

A model of engagement with children, young people and planners in the development of children's services plans

Following the same approach as Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP)

Pilot Report

November 2017

Children and young people have a right to take part in and influence how adults plan and run services for them in the areas where they live and learn. Edinburgh Children's Partnership were successful in a bid to Scottish Government to develop and deliver an approach to their engagement with children and young people which is based on a model drawn from Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights. For the partners in Edinburgh, the pilot initiative was a way to develop a methodology for engagement that is jointly owned by children, young people and adult duty-bearers which might then be shared as a model of good practice with other Community Planning Partnership areas. This report describes the process and the full set of appendices details the outputs from a series of three events which will continue to inform planning in Edinburgh.



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INTRODUCTION

Children and young people have a right to take part in and influence how adults plan and run services for them in the areas where they live and learn.

Public Bodies across Scotland need to consider how they do this with children and young people as active partners, so that they are involved all the way through planning, delivering and finding out how good or not those services are. This should not be undertaken in a one-off manner but should become the way adults with decision making power develop relationships with children and young people in their geographic areas so that planners:

- Understand things better from the child/young person's point of view.
- Use this understanding to deliver better services.
- Make sure children and young people know how they are doing, and if they have done the things they said they would.

This is called **good strategic planning**. It is the responsibility of adults who run services to involve children and young people in all aspects of strategic planning.

Children and young people should also be considered in relation to the **National Standards for Community Engagement**¹, these are the good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement and improve what happens as a result. The Standards are a tool in supporting Public Bodies to put into practice the **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**². The National Standards below have underpinned the work undertaken in the process project partners report on here:

- **Inclusion:** This standard relates to identifying and involving the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement, in this pilot project children and young people.
- **Support:** This means identifying and overcoming any barriers to engagement.
- **Planning:** This means having a clear purpose for the engagement which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and aspirations.
- **Working together:** This means working effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement.
- **Methods:** This standard relates to using methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
- **Communication:** This means communicating clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement.
- **Impact:** This standard relates to assessing the impact of the engagement and then using what has been learned to improve future community engagement.

¹ National Standards for Community Engagement <http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/>

² Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/CommEmpowerBill>

EVIDENCE

There is considerable evidence on the importance of involving children and young people in issues that affect their lives. Adopting an approach to children's services which is based upon children's rights will enhance the wellbeing of our children and young people.

The recent report on the State of Children's Rights in Scotland from Together (the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)³ presents a clear case for focusing our efforts, amongst other areas, on education, leisure, cultural activities, health and wellbeing, disability and welfare, violence reduction, family environment and alternative care.

There have been several studies over the years that have identified best practice models in the participation of children and young people with 36 different models identified between 1969 and 2012⁴. The feature of most of these models is to consider how to move away from what is often identified as limited, tokenistic, consultative approaches, towards real engagement, where "participation is about how children's voices, contribution and agency are perceived, heard, and acted upon."⁵

Despite the evidence about why participation is important and having a wide array of models available to choose from practice is still patchy. In Edinburgh, there are two evidence based approaches currently in use with the Children's Parliament working with children aged up to 14 and Young Edinburgh Action, working with young people aged 11 and over. Both of these approaches adopt rights based approaches which are based on meaningful engagement of children and young people.

Recent research on the approach adopted by Young Edinburgh Action concluded that "The strength of this approach ensures the engagement of young people within the work of the Council and its partners in a way which is co-productive, dynamic and responsive to current legislation."⁶ Similarly, the work of the Children's Parliament has been recognised by Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) talking of how it "demonstrates the possibilities for how children's voices can be included in local and global dialogue, if adults are willing to invest the time and resources needed to create appropriate and supportive opportunities for children to engage and to listen to and value their contributions. Children's voices should have a

³ State of Children's Rights In Scotland

<http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/TogetherReport2016.pdf>

⁴ A Potpourri of Participation Models <http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/a-potpourri-of-participation-models/>

⁵ Young Edinburgh Action: Reinvigorating young people's participation in Edinburgh <https://tinyurl.com/ya9e4ttx>

⁶ Young Edinburgh Action: Reinvigorating young people's participation in Edinburgh <https://tinyurl.com/ycuy9bhf>

ripple effect, influencing life in those spheres closest to them as well as the wider discussions of national and global significance.”⁷

The Edinburgh Children’s Partnership was keen to build on the work of these evidence based approaches in taking forward this pilot in recognition of the considerable work that has already taken place around the participation of children and young people in Scotland. The difference with this pilot is to consider how participation can be achieved in the planning of children’s services and most importantly how it can be sustained.

