



Children and Young People's Voice and Involvement Strategy

2025-2028

City of York
Safeguarding Children Partnership





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Our vision

Every conversation starts with the child or young person. We pledge to work together with young people to ensure their voices are heard, valued and acted upon.

What we mean by ‘Voice’

The ‘voice’ of children must not be limited to spoken words but include supporting and engaging children and young people to express themselves in ways that work best for them. This means actively engaging those who are pre-verbal, non-verbal, or who communicate through alternative methods, ensuring everyone has a ‘voice’.

Why we need a strategy

It is the right thing to do	Young people tell us we can go further
Listening to children and young people is simply the right thing to do. Every child deserves to be heard and to shape the decisions that affect their lives. By working together, we build trust, strengthen relationships, and create services that truly meet their needs.	Many young people tell us they have a positive experience of being involved and having their voice heard, but too often it can feel tokenistic or young people can’t see what difference it has made. By working together, we can create a system where every voice truly matters and leads to real, visible change.
It is fundamental to children’s rights	It helps keep children safe
Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out children and young people’s right to express their views and opinions about decisions that affect them and for those views to be taken into account.	A voice strategy makes children safer by ensuring their views are heard and acted upon. When children feel listened to and empowered, they are more likely to share concerns, build trusting relationships, and engage with support.

How we will deliver this strategy

Through this strategy we are adopting the Lundy model to guide how we work. The Lundy model provides a practical framework to bring to life children's right to participation. The model is designed around the four dimensions below:

Space	Voice
Provide safe, inclusive, and accessible spaces where children feel comfortable to express their views.	Empower children to freely express their views, ensuring they have the information and support needed to contribute.
Audience	Influence
Ensure that the right people listen to children's views seriously and consider them.	Ensure children's views are meaningfully taken into account and that they can see the impact of their participation.

The Voice and Involvement Group is part of the City of York Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group hold a work plan to drive forward the delivery of this strategy and tracking its progress. We will:

Build how we work	A sharp focus on priority areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided by the Lundy model and children's rights develop easy to use tools and resources to help all partners involve young people in a meaningful way. Deliver sessions to help partners engage children and young people and respond to their views. Ensure there are regular opportunities for children and young people to be involved. Celebrate great voice and involvement and sharing what has happened as a result. 	<p>There are priority areas where the Voice and Involvement Sub-Group will take a sharper focus on providing support and challenge. These priority areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Well-being and mental health Priorities identified by children and young people Diversity and Inclusion and reaching those who may not be heard.



The United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child

When we refer to children's rights we mean so in relation to the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child¹ (UNCRC). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a powerful framework that recognises children and young people as rights holders, not just dependents. It affirms their right to express their views and have those views taken seriously, particularly in decisions that affect their lives.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child emphasizes that children and young people's opinions must be heard and considered, ensuring their participation in all matters, from personal decisions to policy-making. This approach underscores the importance of empowering children to have a voice and be active contributors to their own well-being and development.

