

Our Nottinghamshire Approach to Participation

with children, young people and families



We promote the participation of all children, young people and their families. In line with our strengths-based approach and core values of building strong relationships, listening and learning, and treating people with fairness and respect we want everyone to have the opportunity to participate in decisions which affect their lives. We commit to working collaboratively with children, young people, parents and carers, to plan, design, deliver and review support and services to achieve shared outcomes.



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Our Approach to Participation



Key principles for effective participation

- Participation takes commitment and time
- Think about the purpose of the engagement
- Provide safe and accessible spaces
- Consider all the ways we can listen and help people communicate
- People should always have choice about being involved
- Everyone involved needs clear information so they understand and can make informed contributions
- Consider the audience to make sure that the participation can influence our service design, delivery and review
- Be honest about what we can and cannot achieve
- Make sure feedback is given to everyone involved so they know how their views and contributions have made a difference
- Participation is a continuous cycle of learning and involvement.

“
Feeling like I have a voice and being heard. Feeling like I am making a decision on what I want and being involved in what adults decide
Nottinghamshire Young Person.”

Participating in different areas

People can participate in lots of different ways and engagement can have different focuses. We are committed to involving children, young people, parents and carers in all areas:

Individual

- **Participation activity** relates directly to the person's own life
- **Outcomes** that primarily impact the individual.
- Involving people in their plan
- Peer support and mentoring.

Services for children, young people and families

- **Participation activity** aims to improve the quality of the service
- **Outcomes** affect a wider group of children, young people, parents, carers and families.
- Recruiting and interviewing staff
- Telling us about your experience of support and services.

The Council

- **Participation activity** relates to planning, design, delivery and review of support and services
- **Outcomes** influence policy, practice and changes in your local area.
- Deciding how money should be spent
- Being on forums or boards that lead to change.

Why participation matters

- People feel valued and listened to
- Services will be better at meeting people's needs
- The strengths, skills and ideas everyone brings are recognised and welcomed
- Helps build confidence and self-esteem
- Raises awareness and knowledge about services
- Everyone can contribute to things that matter in their local area
- Children, young people, parents and carers all bring a fresh perspective and ideas to improve support and services
- Strengthens relationships between children, young people and adults
- Increases empathy for people's experiences
- Strengthens accountability
- Challenges everyone to work in a more inclusive way
- Reflects the values of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our worker is always polite, non-judgemental and a great listener who always made us feel listened to and important
Nottinghamshire Parent

The legislation

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12 states that local authorities must take steps to ascertain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them.

Section 11 Children's Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to know the child's wishes and feelings and take them into consideration as far as is reasonable, practicable and in line with the child's welfare.

Section 19 Children and Families Act 2014 requires us to have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and parents
- the importance of children, young people and parents participating as fully as possible in decisions
- the importance of children, young people and parents being provided with the information and support they need to help them participate in decisions.

SEND Code of Practice 2015 sets out statutory guidance for organisations working with children and young people and includes a requirement to make sure that children, young people and families are involved in discussions and decisions about their support and local provision.

This approach has been developed by the Children and Families Participation Network, involving children, young people, parents and carers in Spring 2024. It will evolve as we continue to listen and learn.

Opportunities for participation

Participation and engagement is for everybody.

There are already lots of examples of good participation activities and opportunities for children, young people, parents and carers to be involved. We want to make sure we are learning from and enabling everyone to be involved effectively and on a more consistent basis.

To help achieve this, a Children and Families Participation Network was set up in Spring 2023. The network provides a space for people working with children and families to learn, support and challenge each other, share ideas, and celebrate achievements. The participation leads across the network champion everybody's right to be heard. They will be helping make sure that the voices of children and young people, parents, and carers, have influence over the ongoing design, development, and review of support and services and sharing the impact and difference it is making.

How can I get involved?

Find out more about

Our Nottinghamshire Approach to Participation and the ways you can get involved.

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/participationnotts