ABOUT THE PILOT

The approach we report on here starts with **Scotland’s National Action Plan for Human Rights**⁸ (SNAP) which aims to build a better human rights culture, help improve people’s lives through human rights and contribute to a better world by giving effect to Scotland’s international human rights obligations.

Emerging from the SNAP commitment to ‘a better human rights culture’ the SNAP Better Culture Forum was established and subsequently worked on a pilot approach to community engagement in planning – one that places Human Rights at the centre of the process. This approach was first tested by the Scottish Human Rights Commission⁹ (SHRC) and partners through the SNAP Better Culture Innovation Forum held in Perth and Kinross. The approach was built around three events: the first saw members of the public come together to identify local needs in terms of services, then planners took part in an event, then a final joint event when members of the public and planners got together to explore ways forward for local services and make a continued commitment to community engagement.

The Scottish Government were interested in the approach and decided to fund a pilot to look at adapting this SNAP model to support Public Bodies to work with children and young people in a process that would engage them as partners in Children’s Services Planning. Working within a rights framework, in this pilot children and young people are understood to be rights-holders and adults to be duty-bearers.

Partners in the Edinburgh Children’s Partnership were successful in a bid to Scottish Government to develop and deliver the approach. As with the Perth and Kinross iteration, the model started with the structure of three linked events, so that in Edinburgh:

- Event 1 would engage with children and young people as rights-holders.
- Event 2 would engage adult duty-bearers.
- Event 3 would then bring children, young people and adult participants together.

⁷ State of Children’s Rights In Scotland

<http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/TogetherReport2016.pdf>

⁸ SNAP <http://www.snaprights.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/SNAPpdfWeb.pdf>

⁹ Scottish Human Rights Commission <http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/>

The purpose of the events was to identify what children and young people need to live their lives with dignity, to recognise barriers and to explore solutions across the domains of life at home, in school, and in the community.

For the partners in Edinburgh, the pilot initiative was a way to develop a methodology for engagement that is jointly owned by children, young people and adult duty-bearers which might then be shared as a model of good practice with other Community Planning Partnership areas. Ultimately, partners in the Edinburgh Children's Partnership are interested in working with children and young people on improving services, instead of doing it for and to them.

The intention in Edinburgh is that this model will be used to help deliver the 2017-2020 Children's Services Plan in the context of an ongoing commitment amongst the planners (duty-bearers) to meaningful ongoing engagement with children and young people. For Edinburgh, the work is also an ideal and timely opportunity to shape the City Vision 2050, work around Future Schools and creating a child friendly city.

THIS REPORT

This is a report on the delivery of the pilot which sought to adapt the SNAP model to support Edinburgh Children's Partnership to work with children and young people in a process that would engage them as partners in Children's Services Planning. The detailed appendices to the report also record what children, young people and adult duty-bearers recorded as they considered children and young people's lives and the services they receive – it is this detail that will continue to inform planning for children and young people alongside consideration of the model of engagement itself.

PLANNING AND DELIVERY PARTNERS

A small planning group consisted of representatives from City of Edinburgh Council (Schools and Lifelong Learning; Strategy and Insight Division) which included staff who support Young Edinburgh Action¹⁰, NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council¹¹ (EVOC) and Children's Parliament¹². This group met regularly to plan and review each session.

The group was joined at key points by representatives from the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland¹³ and the programme funder Scottish Government (Children's Rights and Participation Team, Children and Families).

¹⁰ Young Edinburgh Action <https://www.facebook.com/SYPED13>

¹¹ Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council <http://www.evoc.org.uk/>

¹² Children's Parliament <http://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/>

¹³ Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/>

PREPARING FOR PARTICIPATION

Having successfully bid for the delivery of the pilot the primary concern of the planning partners was to ensure that the experience of participation was positive for all, particularly for children and young people. While the three-events model was established there was scope to consider how to make it work in terms of the experience itself, and also to create a longer-term impact.

