



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION/PARTICIPATION GUIDANCE

AIM OF THIS GUIDANCE

To establish a best practice process for consultation/participation with children and young people, linked to Buckinghamshire County Council's Consultation Strategy.

This document provides guidance to Buckinghamshire County Council employees on the steps to be taken to either:

- ❖ Facilitate consultation/participation activities with children/young people on behalf of partner organisations;

OR

- ❖ Recruit children/young people to take part in consultation/participation events run by partners.

WHY HAS THIS GUIDANCE BEEN PRODUCED?

This Guidance has been produced because consultation/participation with children and young people is an increasingly vital part of our service design and delivery. The Guidance is important, and needs to be followed by every service, for the following reasons:

- Ensure consultation/participation with children/young people is effective and worthwhile, for both:
 - Children/young people
 - Employees.
- Present clarity of what is required (through the Pro Forma).
- Avoid tokenism.
- Avoid duplication of work.
- Provide staff with a clear procedure, appropriate contacts within their service & a support mechanism.
- Enable a co-ordinated approach.
- Enable the sharing of best practice through services.



GUIDANCE

For the purpose of this document, children are defined as up to age 11 years and young people as 11 to 19 years.

The Guidance below must to be followed by all County Council service areas and employees:

- 1) Organisation/individual requesting consultation/participation to provide **(Nominated Service Contact)** with a contact name and details (telephone, email & address) from their organisation for the Nominated Service Contact to liase with directly.
- 2) Provide a clear written brief to the Nominated Service Contact for the piece of consultation/participation (see attached Pro Forma). This brief must include:
 - (a) The purpose of the consultation/participation, e.g. the opinions of children/young people on transport policy or on a brochure design, along with any supporting documentation, at the earliest opportunity.
 - (b) How many children/young people are required, the age range and background of the children/young people, e.g. their educational/work/training setting, their ethnicity, gender, ability/disability, geographic location (e.g. rural/urban).
 - (c) Social Inclusion – it is important to recognise that some groups of children/young people, such as those with special needs, and disabilities or from a traveller, young offender or ethnic minority background, are often socially excluded. Particular emphasis on consulting with these groups may be required to meet local and national targets.
 - (d) The date, time (start & finish) and venue for where the consultation/participation is to take place – there should be flexibility on dates and realistic timescales for undertaking consultation/participation.
 - (e) Avoid school/work hours if working outside of schools and colleges. If working within schools (e.g. school councils) this will need to be negotiated with school or college concerned.
 - (f) Partners need to be clear how children/young people's views will influence the area they are being consulted about. How children's/young people's views have made a difference (or not) must be fed back to them and the Nominated Service Contact. The feedback needs to take place at the earliest opportunity.



- (g) Budget implications – to include: transport costs, refreshments, venue hire & incentives – what is being provided and who is going to pay?
- (h) At the earliest stage the Nominated Service Contact, needs to know if and how children/young people are to be thanked/rewarded for their time. This information is important for when children/young people are recruited.

Incentives could include: having the opportunity to have an influence over children's/young people's services; count hours towards schoolwork or voluntary award, payment or voucher of their choice.
- (i) Peer Consultation/participation – if you require children/young people to deliver the consultation/participation to their peers this process is possible but will take longer to implement due to recruitment and training requirements of children/young people.

NOMINATED SERVICE CONTACT

Each Service is required to designate a member of staff as the **Nominated Service Contact** for consultation/participation with children and young people.

The Youth and Community Service will maintain a list of service contacts.

QUESTIONS ON THIS GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Participation Group is responsible for monitoring the overall arrangements for consulting with children and young people.

If you have any questions about the Guidance or require any advice on consulting with young people, please contact Ed Mallam, Business Support Manager, Children's Services, Buckinghamshire County Council, Tel: 01296 387657 or email: emallam@buckscc.gov.uk