

# North East Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board Voice and Influence Strategy

2017-2019



## Contents:

Introduction.....	3
What is voice and influence? .....	4
The importance of voice and influence to the Local Safeguarding Children Board .....	4
Who are the Key Partners / Stakeholders? .....	5
Principles/Why it's important .....	5
Shared Values .....	7
Voice and Influence Standards.....	7
Voice and Influence Measures .....	9
What we do well, the story so far .....	11
What do we need to do? .....	12
Mechanism for overseeing youth voice and influence .....	13

## Introduction

This strategy sets out the vision and aspirations of the North East Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (NEL LSCB) for **all** children, young people and their families to participate and engage in all services that affect them. Engaging with children and giving them a voice is everyone's business. The strategy relates to children from 0 to 18 and to young people with disabilities receiving services up to the age of 25.

The purpose of this strategy is to provide the means to a coordinated and consistent approach to understanding the needs of the community and emerging issues by promoting genuine involvement of children, young people and their families in North East Lincolnshire.

Children and young people should have access to effective information, advice and guidance to support them to make informed decisions about their daily lives and achieve the best outcomes for their futures. Only through our commitment to working together can we put what's needed in place to achieve a true culture of engagement in which children, young people, their families and carers have the opportunity to 'have a voice' and be heard at a time and a level that is right for them.

Our Voice and Influence Strategy evidences our commitment to putting children and young people at the heart of all of our activities through involving them and their families in the decision-making, planning, commissioning, design, development, delivery and evaluation of services that affect their daily lives. The strategy applies to all young people at each level of the NEL Child Concern Model, Universal, Universal Plus, Vulnerable, Complex and Severe (including children subject to CIN, Looked After and subject to Child Protection)

The objectives of our strategy will be achieved through all partners signing-up to:

- Having a shared understanding of the importance of voice and influence
- Working within a framework of shared values, principles and standards
- Consistent use of tools to capture the views and voices of children and young people
- Develop the skills and knowledge of the children's workforce to deliver on making the 'Voice of the Child' a tangible element of all practice and development
- Knowing that children's voices can and do make a difference and making sure we can all evidence how this is working and how we can maximise impact

The Voice and Influence Strategy will be aligned to other key strategies including

- Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Strategy

- Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy
- Future in Mind Strategic Plan
- Anti-bullying and E-Safety.

## **What is voice and influence?**

Where we are able to demonstrate genuine success in the development of services in North East Lincolnshire, it is invariably the case that we have also engaged effectively and involved children and young people.

To enable effective Youth Voice and Influence to happen, there needs to be an ongoing dialogue with children and young people at varying levels. Enabling children and young people can truly influence the range of decisions that impact upon their lives is a challenge and in some cases, means sharing power. The issue of power is central to the development of effective participation, because with the power of decision-making, comes responsibility.

## **The Importance of Voice & Influence to North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (NELSCB)**

The NELSCB is the statutory forum responsible for determining how partner agencies co-operate to protect children in North East Lincolnshire. It seeks to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect by ensuring that all those working with children, do so effectively and together. The NELSCB seeks to challenge itself and its partners to provide maximum opportunity to children and young people to have their voices heard and be involved in decisions and services that affect them. Hearing, understanding and acting on messages from children and young people are key functions of the NELSCB.

## Who are the Key Partners / Stakeholders?

This strategy is for:

- Every child and young person living in and being cared for in North East Lincolnshire
- Every North East Lincolnshire child that has been placed out of area as Looked After Children or in alternative education.
- Parents, carers, family members particularly those involved in statutory services
- All organisations working with or providing services for children, young people and families in NEL including:
  - Young peoples' groups
  - Early Years (Child-minders, day-care providers, nurseries)
  - Children's Services (FFAP, CASS)
  - Educational Establishments (Primary and secondary schools, academies and further educations college)s
  - Children's Health Provision ( Health visitors, school nurses)
  - General Practitioners
  - NLAG (Grimsby Hospital, Midwives, community paediatrics, accident and emergency Looked after Children Health Team)

Clinical Commissioning Trust

- CAMHS
- Adult services, mental health, substance use
- Staff working in youth and community settings
- Police , fire and rescue services and ambulance service
- Council employees in housing
- Early help providers
- Family Hubs
- Libraries and Leisure Services
  - Members of the community and faith groups
  - Voluntary sector providers
  - Children's Partnership Board
  - Corporate Parenting Board

## Principles / Why Voice and Influence is So Important

Children and young people are at the heart of all we do. Including and involving children and young people in their journey and in accessing the services available to them is crucial to improving outcomes for them and those around them and making sure they have a say in what those services are and what they look like.