Considering children and young people, it was felt that they should be ready for participation in this programme - a three-event model delivered within a tight timeframe and focused on large gatherings. The model is also demanding in that it necessitates working in groups with others who might not be known, with children and young people expected to meet with adult duty-bearers on their second get-together. For this to be inclusive of children and young people from a range of backgrounds and abilities the project partners were of the view that participants needed to bring some level of understanding of rights, skills and confidence. While many children and young people develop such capability through their normal social and educational experiences, some of the children and young people the partners wanted to engage in this process have only done so with the support and experience gained by engagement with **Children's Parliament** or **Young Edinburgh Action** – so that the active and engaged child/young person they are now is because of their participation in the facilitated, supported and safe programmes they have experienced to date.

Our learning from this pilot reinforces the need for children and young people to be ready to engage in the process. This does not mean that children or young people who need support cannot be involved, it means that the three-event model works when the children and young people that are involved have had opportunities to build capacity to engage meaningfully. In other words, a barrier to engagement in this model would be if there was too much of a focus on time constraints and not enough on efforts to ensure inclusion, support and preparedness for engagement.

Considering adult duty-bearers, the planning partners wanted them to come to Event 3 (with children and young people) with an understanding that they must set aside the power they have as they participate, but then understand that we need them to exercise that power on behalf of children and young people when they leave. To establish a sense of equity, adults participated in their initial session in the same activities as the children/young people had in their event – they used creative props, they worked in small groups, they used only first names, they were asked to leave the restrictions or burdens of their day job at the door. Adult participants were also given some input on what a rights-focus and rights-based approach means in the context of this pilot programme.

MORE ABOUT THE EVENTS

In line with the National Standards for Community Engagement the three linked events were to be **inclusive**, **supported** and **well-planned**. The methods used further reflected the Standards by ensuring that the sessions were experienced by children (aged 10 to 12 years old), young people (aged 14 to 18 years old) and adult duty-bearers as purposeful, creative and enjoyable – in other words, **fit for purpose**.

Event 1 for children and young people, and **Event 2** for adult duty-bearers (see appendices **1a** and **1b** for the full programmes), followed the same format. The purpose was to capture views on the lived experience of children and young people, and to prepare both parties in the process for the final joint event by focusing on:

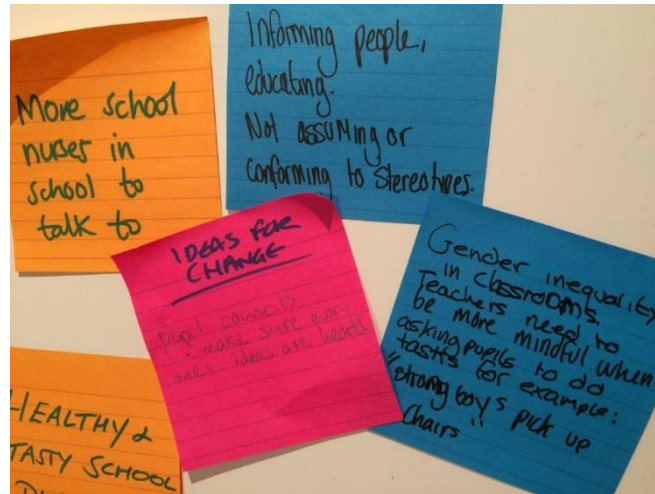
- What do children and young people need to be healthy, happy and safe and live their life with dignity at home, in school and in the community?
- What barriers are there to this?
- Some initial reflection on the question: What can we do to deliver what children and young people need and address barriers?
- Considering Edinburgh, what is it we like and don't like about our City?

Choosing to work with children/young people and then adults in the same way created an opportunity to emphasise the key message that good community engagement starts from the lived experience of the community of interest, and by using approaches they can connect with. For adults, who were steeped in their own services and the work they do day-to-day, it was important to focus clearly on children and young people's needs and rights rather than on adult perceptions of constraints of management or budgets. For the pilot, the explicit intention was to build an approach to Children's Service Planning from the bottom up. Finally, in terms of Event 1 and 2, the participants also began some consideration of the challenge to be considered further in Event 3: What can we do to deliver what children and young people need and address barriers?

Project partners also undertook work between sessions to keep participants on board. Prior to their engagement in the joint/final event (Event 3) children, young people and adults received feedback from their events via summary graphic representations of some of the exercise completed in small groups (see appendices **2** and **4**). The children were all visited back in their own school groups to keep conversations going and to address any anxieties – although there were none. When they came together for Event 3 children, young people and adults entered the room with curiosity and excitement, keen to share further. It was evident that the familiarity children and young people had with the approach enabled them to lead and engage fully in the mixed task-oriented groups allocated to them.

