



# Case study

## impact

**Poole** | How does the YVV have an impact on policies and services for young people?

### What?

Six years ago the Youth Team in Poole were given responsibility for developing a robust participation strategy for the local authority and partners. The aim was to give young people a voice and to ensure they could influence change.

**The first two aims are:**

1. Find ways to enable children and young people, both on a 1:1 level and in groups, to participate in meaningful processes to shape services.
2. Champion the principle that Participation is not simply about consultation with children and young people but ensuring their views influence decision-making and bring about change.

### How?

To make the policy real the policy was developed at a strategic and an operational level. A range of different agencies, service units, and voluntary organisations formed the two working groups to contribute to the production of the Strategy, providing a practical example of agencies coming together to work. The Strategy was also shared for consultation with service units and organisations outside of Children & Young People's Services.

The strategy is underpinned by the UNCRC Article 12 and Hart's Ladder and lays out the agreed vision and values. The use of Hart's Ladder is non-hierarchical and is to encourage people to be honest on where the work sits on the scale.

To support developing a culture the strategy has sections on resourcing, measuring impact and roles and responsibilities and sets out how it will link to key council policies.

The roles and responsibilities in relation to the strategy are set out for the different strategic and operational levels:

#### **Strategic**

- Children and Young People's Governance Board.
- Children's Services Executive Group.

#### **Operational**

- Participation Strategy Steering group.

- Participation Strategy Project Workers group.

All departments are asked to identify targets and outcomes and to report on them. A guidance pack is available to sit alongside the strategy and this with the Workers Project Group supports practice. Practical examples of how the strategy has had an ongoing impact and feed information into strategic thinking include:

- Annual calendar of events.
- Young people invited by default to local planning meetings.
- Others Departments make young people's attendance priority.
- Young people sit on Overview and Scrutiny Group.
- Shadow Children's Board agree three priorities that the Children's Trust pledge to support.
- Young People are involved in recruitment and selection.

## Example - Mayor's Debate

This event is organised by Poole Youth Forum, and there is an open invitation to young people who live or go to school in Poole. Through ongoing discussion with young people across the Borough issues of importance to young people are identified. These are presented at the conference and debated. The outcomes are presented to the Mayor, elected members and officers at the end of the conference. A report is prepared and taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Group where individual members agree to take action.

Other examples include the annual Anti Bullying Conference the outcomes of which shape the anti bullying strategy in the borough. The reports from this also go to Overview and Scrutiny to be commented on and signed off. This event has had the added benefit of improving the relationship between schools and youth service.

Work done with Parks, Leisure and open spaces took work out to youth centres, using mobile provision to parks and where young people meet to gather views on use of open space. The findings were presented to Play.

## Learning Points:

- A strategy adopted at all levels of the council helps embed the work.
- Making sure a strategy is owned across the council embed the work.
- Giving young people the right to have regular points to feed in to policies keeps their views on the agenda.
- A calendar of events creates a momentum.