### Children's Rights and Responsibilities

Children's right to participate is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Every person 17 and under has the right to express their views and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them.

Children and young people have the right to receive, seek and give information. Understanding the child or young person's diversity and cultural needs is a key element of the strategy. Every child has the right to freedom of expression, so long as they respect the rights of others.

Disabled children and young people have the right to active participation in their communities.

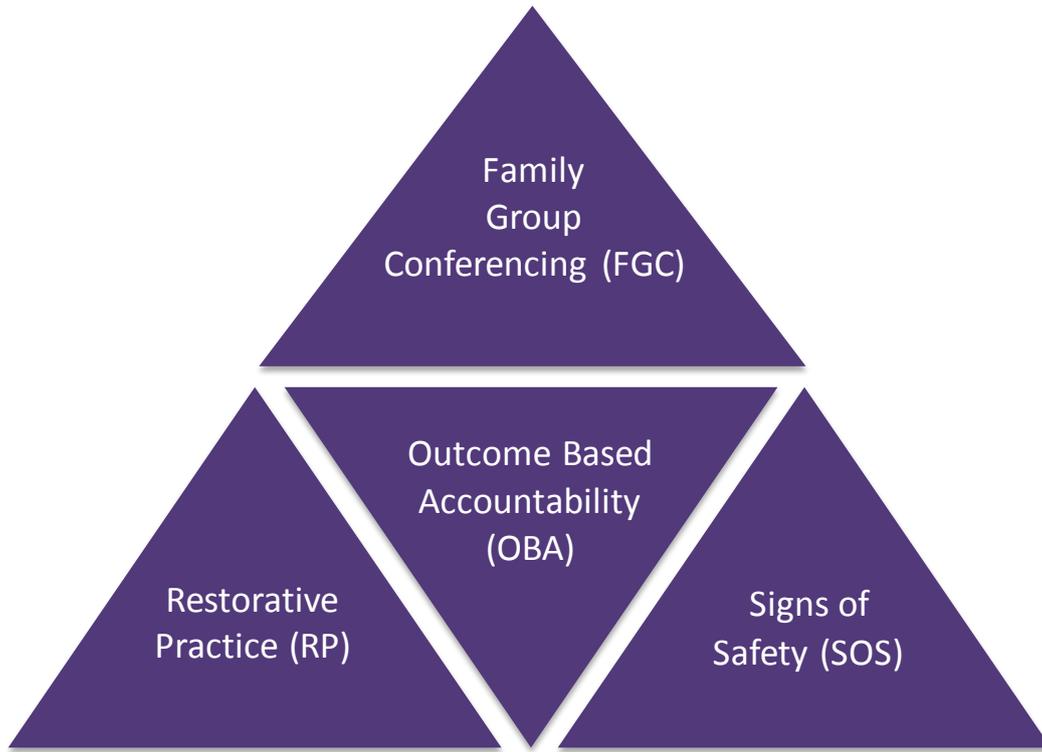
All rights under the UNCRC are required to be implemented for every child without discrimination.

### The Creating Strong Communities Model

North East Lincolnshire Creating Strong Communities model supports the way in which local practitioners and partners work together to safeguard vulnerable children. The model includes:

1. Restorative practice
2. Signs of Safety
3. Family Group Conferencing
4. Outcome based Accountability

All elements of this model used across services focus on the importance of relationships, effective engagement and active involvement that wherever possible shifts the power from those providing services to children and families. In this way, we aim to make children's voices more audible and include them and their families at every stage of involvement.



*The Creating Strong Communities Model*

## Shared Values

Our shared values, developed with local young people are a guide when working with children and young people for Voice And Influence in North East Lincolnshire. These are:

**Children and Young People are at the Centre of all we do** – youth voice and influence is valued and driven by the needs of children and young people

**Understanding** – We take time to understand each other. Involving children and young people is good both for them and also the adults working with them

**Honesty and Building Trust** – Being honest and communicating when we can make changes explain why if we can't make all ideas a reality

**Good Communication** – Listening to each other, understanding and agreeing what can happen together will lead to positive change

**Valuing People** - Valuing all of the views, ideas and contributions that children and young people can bring to making what we do better

**Making it Happen** – Making sure that working with children and families is an 'inclusive process' and all children and young people can get involved how they want to and when they feel ready

**Working Together** - North East Lincolnshire will be a place where children young people can express easily what can be improved, can be involved in making improvements and are regularly kept informed about what has gone well to understand their role in this success

## Voice and Influence Standards

A standard is the minimum we expect of ourselves when asking children and young people to engage with us, to share their views and or to be involved in positive change for themselves and others.