Event 3 (see appendix **1c**) brought further focus on delivering on the National Standards for Community Engagement in terms of **working together** and **impact** by supporting participants to focus on some shared areas of interest and concern, to deepen understanding on the perspectives of others through intergenerational conversations, and to articulate ideas for action and ideas for change.

Specifically, Event 3 sought to take adult duty-bearers to a point where they could identify individual pledges on further action. This began as a collective task with children and young people so that at the end of each block of work the mixed groups were asked to identify **ideas for change/ideas for action** for families, for schools or colleges or workplaces, for communities or for our city (see the later section **Key themes and ideas for action and change**). Then, the day ended with adult duty-bearers identifying what they **can do** and **will do** for children and young people (see the later section **Adult duty-bearers: Planned Action**).



MORE ABOUT METHODOLOGY

The methods used to support community engagement should be **fit for purpose**: but what does this mean for a mixed audience, when the participants are 10 years old, or 15 years old or adults?

As a partner in the pilot Children's Parliament uses creative approaches to support and foster participation. In developing the approach from the three-event model the partners agreed that the pilot would benefit from the kinds of approaches that Children's Parliament use regularly, this might be described as an active, hands-on approach so that children and young people (and subsequently adults) would 'make or create' as part of the dialogue and in doing so capture and represent their views. Simple, attractive and easy-to-do activities – a series of props - provided a way-in to conversations on matters of importance. The intention was that no-one would sit in front of a blank flipchart, rather they would literally unwrap a prop (in the case of Event 3 every group challenge was contained in a giant pizza box) which would intrigue and inspire them to work together.

As an example, to encourage conversations about what children or young people need to be healthy, happy and safe at home, in school and in the community (Events 1 and 2) small groups were given a large jigsaw with prompt questions relating to these areas. They worked together to complete each part of their jigsaw and build their almost life-size response.



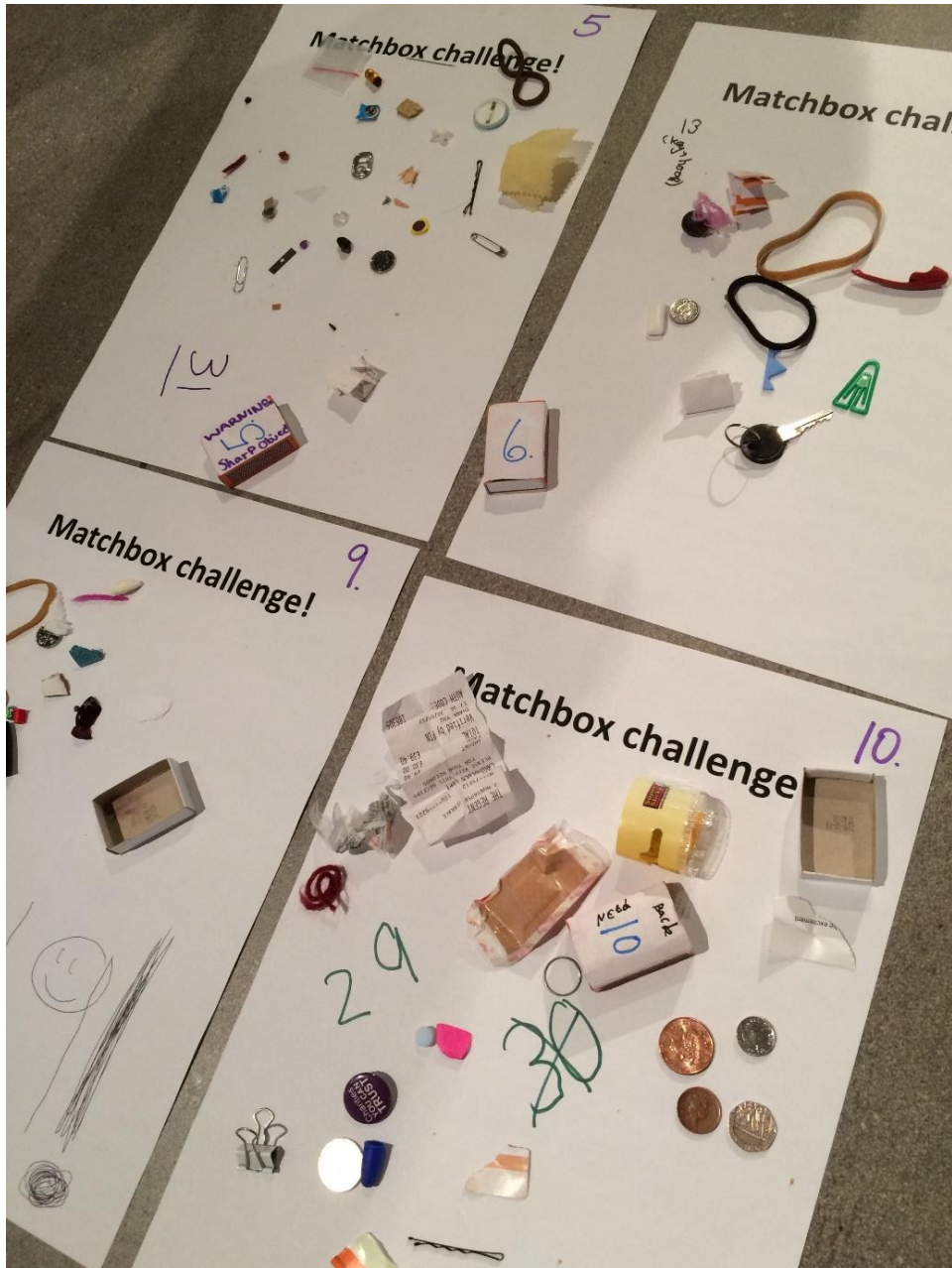
In the joint children/young people/adult session participants worked in groups to deepen conversations about shared topics of interest. As an example, some groups talked about the local environment and represented views on a tree they built and decorated with ideas from a pack provided:



