

Child Friendly CARDIFF



CAERDYDD Sy'n Dda i Blant

01 TOOLKIT INTRODUCTION

WWW.CHILDFRIENDLYCARDIFF.CO.UK



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Cardiff Youth Service's Active Involvement Team and Cardiff Families First have developed this tool kit with contributions from Young Devon & British Youth Council.



INTRODUCTION

1.1 TOOLKIT INTRODUCTION

The iSay Portal is aimed at practitioners working with children, young people & their families.

The iSay Portal provides a series of stepping stones experiences which build on the necessary skills and knowledge for Families to be actively involved in the services they receive. It is essential that children, young people and their families have a good foundation to work from and it is therefore strongly suggested that everyone completes the Access To Participation section before moving on. This training may be enough for some people and this is for the practitioner and the family to discuss the appropriate way forward.

The term 'family' is used in this toolkit to refer to children (0-10), young people (11-25) and parents / guardians / carers within a family setting.

The term "participation" as used in this toolkit refers to families having their voice heard when decisions are being made that affect them, and being actively involved in decision-making processes.

The term 'learner' is used within this toolkit to refer to a family member who is learning new skills while taking part in a fun, interactive workshop, which may or may not be accredited.

Within the iSay Portal there are five main sections:

1. Participation In Practice
2. Researchers
3. Shaping Services
4. Quality Assurance
5. Skills Development
6. Further Reading and Resources

WHO HAS DEVELOPED THIS TOOLKIT?

Cardiff's Families First Team has developed this toolkit along with the Youth Service's Active Involvement Team (AIT).

Families First is a Welsh Government programme to fund the development of effective multi-agency systems and support for families, particularly those living in poverty.

It is designed to recognise the specific needs of different families and the common requirement for multiple agencies to provide holistic and integrated packages of support. The vision for Families First is that service user participation should become more embedded in every service and as a result the programme requires a high level of service user engagement and involvement in service design, evaluation and governance.

EVIDENCE BASED LEARNING

The training programmes are a mixture of discussion, observation and written work with a heavy focus being on discussion based activities. The worker can gather evidence via observation, discussion or written work that the individual has been actively involved in the activity or session.

The learner can provide written pieces of work in order to complete the programme.

We advise that the learner should keep a scrap book or evidence folder of the work that they have completed during the training programme. This would include flip chart paper of particular activities, photographs, assessment findings and consultation information.

INTRODUCTION

1.2 GLOBAL + NATIONAL CONTEXT

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement that protects the human rights of the children under the age of 18. On 16 December 1991, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland formally agreed to make sure that every child in the UK has all the rights as listed in the convention.

Altogether there are 54 articles in the convention. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children are entitled to their rights. Articles 1-42 set out how children should be treated.

Please see the further reading at the back of the toolkit for the full list of Rights Articles in the UNCRC.

These articles can generally be divided into different sub-categories:

While it is common for rights to be discussed in relation to such categories, it is also important to remember that all of the rights are interdependent and all of the obligations are binding upon the states.

The Convention can also be divided into what is commonly called the “three Ps”; they are the rights to Provision, Protection and Participation.

- Rights to Provision: these are the rights to the resources, the skills, services; the “inputs” that are necessary to ensure children’s survival and development to their full potential (e.g. healthcare in Article 24).
- Rights to Protection: these are the rights that ensure children are protected from acts of exploitation or abuse, in the main by adults or institutions that threaten their dignity, their survival and development (e.g. protection and care in the best interests of the child in Article 3).
- Rights to Participation: these are the rights that provide children with the means by which they can engage in those processes of change that will bring about the realisation of their rights, and prepare them for an active part in society and change (e.g. the right express views and to be heard in legal proceedings in Article 12).
- The iSay Portal aims to further embed and underpin the importance of the rights based agenda within services in Cardiff especially the right to participate.

CFC COMMITMENT IN CARDIFF

Cardiff is the first city in Wales to participate in Unicef UK’s national Child Friendly Cities initiative. Our ambition is for Cardiff to be recognised as a Child Friendly City (CFC): a city with children and young people at its heart, where the rights of children and young people are respected by all, a great place to grow up.

WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO THE UNCRC

The Welsh Assembly Government formally adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on January 14th 2004, and in doing so made a commitment to ensure that children and young people in Wales have access to their rights.

The ‘Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure was passed in 2011 by Welsh Government and became law on 16th May 2011.

It places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the rights and obligations within the UNCRC and its optional protocols.

Further information and professional training can be found at:

<http://www.childrensrighthswales.org.uk/professionals.aspx>

PARTICIPATION

The Welsh Government (WG) has demonstrated its commitment to children and young people’s participation in a number of key policy documents. (see Further Reading Section)

There are also a number of structures in place in Wales which support children and young people’s participation, nationally and locally including Welsh Youth Parliament, County Youth Forums and School Councils.

In 2004 the Participation Project in the Welsh Assembly Government ran a competition to produce a national definition of participation that would be easy to understand for adults and young people. The winning ‘sound-bite’ was:

“ Participation means that it is my right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing an action that might affect me. Having a voice, having a choice

INTRODUCTION

1.3 ENSURING QUALITY - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

THE PARTICIPATION STANDARDS

The standards were developed nationally and were launched in 2007.

