

# YORK VOICE AND INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

2017-2020

## VISION

Children and young people are at the heart of our strategic arrangements. The voice and involvement strategy sets out our commitment to ensuring that children and young people have a voice and are involved in decision-making, planning, commissioning, design and delivery of services.

## WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH

- Placing the voice of the child and their journey at the heart of our structures and systems
- Supporting involvement work to improve outcomes and challenge where it doesn't
- Developing the skills of our workforce to deliver this strategy
- Knowing that children's voice makes a difference

## INTRODUCTION

This strategy sets out the vision and aspirations across YorOK (York's Children's Trust) and the City of York Safeguarding Board for **all** children, young people and their families to participate and engage in all services that affect them.

The strategy is a key priority of the YorOK Board, the City of York Safeguarding Children's Board (CYSCB) and has been approved by these bodies.

In this strategy **"involvement"** includes all work that encourages engagement, participation and consultation as well as active involvement in service planning, delivery and design.

Where the term **"our"** or **"we"** is used this is in reference to the children and young people's workforce.

## ABOUT YOROK – YORK'S CHILDREN'S TRUST

'YorOK' is the local name for York's Children's Trust arrangements. A Children's Trust is a partnership of organisations responsible for delivering or commissioning services to children, young people and families. The YorOK Board is made up of representatives from these organisations and is responsible for producing the Children and Young People's Plan, monitoring its implementation and ensuring that all partners really are working together in the best interests of children and families. When we say 'we' in this strategy, we are referring to all of the organisations which are represented on the YorOK Board.

## ABOUT CYSCB – CITY OF YORK'S SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

The City of York's Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) is a statutory inter-agency forum for agreeing how different services co-operate to protect children in York. We seek to ensure that the children of York are protected from all forms of abuse and neglect by ensuring that everybody working with children works effectively together.

The CYSCB is committed to challenging itself and partners to ensure good quality opportunities for children and young people to have a voice and be involved in decisions and services that affect them. Hearing, understanding and acting on messages from children and young people is a key function of the CYSCB.

## YOROK VOICE AND INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY (2017-2020)

The YorOK Children's Trust and City of York Safeguarding Children's Board places the Involvement and Participation of children, young people and families at the core of its work, and adopts the following vision statement:

**Children and young people are at the heart of our strategic arrangements. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people have a voice in decision-making, planning, commissioning, design and delivery of services.**

We will achieve this vision through:

- Placing the voice of children and young people at the heart of our structures and systems.
- Supporting involvement work to improve outcomes and challenge where it doesn't.
- Ensure the YorOK workforce has the skills and knowledge required.
- Knowing that the voices of children and young people make a difference.

## PLACING THE VOICE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF OUR STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring systems are in place to use involvement to evaluate, inspect and quality assure our services and work.
- Ensure the YorOK workforce is aware of messages from children and young people, from senior managers through to front line workers.
- Ensuring that children, young people and families' have direct access to decision makers including elected members.
- Coordinating involvement and participation work undertaken, ensuring groups aren't under or over consulted, and drawing together conclusions to inform service development and delivery.
- Working collectively to maximise use of existing resources, improve access to other sources of funding and ensure children, young people and families' are involved in commissioning arrangements.

## SUPPORTING INVOLVEMENT WORK TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGE WHERE IT DOESN'T

We will achieve this by:

- Raising the profile of involvement and participation work across the City, highlighting issues as well as celebrating the contribution that children, young people and families make to developing high quality services.
- Ensuring that children, young people and families' are aware of their rights to be involved and know how to engage effectively. Providing clear and swift feedback about the impact of their involvement.
- Celebrating children and young people's active participation and achievements.
- Challenging where children and young people's voice is absent or in need of development.

## ENSURE THE YOROK WORKFORCE HAS THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring the YorOK workforce have the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively involve children, young people and families.
- Working to develop resources and materials, promoting forums for sharing good practice and experiences and providing training in order to develop skills around involvement and participation work.

## KNOWING THAT THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We will achieve this by:

- Case studies highlighting the impact of children and young people's voice.
- Our outcome frameworks supporting the Children and Young People's Plan and the City of York Safeguarding Children's Board.

## PRINCIPALS AND VALUES

Underpinning this strategy are the following key principles and values:

- **Involvement and participation of children, young people and families remains the responsibility of all organisations and practitioners working with children or young people. Organisations should ensure that children, young people and families' involvement is included in strategic and operational development and delivery.**
- We will champion the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which establishes a fundamental set of rights for children and young people. Article 12 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.
- Involvement should be high quality and ethical in its approach. Involvement should move beyond just consultation and move to higher levels of participation and involvement. Through activities such as participating in governance, mentoring, volunteering, delivering training or undertaking research and ensuring that these approaches are well considered and supported to enable real participation.
- We will act as a leader in the field of children, young people and families involvement in York and will promote and co-ordinate good and inclusive practice across its constituent organisations.
- We will seek to develop and promote excellent practice across YorOK in involvement, participation and engagement work and will work to model approaches which empower all children, young people and families to take the lead.
- Any involvement work undertaken should be carried out in the most appropriate ways for those children, young people and families most affected by it and be realistic in terms of what it sets out to achieve. Feedback should be given about results and changes that have taken place because of people's involvement.
- We recognise that the involvement and participation of children, young people and families needs to be adequately resourced in terms of expertise, time, money, organisational systems and structures and supported by a culture of openness, mutual respect and listening in order to achieve these high standards.
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Through this strategy we are working to ensure children, young people and families and those looking to involve them fully understand safeguarding implications to involvement work and what to do if they have any form of concern.
- We recognise the critical role of our children and young people's workforce in achieving our vision for involvement. We will work to ensure the workforce have the skills and information required.

## HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS

To support the delivery of the Voice and Involvement Strategy we have two groups that drive this work. These groups work very closely together and are chaired and coordinated through the Children's Trust Unit.

### VOICE AND INVOLVEMENT GROUP (VIG)

The Voice and Involvement Group (VIG) is responsible for the development, review and implementation of this strategy and will routinely monitor progress against the Voice and Involvement Group Action Plan.

This group will facilitate links with key positions and groups within the YorOK partnership associated with involvement and participation work. The Voice and Involvement Group will act as a catalyst to promote the

aims and objectives of the Involvement Strategy across these groups that will in turn facilitate movement and change across York.

The Voice and Involvement Group will report to the YorOK Board and the CYSCB and ensure the board is aware of:

- Areas of good practice
- Areas in need of development
- Themes and messages from children and young people
- Outcomes as a result of children and young peoples involvement.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

By visiting [www.yor-ok.org.uk/voice](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/voice) you can find up to date information relating to this strategy including:

- Case studies demonstrating examples of good quality involvement work impact
- Reports relating to children and young people's voice
- YorOK Quality Standards for Voice and Involvement