As an example, to help the groups talk about poverty and inequality groups built a tower of bricks on which they identified what needs to happen in the city to achieve the aspiration written on the top brick that 'everyone has what they need to live a good life and have the same opportunities'.



There was also time for energising, fun activities - each team took on the Matchbox Challenge and had to fit as many tiny items into a matchbox as they could in just 5 minutes. (A bit of competitiveness crept in at this point....)



KEY THEMES AND IDEAS FOR ACTION AND CHANGE

An important aspect of the three-event model was to identify themes or topics that children, young people and adults viewed as important and wanted to consider further as conversations developed – in this pilot and beyond when partners think about continuing meaningful engagement with children and young people. To support this (as described earlier and in the event programmes appendices **1a** and **1b**) small groups considered what children and young people need to be healthy, happy and safe – at home, in school and in the community. They then identified barriers and started conversations around the question: What can we do to deliver what children and young people need and address barriers?

From Events 1 (children and young people) and Event 2 (adult duty-bearers) the themes or topics that emerged in terms of action needed were identified after the events by the project partners as:

- Mental health
- Support, relationships and views on adults or children and young people
- Life at home and parenting
- Learning, school and teachers
- Bullying, safety and violence
- Community, youth work, things to do, local facilities and environment, housing
- Poverty

When it came to structuring Event 3, bringing children, young people and adults together, the partners worked to develop a number of themes that would deepen the initial conversations, but also start from a neutral stance – so for example we did not want to start the intergenerational conversations from a deficit idea of ‘young people’s mental health problems’ but rather to start with a broader idea of ‘being healthy’ or ‘happiness and wellbeing’. Other themes/topics translated more easily into Event 3’s positive/asset-based approach. The final Event 3 thematic activities were labelled as:

- Being healthy
- Families and life at home
- Feeling safe and being safe
- Happiness and wellbeing
- How people get along
- Learning and school
- Our houses
- Our local environment
- Poverty and inequality
- Things to do

Then, working on tasks associated with the above themes Event 3 asked small groups – of children, young people and adults - to identify **ideas for change/ideas for action**. The participants could identify these ideas in relation to one or more of these groups:

- Families
- Schools or colleges or workplaces
- Communities
- Our city

The full list of ideas is in appendix 5. In summary, these ideas for change/action emerged:

Ideas for change/ideas for action for families

- Actions that address poverty.
- Support and learning on being a parent – as early as possible and non-stigmatising.
- A focus on playing together at home and in the community.
- A focus on healthy, affordable food, learning to cook and eating together.
- Providing homes that are affordable, safe and warm and where each child can have a bedroom.
- Support for parents and families where there is disagreement, conflict and relationship breakdown.

