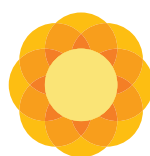




# **PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

**April 2023**



**BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Our Values and Aims	3
3.	Participation in the Trust	3
4.	Our Commitments	5

## 1. Introduction

This strategy sets out Birmingham Children's Trust vision for participation across our services. The strategy is aimed at improving the experience of children, young people and their families by providing opportunities for consultation and co-production and placing them firmly at the centre of our decision-making. We recognise that putting children and families at the heart of what we do ensures that they are genuinely listened to and that services are designed and shaped around what is important to them.

The strategy sets out:

- our values and ambitions for participation across the Trust
- the progress and impact we have made so far
- the commitments we are making
- how a culture of participation and co-production should always be embedded across the Trust.

## 2. Our Values and Aim

At Birmingham Children's Trust we are ambitious for our children and young people. Our vision is to build a Trust that provides excellent social work and family support for the city's most vulnerable children young people and families.

We do this by:

- listening, involving, and collaborating with children and their families
- focusing on positive and strength-based relationships
- working with compassion and care.

## 3. Participation in the Trust

Over the last 12 months we are proud of our work in the Trust and the ways in which our children and families have shaped the services that they receive.

In the Trust there are a range of forums and groups that come together to shape the services we deliver.

<b>Junior Children in Care Council</b>	Up to the age of 13
<b>Children in Care Council</b>	Young people up to the age of 18
<b>Care Leavers Forum</b>	Care experienced adults up to the age of 25
<b>Young Parents' Project</b>	Young parents of various ages
<b>Birmingham Roaring Lions</b>	Forum for disabled young people from our internal children's homes

<b>Don't Dis-Ability</b>	Forum for disabled young people
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	Forum for children who identify as LGBTQ+
<b>Young People Panels</b>	Young people up to the age of 18
<b>Non-White Brits group</b>	Young people up to the age of 18
<b>Safeguarding Parents Forum</b>	Forum for parents and carers
<b>Family Advisory Board</b> (Under creation as part of Child's Journey)	Forum for parents and carers
<b>EMPOWERU</b> (Exploitation and Missing Hub) <b>Parents and Carer's Group</b>	Forum for parents and carers in the Exploitation and Missing Hub
<b>EMPOWERU Schools and Community Interest Groups</b>	Children in local schools connected with community interest companies
<b>FDAC</b> (Family Drug and Alcohol Court) <b>Substance misuse group</b>	Group for parents
<b>FDAC Parenting group</b>	Group for parents
<b>FDAC Emotional wellbeing group</b>	Group for parents
<b>FDAC Own my life group</b>	Group for parents
<b>Birmingham Youth Offending Service Forum</b>	Young people up to the age of 17
<b>Foster Carers Birth Children Group</b>	Group for children
<b>Foster Carer support Groups (city-wide)</b>	Group for foster carers
<b>Birmingham Children's Fostering Association (BCFA) Peer Buddies Groups</b>	Group for foster carers
<b>Post-Adoption Support Teen's Group</b>	Group for young people
<b>YES Group</b> (Youth Empowerment Squad) (Joint with Birmingham City Council)	Young people aged 14 - 30
<b>Rise Forum</b> (Joint with Birmingham City Council)	Young people aged 14 - 19
<b>People for Public Services Forum</b> (Joint with Birmingham City Council)	Adults Forum
<b>Parent, Carer Forum</b> (Joint with Birmingham City Council)	Adults Forum
<b>Early Help Locality Participation Groups</b>	Partnership groups for parents and carers
<b>BTC</b> (Breaking the cycle) <b>Therapeutic Support Group</b>	Group for adults who do not currently have children in their care
<b>BTC Drop in locality based</b>	Group for any adults
<b>BTC Therapeutic Parenting Groups – Circle of Security</b>	Group for any adults and children aged 4 months to 7 years
<b>BTC Stay and Play Events</b>	Parents and children at any age

Our comprehensive participation activity has continued to listen to the voice of children and young people and their parents and carers to influence the decision making and priorities of the Trust, which have included:

- development of the Trust's new Practice Standards which are centred around our relationship-based model of practice Connections Count
- the practice model "Connections Count"
- the training offer to social workers and AYSE's
- development of the IRO approach to participation
- the design of the Commonwealth Games Volunteer support and benefits offer
- development of our Trust Care Leaver offer
- development of a Perinatal pathway

We are proud of the fact that:

- no senior appointments are made in the Trust without the involvement of young people
- all AYSE staff are interviewed by children and young people
- our young people take over the Corporate Parenting Board twice annually
- our participation work continues to be developed and presented on a local, regional and national stage
- we have four Transformational and Improvement apprentices delivering training across the Trust and championing participation

#### **4. Our Commitments**

We endeavour to embed a culture of participation at the very core of our work. We do this by making the following commitments:

- children and young people are involved in decisions that impact on them
- our services are shaped by those who directly experience them
- staff across the Trust have a knowledge and understanding of participation, it's benefits and how to do this effectively
- children and families are provided with clear and accessible information
- we harness technology to promote feedback and participation
- our physical spaces are child and family friendly

We deliver on these commitments by embedding a set of standards to which all service areas will be measured against. Those services that can demonstrate they are achieving these standards are awarded a participation quality standard watermark. It will be the role of the rights and participation service to evaluate these achievements on an annual basis.

The aim is to relentlessly work across our services to ensure that we are all embedding these core standards within all of our work.

The standards are as follows

Standard	Evidence
Children and young people are involved in decisions that impact upon them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people are present or actively involved in key meetings that are about them</li> <li>• The views of children and young people and how they have been considered will be clearly reported and recorded</li> <li>• Children have the right to have an advocate or independent visitor</li> </ul>
Our services are shaped by those who directly experience them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and families are provided with routine opportunities to feedback on the services they receive</li> <li>• There are a variety of accessible ways through which children and families can have their say</li> <li>• Services are shaping their delivery in response to the user experience</li> </ul>
Staff across the Trust have a knowledge and understanding of participation, it's benefits and how to do this effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff across the service are attending the participation training offer</li> <li>• Staff are using a range of direct work tools that are available to them</li> <li>• Service leads are actively promoting this strategy</li> </ul>
Children and families will be provided with clear and accessible information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear information about the service offer is available in a variety of languages and in child friendly formats</li> <li>• Children and families are contributing to key reports that are about them</li> <li>• Services are publishing clear contact arrangements that are responsive to families when they get in touch.</li> </ul>
We harness technology to promote feedback and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people are given access to a MOMO profile</li> <li>• Services are able to provide seamless access to virtual meetings where appropriate</li> <li>• Services are using digital means of communication and feedback</li> <li>• Services are publishing key information through the Trust website.</li> </ul>
Our physical spaces are child and family friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office spaces are accessible to the public</li> <li>• There are staff on hand to greet and meet visitors</li> <li>• There are private spaces available to have confidential discussions</li> <li>• The environment will be trauma-informed</li> </ul>

“If you want to do something that really changes someone’s life, the best thing you can do is make the person you’re trying to help a participant in the process.”

— **John Stahl-Wert**