

participation

DRAFT



parent strategy

2012 - 2015

*Improving outcomes
through active listening*

Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to confirm our shared values and principles, and how these will be implemented, monitored and evaluated. The term parent is used throughout to describe adults who have a parenting role.

The Lincolnshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) recognises that mothers, fathers and carers are the biggest single influence on children's lives and have the key responsibility for supporting their children to reach their full potential.

- * Parents and carers are the experts on their family's needs and have a unique understanding of the needs of their local community. As such they have an important role to play in influencing the way that services are planned and delivered.
- * Services and interventions developed with the support, contributions and agreement of parents/carers are much more likely to be useful, successful and cost effective.
- * Working respectfully with parents and carers encourages parental engagement with their child's development and learning, raising aspirations and boosting their children's chances of achieving their full potential.

What is Participation?

Participation creates opportunities for parents to be involved in decision making processes on issues which affect them and their families. It's about listening to what matters most to families and taking their views seriously. It's not just about consulting them on matters that are high on services agendas or only working with those who have the loudest voices. Participation with parents is inclusive of all parents whatever their situation.

Participation is *not* an optional extra. Participation is *not* a token gesture. It is *not* about 'ticking the box' to impress OFSTED or help secure a funding bid. It is not the same as consultation, which is just one method or involvement. It is not always requiring parents

to engage in service structures to be heard and/or be taken seriously.

Participation is not always easy and it cannot be rushed; some parents require more time to think and say what they feel, and some need more support and require different methods of engagement. It is incredibly important that they have the opportunity to really engage with services, agencies and professionals. It is only through working with parents that we can get the match for their needs and services right. Participation is not a 'bolt on' to our relationships with parents, it must be at the heart of everything we do.

The process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship.

Roger Hart 1992

Benefits of Participation

There are many benefits of involving children in decision making processes, to both children and the organisations which engage them. These include:

For parents

- * Better and more relevant Services
- * Services which are more flexible and responsive to needs and aspirations
- * Opportunities to build on existing skills and develop new ones
- * Opportunities to achieve accredited learning
- * Increased confidence and self-esteem, leading to greater resilience
- * Being valued stakeholders in their communities

For organisations

- * Learning from families as citizens and customers about their:
 - * Attitudes
 - * Needs
 - * Aspirations
 - * Views on what makes a quality service
 - * Barriers to accessing services
- * Fresh perspective and new ideas
- * Services designed, delivered and evaluated based on actual rather than perceived needs
- * Demonstrating a commitment to families in line with the aspirations of the Big Society agenda

Participation Structures in Lincolnshire

Parent Carers of Children With Disabilities and/or Sensory Impairment (CWDSI)

This network has been established to ensure that parents/carers of CWDSI have the opportunity to contribute their views and ideas to help shape services.

Parents/carers are encouraged to become part of this positive and constructive network. The Network is both an electronic forum and regular meetings. If you are interested in being involved

in this exciting new project, or you know of parents/carers who you think should be involved, please contact:

01522 554214

parentcarersofcwdsi@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Parent/Carers Network

This network provides a formal link with the CYPSP. It holds county events for parents which include consultation on the Children and Young People's Plan, along with updates on progress, priorities, and service changes. A

large number of stakeholders will be involved and workshops held on topics of interest. Enquiries to:

parenting@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council (LPCC)

The LPCC is a small independent charity run by volunteer parent/carers of disabled children. The LPCC has networks of parent/carers, and for professionals and interested parties.

It is one of the communication channels between parent/carers and service providers. Information sharing is vital between all parties to enable the best possible outcomes for

children with special educational needs and disabilities. The LPCC takes in everyone's views and represents them to service providers including Lincolnshire County Council and NHS Lincolnshire.

For more information visit:

www.lincolnshireparentcarercouncil.org.uk

Children's Centres

In Lincolnshire opportunities exist for parents to participate at different levels. Parents attending activities at children centres and parenting programmes are routinely asked to feedback their views on activities attended which inform future planning.

All Children's Centre (or their clusters) have a Children's Centre Partnership whose membership must be made up of 50% parent/carer representation. Parents and Carers are encouraged to be a part of these partnerships

and are given support, for childcare and where necessary expenses to attend.

Parent/Carer forums are also set up in Children's Centres to give a more informal approach to engagement. These groups enable opportunities to consult on local priorities and the development of services locally.

For more information contact your local Children's Centre.