Ideas for change/ideas for action for schools or colleges or workplaces

- Challenge stereotypes and discrimination – every boy/girl or young man/young woman should have the same opportunities.
- Open school buildings to the community.
- Improve interpersonal relationships – no shouting, always respectful.
- Make school a place where children are happy to learn and teachers happy to teach.
- Provide additional support for learning when it is needed.
- Improve skills and approaches to support young people with mental health problems.
- Address bullying.
- Deliver the best learning about alcohol, drugs and sexual health and relationships.
- Provide snacks and lunch free to all children and young people.
- A fair living wage for all.

Ideas for change/ideas for action communities

- Support for children and families to access local facilities and activities – for free or make them affordable.
- Easy access to safe well-maintained places to play and do sports.
- Improved intergenerational understanding and relationships, mutual respect.
- Build pride and community connections.
- Help neighbours get to know each other and get on.
- Build excellent relationships between citizens and Police.
- Places to help when families or individuals are struggling.
- Support for learning and to raise attainment across communities.
- Revitalise youth work and clubs and activities locally.
- Create community gardens and local environments that citizens can look after.
- Create kinder communities.

Ideas for change/ideas for action our city

- Make Edinburgh a place where children's lives are free from alcohol and tobacco harm.
- End discrimination, celebrate diversity.
- Make cars/traffic less of a problem in terms of congestion and pollution.
- Create cleaner, greener, safer streets and local environments.
- Focus on supporting and improving mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensure affordable housing and work for all our citizens.

ADULT DUTY-BEARERS: PLANNED ACTION

Event 3 ended with adult duty-bearers identifying what they **can do** and **will do** for children and young people.

This summary of **I can** statements from the adult participants captures the main emphasis of the commitments made on the day:

- Help all services to work together to make sure what we have learned from children and young people helps shape the future of Edinburgh.
- Listen to children and young people/ensure that children and young people are listened to, continue to be listened to and have opportunities to participate regularly.
- Encourage others to listen to and respect the views of children and young people.
- Promote the rights of children and young people to be heard and to be involved in planning services.
- Ensure children and young people are at the heart of decision-making and planning.
- Advocate on behalf of young people to policy makers and decision-makers.
- Make sure children and young people are involved in developing specific services/aspects of work: schools, NHS, Locality Improvement Plans.
- Share key messages from today/from children and young people as well as sharing knowledge about how we worked together.
- Learn how productive mixing children, young people and adults can be.
- Support new parents so that they have the confidence and tools to give children the best start in life and to develop with their children.
- Offer free recreational clubs and activities.

This summary of **I will** statements from the adult participants captures the main emphasis of the commitments made on the day:

- Share with my team/service the outcomes, learning and inspiration of today, put it on the agenda of team meetings.
- Promote the voice of children and young people.
- Promote children's rights and how they can make everything we do better – encourage others not to be frightened of upholding children's rights.
- Don't make assumptions about what children and young people want or need.
- Ensure that there are regular opportunities for young people to participate in service planning.
- Check regularly with young people that we are listening to them and acting on what they say.
- Listen to children and young people at every opportunity.
- Involve children in the design of new schools.
- Measure the impact of children and young people's involvement and promote what we find.
- Embed this approach in locality improvement planning and engagement in Edinburgh.
- Share commitments and ask 'powerful adults' if they have acted on them.

A full recording of responses is in appendix 6.

VIEWS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE PILOT PROCESS

At Event 3 children and young people worked together to respond to two questions: **What has worked well about this consultation project? Can you think of other ways children and young people should be able to have their say about what happens in our city?**

Responses to both questions are to be used to support Edinburgh Children's Partnership to consider the appropriateness of the methods used in this approach and the impact that this and other work might have to support continued meaningful engagement. It will also support shared learning for other Community Planning Partnerships across Scotland, the key purpose of this pilot. A full recording of responses is in appendices 7 and 8. In summary:

What has worked well about this consultation project? Children and young people liked:

- Meeting other children and young people and working together.
- Meeting the adults and working in groups that had a mix of all ages.

