

Hear by Right in Health Services: Children and Young People's participation in PCTs, hospitals and other health settings

“The active participation of young people in making decisions about their health, both at an individual level and at the strategic level of healthcare provision, is key. The free expression of views, given due weight according to the age and maturity of the child, is not only a human right, it is also known to improve health.”

Sir Liam Donaldson – Chief Medical Officer for England¹

This briefing discusses how the National Youth Agency's **Hear by Right** standards framework can help ensure legal compliance and best practice on the safe, sound and sustainable participation of children and young people in health settings. It is aimed at trustees and strategic leads across health services and their partners including Strategic Health Authorities, PCTs, NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts. It indicates how health services can meet statutory guidance and explores how to use the **Hear by Right** standards framework at strategic and operational levels across partnerships and departments.

“We will expect to see the systematic involvement of young people and their parents in service development, supported by accredited frameworks for young people's involvement such as ‘Hear by Right’ ”

Healthy lives, brighter futures, Department of Health/Department for Children, Schools and Families²

Children and Young People's Participation – in context

Participation is the process by which children and young people influence decision making which brings about change in them, others, their services and their communities.

There are many opportunities for children and young people to take an active part in shaping where they live, the services they use and the running of local and national organisations. They have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect them. Their participation is essential to improve services and respond to their needs.

Standards are crucial to help assess what has been achieved – public and measurable promises to reach a level of activity or service. They need to be a catalyst for action: mapping, planning and evaluating change. **Hear by Right**, the National Youth Agency's standards framework offers tried and tested standards about the participation of children and young people.



Why involve children and young people?

The government recognises the need for robust arrangements to promote and ensure the quality of health services, which includes the need to:

“Further promote the voice of children and young people, through commitments to ensure that children and young people’s views are given prominence in future assessments of healthcare organisations”

Healthy lives, brighter futures, Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families.³

Statutory Guidance⁴ indicates the expected range and scope of children and young people’s participation across Children’s Trusts, which specifically includes health services. Young people should be involved in:

- inter-agency governance arrangements;
- joint audits, plans and commissioning arrangements with pooled budgets;
- shared processes across partnership working; and
- recruitment, selection and training of frontline staff providing integrated services.

“The *Hear by Right* framework gives a structured and robust approach to embedding participation across all levels of health services. This is an integral part of helping to deliver the You’re Welcome quality criteria to ensure that young people access and receive the best health care available to them through partnership working.”

Lily Makurah, Head of Adolescent Health,
Department of Health

What are the benefits of children and young people’s participation in Health Services?

Children and young people have a right to participate in the issues and services that affect them and their engagement is essential to achieve the best possible outcomes, as set out in the government’s Every Child Matters strategy⁵. The United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 clearly defines children and young people’s right to be involved in the decision making processes that affect them.

There are further benefits – for **organisations, the community and for meeting external requirements**

– beyond those directly affecting children and young people. ***Involving young people in the development of health services***⁷ is a guide produced by the Department of Health and the Association for Young People’s Health which outlines these benefits further and explores the reasons for involving young people in a health context. It includes practical tips for putting participation into practice and is available online at www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk

Effective coordination and delivery

“It is important to ensure seamless service delivery to young people, through effectively joined up services across health, local authority, community and voluntary and private sectors. The You’re Welcome quality criteria set out principles to support health service providers to improve their services and be more young people friendly. PCTs, Children’s Trusts and local authorities have an important role to play here in coordinating young people’s involvement across areas in line with **Hear by Right.**” **You’re Welcome quality criteria, Department of Health**⁸.

What is Hear by Right?

The **Hear by Right** standards framework is based on the established seven S model of organisational change, demonstrating how progress needs to be made across all aspects of an organisation to establish the safe, effective and sustainable participation of children and young people. There are seven performance indicators for each standard, covering progress at three levels:

- Emerging;
- Established; and
- Advanced.

The **Hear by Right** resources include:

- the **Hear by Right** book, setting out the context, standards and indicators, with questions and ideas about evidence of meeting the standards;
- the electronic mapping and planning tool on the accompanying CD, which sets out the standards and indicators in table form for easy completion to help develop the participation action plan based on evidence, self assessment and agreed priorities;
- **Building standards**, tools developed with children and young people to involve them directly in the mapping and planning process;
- **Involving children and young people: an introduction**, a guide to different approaches and their relative merits and application;

- a range of other briefings introducing **Hear by Right** to specific sectors such as schools, Children's Trusts and youth justice;
- *What's changed?* – a tool to record and evaluate what has changed because of genuine dialogue with children and young people; and
- the shared learning website at www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright

Using **Hear by Right** to enable the participation of children and young people in health services

Approaches to mapping and planning

Coordinators need to decide how best to determine participation priorities at strategic and operational level. Ensuring adequate participation (ie the **Hear by Right** emerging level) may be the principal requirement within a commissioning framework. Sifting priorities down to one for each standard may be more practical for building targets into annual performance plans. Or priorities may be those agreed with children and young people. Examples of approaches can be found at www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright.