There are 7 National Standards that organisations working with children and young people should aim to meet so that children and young people have a good experience of participation. These standards promote the participation of children and young people in making decisions, planning and reviewing any action that will affect them- 'Having a Voice, Having a Choice'. We use these Standards in our work and help other organisations to use them when they work with children and young people.

The 7 Standards are:

1. Information
2. It's Your Choice
3. No Discrimination
4. Respect
5. You get something out of it
6. Feedback
7. Working better for you



INTRODUCTION

1.4 LOCAL CONTEXT

Children, young people and families are the experts in understanding their own needs and their lives. It is because of this reason that Cardiff has made a central commitment to making sure that children, young people and their families are actively involved in shaping, delivering and improving the services they receive. This commitment is contained within the Capital Ambition, Cardiff Wellbeing Plan and the Child Friendly Cardiff Strategy.

In order to make sure that all services act in the best interest of their service-users, Cardiff coordinates a series of opportunities for children, young people and their families to be involved in shaping decisions.

SCHOOL SUPER SURVEY

The Child Friendly Survey is conducted in every high school across the city. The Child Friendly Survey helps us listen to what is important to children and young people in relation to their health, sense of safety, neighbourhoods, education and employment prospects, cultural and leisure interests, along with a vast array of other topics. The information and data collected from the Child Friendly Survey is then used to help services work on what is important to young people.

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Welsh Government states that every school in Wales must have a school council. The school councils are made up of pupils and these pupils are responsible for representing the voice of young people, shaping and influencing the life of the school from the healthy school action plan to the governing body.

CARDIFF YOUTH COUNCIL

Is supported by the Council's Youth Service and represents the views of children and young people in many of the political decisions across the authority. The network is made up of young people aged 11- 25 from across the city.

GRAND COUNCIL'S

These are termly day-long youth conferences that enable participants to share their views on strategic developments in the city.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT WORKING

There are 6 Neighbourhood Management Areas across the city and this is a way of bringing professionals and citizens closer together to create local solutions to local problems.

THE SPROUT

"TheSprout.co.uk (<http://www.thesprout.co.uk/>) is a news, information and advice website for young people in Cardiff and the articles are written by young people, or organisations that work with young people, in Cardiff. The service is funded by Families First.

For more information please contact info@TheSprout.co.uk- 029 2046 2222

DEWIS CYMRU

Dewis Cymru is the place to go if you want information or advice about your well-being – or want to know how you can help somebody else.

It has got information that can help you think about what matters to you, and we've also got information about people and services in your area that can help you with the things that matter to you.

www.dewis.wales

INTRODUCTION

1.5 BENEFITS

BENEFITS TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES

Participation provides the opportunity for children, young people and their families to personal, social and political development. Participation can offer practical experience and the opportunity to learn how to exercise responsibility.

Service users participation brings a number of benefits to the individual users involved:

- Direct improvements in their own lives and life chances e.g. improved services.
- The possibility to protect themselves and challenge abuses of their rights, either directly or through informing a responsible adult.
- Enhanced self-confidence and self esteem
- An opportunity to acquire and expand their skills, including problem-solving, negotiation and communication skills.
- Familiarisation with group and democratic processes, including understanding different points of view, the need for compromise and a sense of responsibility for group decisions.
- A sense of purpose and competence in their own lives- a belief that they can make a positive impact on their own lives and on the lives of their peers, family and community.
- An opportunity to learn and practice the skills of responsible and active citizenship.

BENEFITS TO ORGANISATIONS

Service user participation has benefits for organisations in that it:

- Enhances relationships
- Increases organisational relevance to children
- Improves organisational ability to achieve outcomes
- Assists organisations to effectively target funds
- Enhances organisational credibility and reputation
- Offers organisations a wider variety of perspectives
- Improves organisational systems
- Helps build capacity and sustainability within an organisation

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Participation empowers families as members of civil society and active citizens. The practice of participation strengthens the family's ability to hold organisations, institutions and governments to account. It enables children to play an active part in civil society and to compensate for their exclusion from formal political processes. It increases the visibility of family members and their issues ensuring that they are given greater weight in economic, social and political agendas. By increasing accountability to families, it enlarges the democratic space and encourages good governance.

INTRODUCTION

1.6 GETTING STARTED

The National Children and Young People's Participation Standards and the Parents Charter are tools to help you measure the process of children, young people and their family's participation in the work that you do.

First, you need to make the case for increasing the participation of children, young people and their families in decision-making in your organisation. You can do this by:

- building an evidence base
- drafting a strategy

The case can be made in two main ways. Firstly, using the international legal framework of human rights, the UNCRC and Article 12 for children and young people. This is a 'rights based approach' to participation.

Secondly, we can make the case by describing the potential benefits for individual children, young people, their families, for communities and for organisations.

It is important to build up your own local evidence of the benefits as work progresses.

These can include direct benefits for families and indirect benefits through improved and more responsive local services. There can also be demonstrable benefits for the organisation in improved target setting.