Personal Budgets Implementation Group

This is made up of parents who have been invited to form a consultation group. They will contribute to the planning and eventual implementation of Personal Budgets in Lincolnshire. We are keen to ensure that personalisation reflects the needs of families with children who are disabled and/or

sensory impaired. We want them to steer this programme so that it is parent-led rather than imposed, and we want them to be fully involved. Consultation will be through both direct meetings and electronic communication.

Parent Partnership

Lincolnshire Parent Partnership supports parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs from pre-school until school leaving age. We provide free and impartial information so that parents can be fully involved in decisions about their child's education.

Our team includes two Choice Advisers who offer information, support and advice to parents to help them make the best choice of school for their child.

For more information:

01522 553351

parentpartnership@lincolnshire.gov.uk



Chill and Chat

A group at Hemswell Cliff Children's Centre talk about running a workshop on child behaviour.

The Context for Participation

There is legislative guidance around the involvement of parents in their children's lives. There will always be a desire to work in partnership with parents and carers of children and young people who have special educational needs and young adults up to the age of 25 who are learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities.

The Children Act 1989 (as amended in the Adoption and Children Act 2002)

This clearly reflects the duty on Local Authorities to work in partnership with families, to ensure that parents are included in planning

and decision making, and have the opportunity to contribute to shaping services for their children.

Working Together 2010

Statutory guidance states that when finding out what is happening to a child it is important to listen to the child and gain an understanding of his or her wishes and feelings.

The importance of developing a co-operative relationship is emphasised so that parents and carers feel respected and informed. When they believe staff are being open and honest with them they will be more confident about providing vital information. Decisions should be made with the agreement of the child and their parents/carers whenever possible, unless to do so would place the child at risk of suffering significant harm.

The non-statutory guidance within Working Together includes the Family Group Conference. This is a decision making and planning process whereby the wider family group makes plans and decisions for children and young people who have been identified either by the family or by service providers as being in need of a plan that will safeguard and promote their welfare. The guidance states that families and professionals must be clear about the family's scope for decision-making, and what is not negotiable.

www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk

The SEN Code of Practice (2001)

This devotes one chapter to "Working in Partnership with Parents" giving practical advice on how Local Authorities should meet their statutory duties to children with SEN. It states:

"LEAs need to ensure that they are accessible, welcoming and value the views and involvement of parents."

Ofsted - Framework for School Inspections 2012

When evaluating the quality of leadership in and management of the school inspectors will consider whether parents and carers are engaged in supporting pupils' achievement, behaviour and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The Evaluation Schedule for school inspection

states that to be judged 'Outstanding' a school must demonstrate it has ***“highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers, to the very obvious benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with schools difficult.”***

www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Sure Start Childrens Centres Statutory Guidance (2010)

This states that ***“Local Authorities should ensure that there are effective mechanisms for the involvement of fathers, mothers and carers, especially those with young children in the planning, delivery and governance of services. Prospective parents also have a valuable role to play in being involved in the design of local services. It is vital that the Childrens Centre advisory board reflects local families and communities”***.

Successive studies and reports have highlighted that parenting and parental engagement are the single most influential factors on a child's education:

- * ***“Parental involvement in the form of ‘at-home good parenting’ has a significant positive effect on children’s achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation. In the primary age range the impact caused by different levels of parental involvement is much bigger than differences associated with variations***

in the quality of schools. The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups”. (Desforges 2003).

- * ***“The more engaged parents are in the education of their children the more likely their children are to succeed in the education system. School improvement and school effectiveness research consistently shows that parental engagement is one of the key factors in securing higher student achievement. Schools that improve and sustain improvement engage the community and build strong links with parents. Where schools build positive relationships with parents and work actively to embrace racial, religious, and ethnic and language differences, evidence of sustained school improvement can be found”***. Review of best practice in “Parental Engagement: Practitioners Summary” DfE 2011

Leading Parent Partnership Award

This is a national framework for ***“schools and settings committed to investing in parents and carers for the achievement of pupils and students”***. Although not sponsored by Ofsted or DfE, it makes close links to the Ofsted framework and research papers and gives

schools a strategic and practical framework to work with in engaging parents in their child's education.