Secondly, coordinators need to offer a range of relevant, practical approaches to **Hear by Right**'s mapping and planning task. It may be managers and staff who start the process, drawing on evidence from children and young people where possible, or including a core group throughout. Or, using **Hear by Right** Building Standards resources, a larger and wider group of children and young people may first set the priorities and then work in partnership with managers to agree the action plan.

Evidence of dialogue and change

Children and young people are often passionate about practical improvements in services they use to get a better deal and critical of pronouncements and policies not leading to action and change. For this reason, **Hear by Right** is established on three golden rules to safeguard against tokenism:

1. **Hear by Right** must map current participation and plan for improvement.
2. It must record evidence of dialogue and change in the organisation and in the lives of children and young people.
3. Evidence of change must come from children and young people themselves as well as adults.

Hear by Right is a self assessment process compatible with other quality assurance frameworks that include external validation. The NYA and Investing in Children partnership offers a three year

programme to partners leading to services seeking external validation through the Investing in Children Membership Scheme, with evidence of dialogue and change from children and young people.

From words to action: top tips on using **Hear by Right**

Getting started: **Hear by Right** is flexible as a tool and as a process. What suits your organisation or partnership best? The National Youth Agency would encourage you to:

- Go to www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright to see how others have made the most of **Hear by Right**. Contact the NYA Participation team for support.
- Gain early agreement and backing from leaders, staff and children and young people by using, for example, the PowerPoint presentation on the CD and **Hear by Right** briefings.
- Make sure there is someone with clear responsibility to drive the process.
- Identify a budget for this work. Can young people manage some of this budget?
- Be prepared to start small and develop incrementally.
- Ensure strategic ownership and effective coordination across partnership services and health service departments.

Some organisations choose to have **Hear by Right** steering groups, bringing together participation related staff across services and partnerships, reducing duplication, sharing resources and reviewing and implementing the action plans systematically.

Developing a strategy for children and young people's active involvement:

- Involve children and young people on their own terms, using the **Hear by Right** – Building Standards tools to help them set their priorities and agree actions with managers.
- Use the tool on the CD to map your evidence and plan actions. Make it manageable by, for example, just doing one level or refine to just one priority for each standard.
- Run short workshops with leaders, staff and children and young people to give the mapping and planning a flying start.
- Base your priorities on the evidence from the map and plan. Cut and paste relevant text from the Word version of **Hear by Right** on the CD to underpin your strategy.
- Agree realistic timescales and targets for progress. It can for example take two years to reach the emerging level.

What is the strategic fit?

Strategic partnerships

Health services are an integral part of Children's Trust arrangements, providing health care and support for all children and young people

The partnership context

Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts have a legal duty to cooperate within Children's Trusts and within the wider health sector through the Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007. Local Area Agreements and Comprehensive Area Assessments extend these duties to include an emphasis on local community involvement which includes children and young people. DCSF and, Department of Health (DH) Guidance and the Audit Commission all indicate the value of **Hear by Right** in helping meet these requirements.



Sharing and celebrating achievement of development and change for children and young people:

- Record successful evidence of dialogue and change using the What's Changed tool.
- Use newsletters and briefings for staff, leaders and children and young people.
- Share success stories with *Children and Young People Now* magazine, the local media and professional publications.
- Put on showcase events that help share information and encourage further success.
- Involve children and young people directly to record and celebrate achievements.
- Use www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright to share plans, resources and stories more widely.

Hear by Right is available from the National Youth Agency, priced £12.50 (plus post and packing). Contact NYA Sales on 0116 242 7427. Email: sales@nya.org.uk



National Youth Agency

Notes

- 1 *Under their Skins: tackling the health of the teenage nation*, Chief Medical Officer Annual Report, Department of Health, 2007.
- 2 *Healthy lives, brighter futures: The strategy for children and young people's health*, Department of Health/Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009.
- 3 *Healthy lives, brighter futures: The strategy for children and young people's health*, Department of Health/Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009.
- 4 *Children's Trusts: statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008.
- 5 *Every Child Matters*, The Stationery Office, 2003
- 6 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, 1989.
- 7 *Involving young people in the development of health services*, Department of Health/ Association for Young People's Health, 2010.
- 8 *You're Welcome quality criteria: self assessment toolkit*, Department of Health, 2009.

Useful Websites:

Hear by Right website: www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright

Youth Work for Health, The National Youth Agency: www.nya.org.uk/yw4h

Association for Young People's Health: www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk

You're Welcome Quality Criteria: Making health services young people friendly: www.dh.gov.uk

Participation Works: www.participationworks.org.uk

Investing in Children: www.iic-uk.org