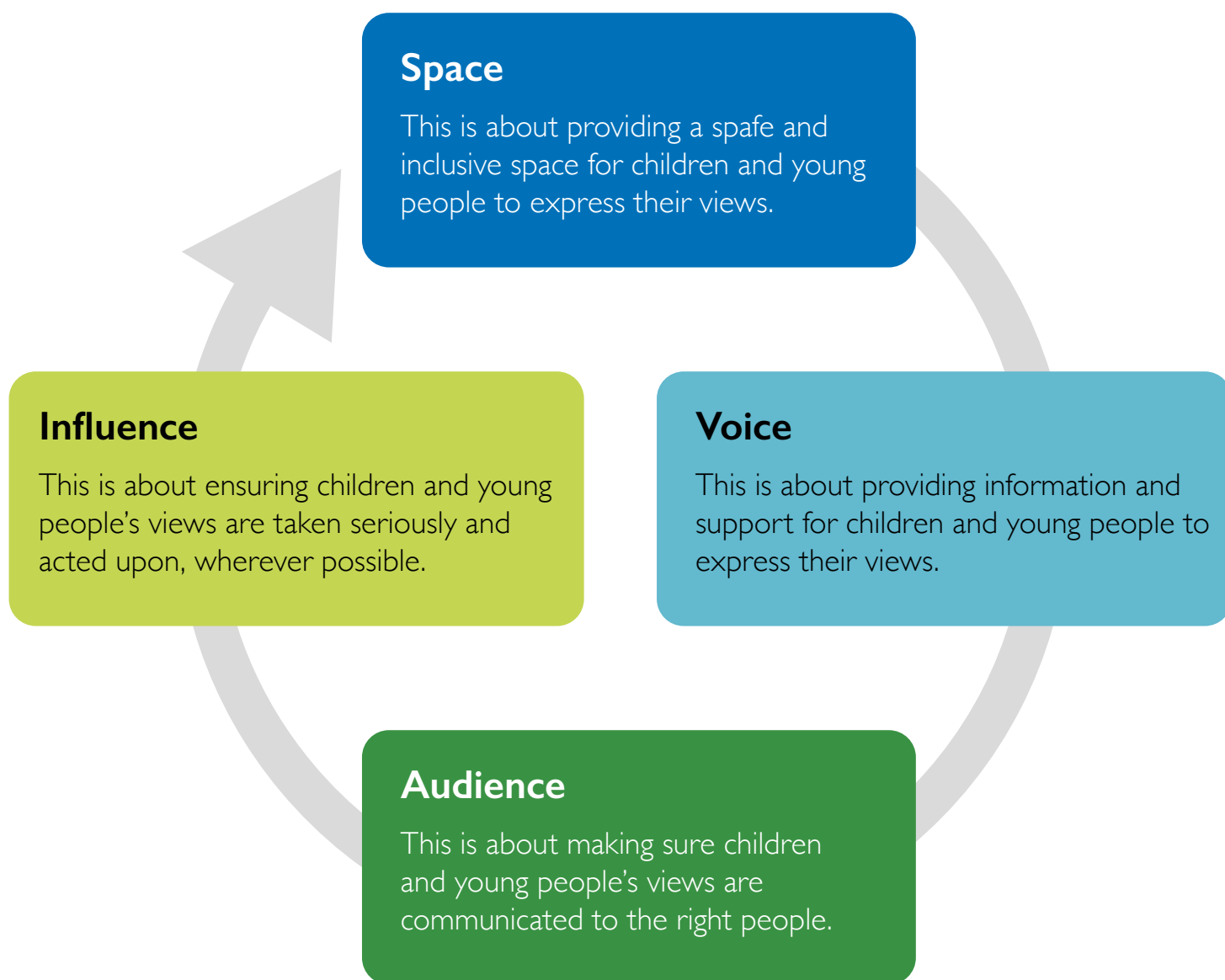
Voice, Involvement and Working Together to Safeguard Children

"Working Together to Safeguard Children" is statutory guidance that outlines how agencies and professionals should work together to protect and promote the welfare of children. It sets out the framework for local authorities, schools, healthcare providers, and other organizations to collaborate in safeguarding children and young people from harm.

Working Together highlights the importance of ensuring that children's voices are central to safeguarding processes. It sets clear expectations that children and young people should be given opportunities to express their views, participate in decisions affecting their lives, and have their perspectives listened to and respected. Specifically, it emphasizes the need for professionals to create environments where children feel safe to speak, actively seek their views, and ensure that their opinions influence decisions about their care and protection. The guidance also stresses that children should be informed about the outcomes of their involvement, promoting transparency and trust in the safeguarding process.

¹ www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights

The Lundy Model of Participation



The Lundy Model of Participation is a framework that outlines how children's rights to participation can be brought to life.

The Lundy model is based on four key domains that should be considered in sequence.

The Lundy model is closely aligned with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which asserts that children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them.

The Lundy Model helps guide the practical application of children's participation rights, ensuring that their voices are not just heard but have real impact on the decisions made about their lives.