- Sharing their ideas and opinions with others.
- Getting to talk about a lot of different topics.
- Feeling that other people – children, young people and adults – were interested in what they had to say.
- Sharing ideas and learning about how to improve the lives of people in Edinburgh.
- The fun and creative activities used to generate and support the conversations.
- That everyone felt included and involved in the events – every opinion was heard no matter what age the person is.
- Meeting adults they felt were genuinely interested in hearing the perspective of children and young people – with the hope that adults would learn from children and young people.
- Hearing the views of different generations and finding out what people agree on what is different.
- Meeting adults who make decisions that impact on children and young people's lives at home, at school and in the community.
- The venues and the food.

Can you think of other ways children and young people should be able to have their say about what happens in our city? Children and young people suggested:

- More opportunities for more children to have their say just like these events.
- Opportunities for all children and young people to have a trusted adult they can speak to and have their say.
- Decision-makers should visit schools more often and spend time with children and young people.
- Teachers should be good at listening to what children have to say. Then there should be links between what happens in schools and adults who make decisions.
- Assemblies and Pupil Councils at school.
- Gatherings in local community centre or libraries.
- Bringing children, young people and adults together locally.
- Every school should be part of Children's Parliament. Children's Parliament could go into schools and gather ideas for events.
- Young Edinburgh Action and Children's Parliament meeting more often.
- Voting in Scottish Youth Parliament elections.
- Children and young people emailing and writing to decision-makers.
- An app where you can have your say about the city.
- Online suggestion box.
- Projects like this that include children, young people and adults.
- Protests and campaigns.
- Children and young people going to public meetings.
- Easier ways to meet and chat to your MSP. Children and young people should act as advisors to the Scottish Parliament.

VIEWS OF ADULT DUTY-BEARERS ON THE PILOT PROCESS

Following Event 3 adults were asked for feedback on the process via a short online survey. Again, this was to support reflection on the model and its potential for continued community engagement with children and young people. In summary, adult respondents said:

Summary

Positives about the approach

Respondents highlighted the direct involvement of children and young people in the events and the creative, fresh engagement methods used. Respondents appreciated the mixed grouping of staff from different sectors and partner organisations as they felt this added to discussions. Respondents highlighted that there was a clear focus on children during the events and that the energetic and relaxed atmosphere allowed open, meaningful conversations.

“Getting to spend more time with the children and young people was a real advantage especially for strategic level staff who - sadly - don't get time for face to face work with children!”

It was felt that there was a real connection between the different sectors, partners and children and young people, a willingness from all to be actively involved and that this could be built on for future activity and engagement.

Ideas for future approach

When asked if there was anything they would have changed about the approach, respondents suggested the following:

- Shorter events or providing breakout spaces, as respondents noticed that some children and young people appeared to get tired half way through the day.
- Less tasks to allow more in-depth discussion, especially to explore and understand topics such as what it means to be cared for by adults and what it means to be listened to.
- Write-ups of what children and young people said expressed in their own words and more vivid documents.
- Using varied settings for future sessions to encourage a more equitable process i.e. adults in schools, children at Waverley Court or third sector offices, using local facilities rather than just city centre venues.
- Continue to encourage involvement of more diverse groups of children and young people.
- Developing a shared online community to allow adults to ask young people questions or seek their advice.
- For the Edinburgh 2050 Vision, tracking the progress of children and young people involved in the ‘Holyrood baby’ project.

Future Involvement

Respondents welcomed the opportunity to facilitate future events, take forward actions arising from events and use the information gathered to inform planning. It was recognised that incorporating children and young people's engagement as part of core business and strengthening partnership working is important. Respondents support the development of an approach that involves children and young people in service development and planning, uses creative engagement techniques, demonstrates how we listen to children and young people and celebrates their achievements.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MODEL/NEXT STEPS

The pilot has generated significant interest in and enthusiasm for children and young people's participation and rights at a range of levels – service-specific, locality-wide and strategic.

This interest and enthusiasm builds on a track record in terms of participation and engagement over many years, highlighted by the Care Inspectorate's joint inspection of children's services (2013) which highlighted the partnership's 'genuine commitment to consulting young children and young people in policy and service development' and commended the use of a 'very wide range of measures to consult and seek the views of children, young people, families and stakeholders'.

The model used in the pilot has involved a significant development on from previous approaches in that it has been explicitly grounded in a rights-based approach, with children and young people's human rights understood as basic standards and entitlements which adult participants have a duty to deliver on.