www.lppa.co.uk



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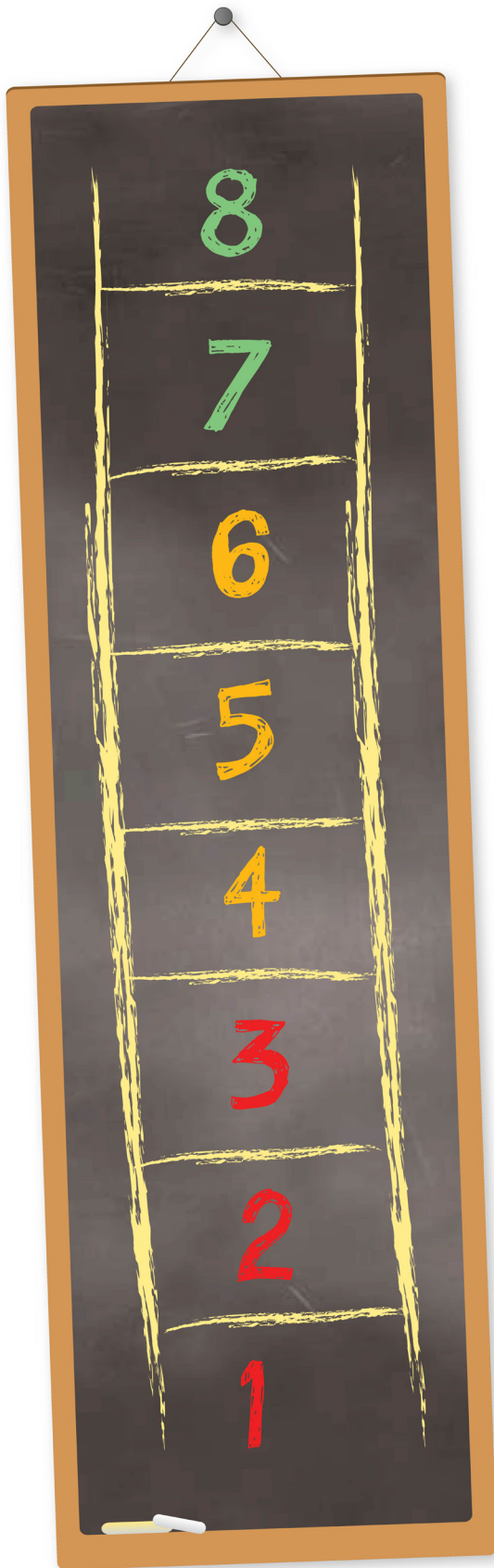
Assessing Participation

Hart's Ladder of Participation provides a means of evaluating the quality of engagement within organisations, services and communities. It describes the generally accepted levels of participation and provides a framework for benchmarking.

We hope to see participation activities working at level 6, while recognising that there will be times when various constraints will mean working at a lower level. Children will

usually need more support near the start of a project and less as they develop confidence and skills. The nature of some projects will restrict the level of decision making children can have, while listening to and considering their views remain an essential part of the process. Informed choice and skilled support will enable children to meaningfully participate in a meaningful way. We would hope no organisation or setting is operating at levels 1-3.

Hart's Ladder - Definitions



Parent initiated decisions and actions

Parents take ownership and are empowered and able to call on the life experience and expertise of those supporting them and have control of budgets and key decisions.

Parents initiated and directed

Parents have an idea or goal and decide the way forward. Adults support, but do not take charge. Decision making is shared or negotiated.

Adult initiated decisions shared with parents

Adults have the initial idea. Children have their views considered and are involved in making decisions at every step of planning and implementation.

Consulted and informed

Parents give advice on projects run by adults. They are told how their input will be used and what decisions have been made. They have a full understanding of the project and their opinions are taken seriously.

Assigned and informed

Parents are assigned a role and told how and why they are being involved.

Tokenism

Parents appear to be given a voice, but they have little or no choice about the scope or methods of their participation.