The table below shows the strong alignment between the expectations of Working Together and the Lundy Model of Participation.

Space	Voice
<p>Expectation: Create safe, inclusive, and accessible environments where children feel comfortable to express their views.</p> <p>Working Together: Professionals must provide environments where children are encouraged and supported to share their thoughts on safeguarding matters.</p>	<p>Expectation: Actively seek and facilitate children's views, ensuring they have the information and support needed to participate meaningfully.</p> <p>Working Together: Children's voices should be heard in safeguarding decisions, with their views being actively solicited and heard by relevant professionals.</p>
Audience	Influence
<p>Expectation: Ensure that decision-makers listen to and seriously consider children's views.</p> <p>Working Together: Children's views should be directed to the appropriate professionals and decision-makers, ensuring their opinions influence safeguarding outcomes.</p>	<p>Expectation: Ensure that children's views are not only heard but have a tangible impact on decisions and outcomes.</p> <p>Working Together: Feedback mechanisms should be in place, allowing children to see how their input has shaped decisions, ensuring transparency and trust in the safeguarding process.</p>



How we will deliver this strategy

The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group is part of the City of York Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group hold a work plan to drive forward the delivery of this strategy and tracking its progress. Throughout the delivery of this strategy we will be guided by the **Lundy model** as our framework for good quality involvement of young people.

Build how we work

Everyone in York has a responsibility to support children and young people to realise their rights and to be heard. There is no single voice 'team' and every person, practitioner and agency are responsible for playing their part. Under the work stream of 'build how we work' is our activity to **drive change across the entire city and across all partners**.

To achieve this we will:

- **Develop easy to use tools and resources** to help all partners in the city involve young people in a meaningful way. These will build on and embed existing resources including;
 - » Voice Pledge
 - » Language matters pledge
 - » Children's Rights Toolkit
 - » PRESENT tool (resource to capture the lived experience of pre-verbal children)
 - » The Young Carers Covenant
- **Review the training offer** of the safeguarding partnership to ensure it supports young people voice and children's rights.
- We will develop a **simple self-assessment** tool based around the Lundy model and work with partners to encourage them to reflect and develop how they involve young people.
- **Deliver sessions to help partners** engage children and young people and respond to their views. Build a programme of sessions over the year that provide accessible information and support to help children and young people have their voice heard.
- Provide regular **opportunities** for children and young people to have their voice heard. This will include:
 - » Sharing details of **upcoming opportunities** to be engaged and **how to get involved** in different participation groups.
 - » Identify **young people who may not have a voice** and work with the partnership to try to create new opportunities.
 - » Ensuring we support young people to attend and engage with the safeguarding partnership through **development days**.
- Celebrate voice and involvement work and **sharing what has happened as a result**.

- » Make sure partners feedback to young people what difference their voice has made.
- » Through the Voice and Involvement Sub-Group track and share what has happened as a result of young people's involvement.
- **The priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan** (Best start in life, happy and healthy, Stay safe, Ready for the future) – The Children and Young People's Plan is our city wide strategy for growing up in York. All partners should be able to show what contribution they are making to the four shared priority areas. Through the Voice and Involvement Sub-Group we will explore how young people's voice and involvement is influencing how partners are delivering the plan.

A sharp focus on priority areas

We want all young people to realise their right to voice and influence. We know that there are priority areas where the Voice and Involvement Sub-Group will take **a sharper focus on providing support and challenge**. These priority areas are:

- **Safeguarding** – Understanding and developing how partners across the system are meeting the expectations of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) in relation to voice and involvement.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** – Linked closely to the model of Joint Partnership (co-production) understand how well SEND young people have voice and influence.
- **Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing** – Young people have consistently shared views in relation to mental health and well-being. The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group will work to help these views to be heard and support young people to be meaningfully engaged in the development of local solutions.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group will drive the partnership to support all children and young people to have a voice. In particular young people who may be less likely to be heard or excluded.
- **Priorities identified by children and young people** – We will invite key forums to share with us key priorities they would like to raise. We will work to three key priorities each year and work through existing forums to understand young people's views, what is working well, what needs to change. The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group will work to make sure these views are heard and responded to by the most relevant partner(s).