In addition, funding sources or funding bodies, such as the Big Lottery, increasingly require evidence of beneficiary participation in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of a project for it to be funded.

WHY WRITE A STRATEGY?

To achieve change of behaviour within an organisation it is important to have a clear idea of what change is needed and to have the support of those that have decision-making power. Devising, agreeing and implementing a strategy is a good way to do this.

In a strategy, you can summarise the evidence on which it is based; for example, providing the sources of research or other evidence to show that the direction proposed is the most effective one. You can use the self-assessment tools

(which you will be told more about later on in this toolkit) to help you gather this evidence.

This evidence is necessary for you to get support for the strategy from all the people ('stakeholders') that need to agree to it (for example, managers who will officially 'sign it off') and those who will have to implement it (for example, managers, front-line practitioners and other staff). A strategy can also explain concepts and draw on models that can help develop and improve local practice.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

All the key players within the organisation need to be consulted and involved, but at different times and to different degrees depending on their role. This will also help when it comes to evaluating the process using the self-assessment tools. If everyone is on board from the beginning it will be easier to collect evidence in the longer term.

For example, senior managers may need to be involved briefly in setting the direction and then to be updated on progress and then to sign off the draft. Budget holders may need to be involved to ensure their support in changing the culture of participation.

Children, young people and their families should be involved in the process from the early stages; for example, by providing feedback on an outline of the vision and direction. A completed Participation Strategy can be shared with children, young people and their families, partner organisations and other stakeholders to help to explain what you are doing to improve participation.

INTRODUCTION

1.7 WAYS OF WORKING

At the same time as setting out what you are going to do to ensure the meaningful participation of children and young people in your organisation, it is also important to think of how you are going to do it and to think about your organisation's ways of working with children and young people. When working with any families it is important to fully consider the key issue of safeguarding. The term safeguarding has been used over the past few years in a wide range of settings. In the context of protecting children it is defined as:

“Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.”

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Children and young people's participation is a key factor in safeguarding children. If children can have a voice and we can hear what they are saying, they can be better protected. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms the child's right to have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Article 19 affirms their right to protection and means that:

“Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents

or anyone else who looks after them.”

All organisations coming into contact with children have a 'duty of care' towards them. The roles of agencies and voluntary organisations and their responsibilities for working together and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, are outlined in the guidance *Safeguarding Children- working together* under the Children Act 2004 (Section 28).

Safeguarding is a challenging area of work where it is key to involve children and young people in the processes that affect them. Organisations can use the National Participation Standards as a process to help them to empower children and young people to speak out and to strengthen both individuals' and organisations' ability to listen and therefore safeguard them.

There are common shared themes between the principles set out in the guidance

'Safeguarding Children- working together under the Children Act 2004' (Section 28) and the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales. For instance, some of the core principles for organisations working with children and young people and encompassed in the Participation Standards are:

- Listening to children,
- Involving children and young people in decision-making,
- Sharing information,
- Providing support and advice,
- Addressing diversity issues,
- Ensuring children know their rights.

If professionals do not ask children about their views on keeping safe then how will they know whether their safeguarding practices are working? Tragedies have reinforced the message that we need to be spending time listening to children and young people in order to prevent abuse (CSSIW 2009).

In order to develop and maintain a safe and listening culture we need to engage with children and young people and involve them in the discussions. Then this will give professionals a good indication of whether we are effective in developing and maintaining structures that encompass safeguarding.

Research has highlighted that children and young people from every community can be hurt, put at risk, or abused regardless of their age, culture, class, disability, gender, religious belief or sexual orientation.

Child abuse can range from peer group bullying to severe physical, sexual and emotional which goes beyond the family context. Children can face abuse whether at home, school or when being looked after. The wide diversity of organisations and groups makes it difficult to design a 'one size fits all' approach to safeguarding.

INTRODUCTION

1.7 WAYS OF WORKING (CONTINUED)

INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR WORK

The Standards can help you think about how you as adults can improve your support for children and young people in decision-making processes but there is also potential for children and young people to support each other to participate.

Below are some examples that children and young people have given us of how you can empower children and young people themselves to improve the quality of participation for other children and young people.

- Children and young people leading consultations and sharing information with other children and young people.
- Young people updating information websites.* (Young people pointed out however that websites are not always accessible to all young people, particularly those already marginalized e.g. young people in looked after accommodation).
- Children and young people to work on making adverts and resource packs to inform other children and young people of their choices.
- Children and young people asking other children and young people if they want to get involved.
- Children and young people involved in planning and delivering events.
- Children and young people led feedback on other children and young people's experience of respect within the project.
- Use of questionnaires designed by children and young people to ask other children and young people's views and priorities.
- Children and young people identifying the best means of communicating with them.
- Children and young people involved in deciding where they should meet, what activities should take place and what is an appropriate recognition / reward for their involvement.
- Children and young people monitor responses from other children and young people about activities they have taken part in.
- Children and Young people designed and led start / end evaluations.
- Children and young people feed into aims and objectives e.g. joint planning with children and young people steering / advisory group.
- Children and young people conduct peer-led evaluations with other groups / organisations e.g. young people inspectors.