A standard is also the way in which we can benchmark how well all of our partner agencies' are working to involve children and young people effectively in the provision of services. This means guidance is needed on the practice of meeting basic standards.

The standards are based on the following principles:

- That children and young people are experts in their own lives
- That children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their own opinions taken into account

- That dependent on levels of understanding, adults that are involved in actions or decisions that affect children's and young peoples' lives have an absolute duty to provide information and explanations to aid children's active participation and enable them to express how they feel and what they want

Children and young people's voice and influence can contribute to developing better solutions to local issues and identifying themes or priorities as well as:

- Developing active citizens across our communities
- Promoting citizenship and social inclusion
- Adding to personal and social education and development
- Helping children and young people feel safe and be safe

To achieve this, children and young people's voices must be heard at a number of levels:

- Where individual decisions are being taken about children and young people's lives
- Where services for or used by children and young people are being developed and delivered by local agencies including the space and environment in which children and young people play meet and grow up
- Where national policies programmes and services are being developed delivered and evaluated
- Where a thematic issue is identified from listening to the views of children and young people

The core standards we adopt in North East Lincolnshire for the involvement of children and young people's voice and influence are:

- The voice and influence of children and young people is central to all we do
- We adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognising Article 12's is pivotal to our strategy
- Children and young people's voice and influence is recognised and used to inform plans at all levels
- Children and young people are aware that their voice can inform and influence plans
- We have structures in place for children's and young people's views to be heard so that they are true 'partners in decision-making, planning and scrutiny frameworks
- Recording and evaluation systems are in place to identify and share learning and evidence of change arising from children and young people's participation

- Systems are in place to record, report and celebrate children's and young people's active involvement
- Recruitment information and induction as well as supervision and appraisal of all staff and managers identify the importance of the voice and influence of children and young people across all organisations and services for children
- Children and young people take an active part in the recruitment, selection and induction of a range of staff and managers across the organisation or partnerships
- We identify key young people, managers and leaders who are effective champions for the active involvement of children and young people, with clearly identified responsibilities

## Voice and Influence Measures

The voice and influence standards set out above provide us with the benchmark measures for Voice and Influence. However it is acknowledged that additional measures may be needed to capture mainstream participation activity such as Youth Parliament etc.

The measures detailed in table 1 will be captured by agencies' case records including:

- What the child/young person told us
- What we did about it
- What improved, happened or was changed as a result

A summary of all responses and any identified themes will be collated and reported quarterly by all services via the LSCB performance framework. Examples of good practice and quotes should be included but priority must be given to what we have done about negative responses, indicating children's and young people's dissatisfaction or lack of difference made.

Irrespective of format or tool used, the same questions should be asked of every child. The measures will act as indicators from which to measure the effectiveness of compliance with minimum standards for all those working with and providing services for children and families in North East Lincolnshire.

The child knows/understands why you (worker/service) are worried about them and what you want to help the child with, what needs to change and why.

The child feels you ( worker/service) explain things to them and they understand, whilst feeling involved in what is happening to them and decisions affecting them

The child feels listened to, feels he or she has a say in decisions about what happens to them - and feels "involved" in what has been provided

The child feels that being involved with you (worker/service) is helping to make things better and/or makes them feel safer or happier

The child is asked if there anything that they are not happy about that you (worker/ service) are doing and what they think we could have done differently or better

A difference has been made and things have improved for the child as a result of their wishes/feelings being listened too and acted upon.

There is evidence that the child's perception is that things have improved for them.