The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group has built a three-year workplan showing how the above areas will be reviewed and progressed. In 2024 we piloted workshop style sessions with a thematic focus. We will take the learning from those workshops to develop a model of support and challenge for priority areas. These will help us to identify what young people are saying, what is working well and make clear recommendations for how to improve further.



Every conversation
starts with the child.

How the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership involve children and young people

The meaningful involvement of children and young people is a golden thread that runs through every aspect of how the safeguarding partnership functions. There is no single group or route for how children and young people are involved. Rather it is a multi-layered approach to ensure there is direct and indirect involvement of children and young people at all levels of our work. This approach is summarised below.

Involvement Opportunities

Children and young people have a range of different opportunities to be engaged and involved in. These break down into individual, group based or whole population opportunities.

Individual involvement

- At an individual level children and young people are involved in decisions that affect them.
- Through individual experiences their voice is heard and acted upon.
- For example through Education, Health and Care Plans, advocacy cases, support from children's social care.
- Where possible this should be aggregated to identify trends to inform wider service planning and evaluation.

Group involvement

- Through participation groups, children and young people are involved in service design, delivery and evaluation.
- There are a range of regular participation groups across the council and wider city.
- These are often group around themes of interest. E.g. young carers, children in care, age ranges, geography etc.
- There are also ad-hoc groups and events to consult on specific issues.
- The CYSCP through the voice group maintains an overview of groups operating across the city.

Whole Population involvement

- Periodically there may be "whole population" consultation exercises, often as part of wider involvement activity.
- "Whole population" could refer to open consultations across all children and young people. This may need mixed methodology to effectively reflect views.
- It could also refer to the whole population of particular groupings. For example, care leavers or those with SEND.

How will we know?

CYSCP Development Days

- Young people are regularly supported to engage in CYSCP development days.
- There is a designated and dedicated time for young people to lead a discussion and provide strategic input into the work of the partnership.
- Young people decide on their input and what they want to share.

Voice Assurance

- All CYSCP subgroups are signed up to the Voice Pledge. This acts as a way of ensuring voice and involvement is embedded in every day business. Voice and involvement is not the responsibility of 'others' the pledge affirms our collective responsibility to voice and involvement.
- Regular Assurance reports to the CYSCP from it's subgroups all address how voice and involvement is reflected throughout their work. Where this is absent or not sufficiently meaningful it is both challenged and supported by the partnership.

Seeing the big picture

- There is a rich range of existing voice and involvement work that is taking place across the city.
- Key reports and recommendations from voice and involvement work taking place across the city will be shared with the CYSCP to inform their work.

Quality and support

- Partners will work with the Voice and Involvement Sub-group to support the delivery of high quality and meaningful involvement activity.
- This includes sharing best practice, sharing resources and building the capability of the partnership to meaningfully engage young people. This is through the use of the Lundy model of participation.

At a simplistic level **young people will tell us they have a voice and feel listened to.**

Measuring the direct impact of young people's involvement is more complex and nuanced than this simplistic measure though. We should also expect to see:

- More partners self-assessing themselves positively using our Lundy model tool.
- Partners making use of the tools and resources we have developed to develop their work.
- Partners feeling more confident and capable in delivering good quality voice and involvement opportunities.
- More partners understand children's rights and their responsibility in realising them with young people.
- That where we identify gaps we can show what has happened to close them.
- The Voice and Involvement Sub-Group is actively bringing together the network of key partners helping children and young people to be involved. The group can demonstrate it is sharing good practice and amplifying children's voice in the city.

We will demonstrate our progress in implementing this strategy through the City of York Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report. This means each year providing a simple summary of the activity and progress we have made together with young people in realising our shared vision.

Every conversation starts with the child. We pledge to work together with young people to ensure their voices are heard, valued and acted upon.





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এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

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