The model also involved children and young people engaging with adult duty-bearers on the basis of equity and a level playing field. This was largely made possible by the fact that the children and young people were themselves ready to participate (see 'preparing for participation'); that the first two events followed the same format, allowing both groups to clearly focus on children and young people's needs and rights rather than other considerations; and that adult duty bearers were encouraged to set aside their power and the limitations of their professional roles at the door.

The group that oversaw the planning of the pilot recognise that much of the success of the pilot and the three-event model was based on how ready the children and young people were to participate in this process. Some of the children and young people involved were not what might be seen as 'traditional participants' that we would see putting themselves forward for some of the more traditional forms of engagement such as local pupil councils or youth fora. It is recognised that the success in engaging such a wide range of children and young people in this pilot was as a result of significant work beforehand with the children and young people, where relationships were developed with adults that they grew to know and trust thereby enabling them to participate fully in the events. This process should be built

in to any future models developed around engaging children and young people in the planning of children's services.

It is clear from the commitments that adult duty bearers made at the end of the third event that there is a widespread intention to improve outcomes for children and young people and to create new opportunities for children and young people to participate in service planning and decision-making.

Turning these commitments and this enthusiasm into day to day realities at all levels and across all services will clearly require ongoing support in terms of a continuing commitment across the partnership, CPD opportunities, sharing of good practice and specialist support from Young Edinburgh Action, the Children's Parliament and those involved in planning and delivering the pilot.

An intention was expressed by the chair of the partnership at the end of the third event to bring participants – children, young people and adult duty-bearers – back together again after a year or so to revisit the model and the commitments, celebrate progress and work together on what should come next.

The Edinburgh Children's Service Plan 2017 – 2020 will include a specific objective to 'Enhance children's rights across the city in line with the UNCRC' under strategic outcome 5 'Children, young people, their families and communities will be empowered to improve their wellbeing'. As part of the plan's performance monitoring framework, lead officers will report on performance across all of the strategic outcomes using a template which will include a description of how activities contribute towards the enhancement of children's rights and a description of what engagement has taken place with children and young people, parents/carers and others around the outcome.

In addition to the outcomes and objectives in the Children's Services Plan, the feedback from the pilot will also feed into the Edinburgh City Vision 2050, Locality Improvement Plans and work around Future Schools. The engagement of children and young people and their participation in these ongoing pieces of work are crucial in ensuring that their needs and priorities are listened to and reflected in future plans. The learning from this pilot will be shared in order to ensure that duty bearers can best engage with children and young people as well as consider the feedback that has already been gathered by the pilot.

Recommendations

- The children and young people who took part in this process should be offered the opportunity to continue the discussions and help take forward the actions identified.
- All adults should be followed up to check how they have taken forward the commitments they made to children and young people at the final event, reporting back to the children and young people after six months.
- Conversations with children and young people need to be built in to all planning processes. Training on children's rights and participation should be offered to staff to assist them to do this in a meaningful way, starting with staff

in schools and community settings who have the initial contact with children and young people and moving on to all staff that work with children or have a responsibility for children's services planning.

- An annual event with adults, children and young people should be built in to the Edinburgh Children's Partnership planning processes.
- Liaise with the Scottish Government to share the findings of the pilot with other community planning partnerships.

APPENDICES

The appendices provide detail on the work undertaken by children, young people and adults.

1. Full programmes for the 3 events, including activities

- a) Event 1: Children and young people
- b) Event 2: Adults/duty-bearers
- c) Event 3: Working together – Children, young people and adult duty bearers
- d) Activities for event 3
- e) Children's Report

Appendices 1a to 1e can be used together as a toolkit - a practical guide to putting rights at the heart of planning services.

2. What children and young people need and barriers faced

- a) The views of children
- b) The views of young people
- c) The views of adults

3. Some initial reflection: What can we do to deliver what children and young people need and address barriers?

- a) The views of children
- b) The views of young people
- c) The views of adults

4. The Edinburgh barometer:

- a) Our city: the views of children
- b) Our city: the views of young people
- c) Our city: the views of adult duty-bearers

5. Ideas for change/ideas for action

6. Commitments from adult duty-bearers: I CAN/I WILL

7. Views of children and young people on the pilot process

8. Views of children and young people on other ways they should be able to have their say about what happens in Edinburgh



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