gives the overview of the delivery of participation in B&NES.



Participation of
Children and Young P

In additional we have policy and strategy groups in B&NES that focus on SEND and global majority young people.

Participation for Children Looked After and Care Experienced young people in B&NES is a Commissioned Service. Off the Record will run our Participation Service and advocacy service. They work with the following groups:

In Care Councils

Youth Forum , working with the wider Youth Networks across B&NES

Off the Record run Participation training sessions for all staff twice a year.

All our commissioned services are required to adhere to the 6 Standards of Participation and undertake an annual review of these standards as part of their monitoring.

6 Standards of Participation for Commissioned Services

1.Young people are given a range of opportunities to give feedback on the service they receive and are clear about how that feedback will be used.

2. Young people are encouraged and supported to participate and contribute to service delivery.

3. How do you ensure that young people in minority groups have equal opportunity to participate within your organisation.

SEND

LGBTQ+

Ethnic minorities

Children Looked After /

Care Leavers (if applicable)

4. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis (and the repercussions of Covid) are affecting many young people and their families emotionally and economically.

How have your young people who are or whose families are facing challenges related this.

5. We have a clear commitment to Participation within our organisation, which all staff are aware of.

6 Sufficient budget is allocated to support participation.



External Report of the
Participation Standard