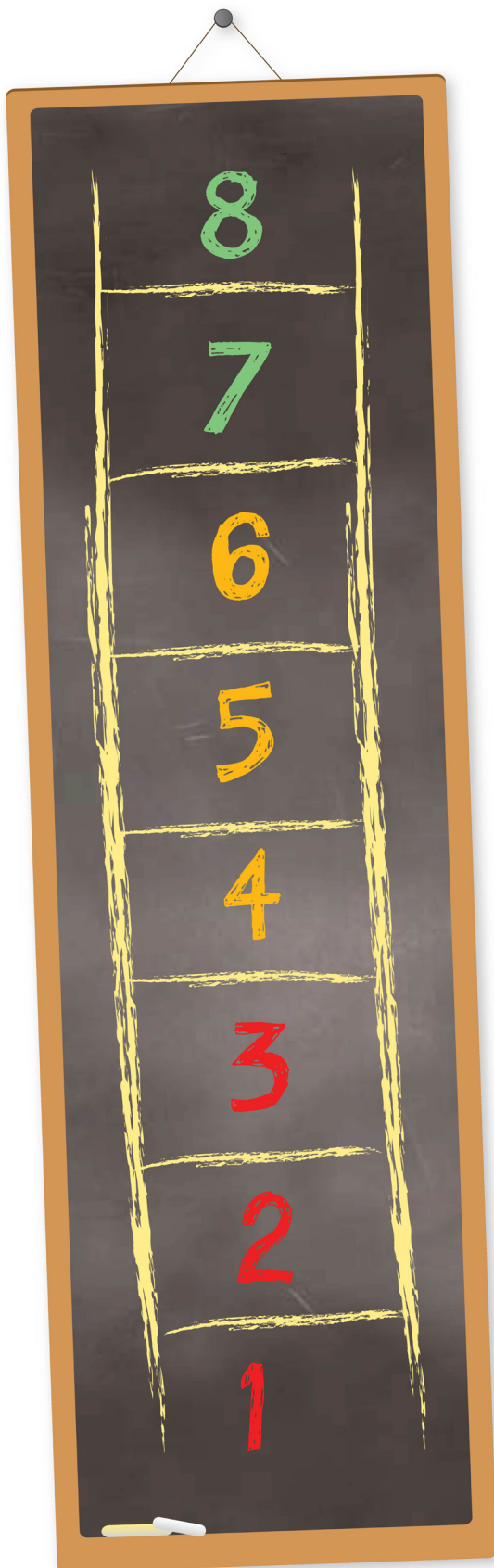
Decoration

Parents are 'used' to help or bolster a cause. They may take part in an event but not understand the issues or the purpose.

Manipulation

Parents do or say what professionals suggest. They have no real understanding of the issues, or will not have been asked for their opinions. Some of their ideas may be used but they are not told what influence they had.

Hart's Ladder - Examples



A parent network set their priorities with action plans and approved spending from their own budget. A professional supports, offering advice on how to take projects forward.

Parents wanted an information pack for a service they receive. They wrote some of the content and worked with graphic designers. Professionals supported this work and made it clear that certain information would have to be included.

Professionals wanted to run an event to celebrate the achievements of parents. Parents were asked for their views and became involved in planning and running the event.

A professional had to review a project and make improvements. She invited a group of parents to tell her what they thought of the project and how they would make it better. Having listened she told them what changes she would make, and why, and invited them to review progress in one year.

A school governing body invited the chair of the school council to their meetings to represent students.

Parents were consulted about an issue using a large consultation document which was written for professionals using language that others do not understand.

Professionals started and ran a project. Parents who have no understanding of, or involvement in the project had their photographs taken to promote it.

A parents group was 'controlled' by a member of staff. Children are chosen rather than elected, have no influence on setting the agenda and there was little or no regard for their views.

Assess participation practice

Conclusion

How parental participation will lead to better outcomes for children, young people and families in Lincolnshire

- * Parents will feel directly involved with the services they use to ensure that services are designed to ensure that their children will have the opportunity to reach their full potential
- * Parents, regardless of background, will to have the skills knowledge, confidence and capacity to participate and support their families effectively.
- * Parents will know where to access information and support their child's needs.
- * Parents will be involved with decisions that affect their family directly.

Parents can help in numerous ways:

Improving the quality of services so that they are more efficient, cost effective and better meet the needs of the community.

Parents will be routinely involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the services they experience. They have an important role in influencing the way that services are planned and delivered. Services and interventions

developed with the support, contribution and agreement of parents are more likely to be useful and successful, relevant and cost effective.

Reducing social exclusion and narrowing the gap in achievement; addressing child poverty and ensuring better outcomes for all children.

Working effectively in partnership with parents will encourage parental engagement with their child's development and learning boosting children's chances of achieving their full

potential. Parents have identified that they can act as advocates for their own children and other parents.

Supporting more sustainable communities

Well managed and supported participation should support mutual learning and encourage new understanding and better relationships between parents, professionals and

organisations. Meaningful and transparent consultation helps to build community trust and confidence in services.

Developing consistent way of working with parents

Adopting a shared approach to parental participation and consultation will support the development of consistent standards across services which parents are entitled to

expect and prevent 'consultation overload' by creating a co-ordinated approach and a shared resource.