A difference has been made to service developments/ improvements as result child's voice/ influence

**Table 1 – Voice and Influence Measures**

## What we do well, the story so far

- Signs of Safety model puts children and their families at the centre of the work completed and actively promotes 'working with' rather than 'doing to' our children young people and families.
- Family Hubs regularly work with children and families to ensure what they are delivering meets the needs of the people in the local community.
- Across NEL involvement of young people in decision making through work of the Youth Action group who work on issues identified as important to young people by the young people themselves. The group plan engages with appropriate services and managers to work together on improving issues impacting on local young people.
- UK Youth Parliament. Youth Parliament representatives are elected by their peers to represent their views. They carry out annual consultation on the most important issues for young people representing young people from this area both regionally during conventions and action planning alongside the annual sitting and House of Commons debate.
- Young Reporters enable young people in the area to write about the issues and topics that are important to them for an audience of the wider local community. This not only gives a fresh perspective on the issues and topics but also engages the audience and challenges often negative perspectives of young people portrayed in the media.
- Street based teams use tools such as the Mobile Units, CAGE and portable skate park to engage with young people 'where they are'. This includes carrying out consultations and following journey of young people through use of ME assessments.
- Young and Safe team have worked with young people to develop the range of relationships and resilience training which is delivered in schools across the area.
- Outdoor Learning services are working with a wide range of young people who help in developing future programmes as well as planning and delivering work in the community as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.
- Use of Viewpoint to work with young people in care, young offenders and young people through Young and Safe teams.
- Mechanisms to support the Voice Of the Child in LAC and CP meetings including IROs and advocacy service and within the LAC statutory health assessment.
- Council for Children in Care and LAC Health Days enabling young people in care to engage with key workers and services to improve outcomes for them.
- Consultation carried out by partner agencies with young people in the community on what they would like in their communities.

## What do we need to do?

The priority actions have been developed through consultation with LSCB partner agencies. The Voice and Influence strategy priority action plan will be overseen by the strategic NEL LSCB Voice and Influence Group.

Priority Actions	• How we will achieve our priorities
<p>1. Enable a joined up approach to capturing the voice and influence of children which makes a difference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The implementation of the V&amp;I Strategy and oversight by the V&amp;I Strategic Task and Finish Group</li> <li>•Ensuring a common agreed approach use of tools and measures to capture V&amp;I and impact</li> <li>•Coordinating involvement and participation work, ensuring groups are not under or over-consulted</li> <li>•Ensure the work force is aware of key messages from children and young people</li> </ul>
<p>2. Our shared values and commitment to involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Oversee the adoption and use of the V&amp;I Standards, Values and Principles as the cornerstones of the strategy</li> <li>•Ensure that the LSCB V&amp;I strategic group coordinates and develops involvement work across partner agencies and facilitates the sharing of good practice.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Ensure the workforce has skills and knowledge required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ensuring the children’s workforce has appropriate resources and tools to support the necessary skills to effectively involve children and young people. (Including the use of the LSCB VOC Tools, V&amp;I performance measures)</li> <li>•To incorporate the NEL approach to Voice and Influence into all LSCB Training Packages</li> </ul>
<p>4. Develop effective mechanisms for gathering collating and analysing and sharing of V&amp;I</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Use of the LSCB Voice of the Child Tools</li> <li>•Use of the LSCB V&amp;I measures</li> <li>•Consistent use of the LSCB V&amp;I measures</li> <li>•Evidencing V&amp;I within performance scorcards</li> <li>•Oversight and analysis by the V&amp;I strategic group including the identification of emerging themes and issues impacting on children and young people</li> </ul>
<p>5. Evaluate the impact of the strategy and the difference made, how have things improved for children and YP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Utilisation of the LSCB audit and quality assurance framework to measure the effectiveness of involvement work by agencies</li> <li>•Identify case studies highlighting the impact of children and young people’s voice</li> <li>•Quarterly agency performance scorecards including V&amp;I</li> <li>•Analysis of the impact of children’s V&amp;I measured through the LSCB quarterly performance report</li> </ul>

## Mechanism for Overseeing Youth Voice and Influence

North East Lincolnshire Youth Voice and Influence sub group will be responsible for the implementation, monitoring, effectiveness and reporting on the impact of the Voice and Influence strategy and priority actions.

Members will be responsible for using performance data to identify:

- Areas of good practice
- Areas in need of development
- Themes and messages emerging for children and young people
- Outcomes as a result of children and young people's involvement

### Accountability/Action Plan

All partner agencies and service providers are accountable to the LSCB for the strategy and its implementation in practice

The implementation of the strategy and identification of emerging themes will be overseen by the V&I strategic sub group. The V&I sub group will report directly to the LSCB Safeguarding Children's Board.

The action plans that emerge from this strategy will be subject to ongoing review and challenge by the NELSCB.

Outcomes and findings regarding the Voice of the Child and Influence including the use of designated tools will be overseen by the Quality Assurance and Performance subgroup