

North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Voice and Influence Strategy

2020-2022



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1) Introduction

This strategy sets out the vision and aspirations of the North East Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (NEL SCP) 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 Together for All threshold of Need (Universal, Targeted, Complex and Severe). 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 underpin other key strategies including

- Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy
- One System Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy
- Child Criminal Exploitation Strategy
- Youth Justice Plan
- Runaway and Missing from Home Protocol

- Corporate Parenting Strategy and Pledge
- Future in Mind Strategic Plan
- Online safety and Anti-bullying Strategy
- Talking, Listening and Working Together
- North East Lincolnshire Creating Strong Communities model

2) 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.

3) The Importance of Voice & Influence to North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NELSCP)

The NELSCP safeguarding arrangements as agreed by the three safeguarding partners determine how partner agencies co-operate to protect children in North East Lincolnshire. And enable local organisations to work together in a system where children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted

The SCP need to be assured through the Voice and Influence Strategy and action plan that services have a process for hearing the voice of the child, they are listening and improvements are made to service delivery and practice as a result.

A virtual Voice of the Child Task and Finish Group will be responsible for the implementation of the strategy action plan and being clear how this impacts on the SCP two outcomes.

- The safeguarding partnership is robust and effective
- Children are and feel safe

Young people will actively be involved in contributing to assurance visits to agencies as scrutineers aligned to the SCP Scrutiny and Assurance Framework. The NELSCP Annual report will evidence how the safeguarding arrangements include the voice of children and families as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

4) 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 Children Looked After 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 in relation to safeguarding:

5) 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. The strategy is aligned to the “Talking Listening Working Together, Community Engagement Strategy” and its commitment

The North East Lincolnshire commitment	
Talking	<p>We will be clear and honest about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> how you can get involved <input type="checkbox"/> what we are doing with what you’ve told us
Listening	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> hear your voice and what you have to say <input type="checkbox"/> use what you tell us to bring about change <input type="checkbox"/> be open to be challenged on the way we do things
Working Together	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> encourage all of our communities to take part <input type="checkbox"/> come to the places where you are <input type="checkbox"/> work together with you and others to make the best use of time and money
<p>Making Every Conversation Count</p> <p>Created by community members, and representatives from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector working as equal partners with the CCG and council and agreed as the way to do things in North East Lincolnshire</p>	

6) 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.

7) 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

8) Voice and Influence Standards

The standards below are localised and are based on the National Youth Agency Hear by Right Standards

Shared Values - What we believe is agreed and contributed to by young people and adults signing up to them (we already have these in the document)

Strategies – A plan is in place for everyone to understand how they can take part in sharing their views, being involved in the solutions and saying how the plan is working (we already have the strategies we link to in the document)

Structures – A range of opportunities are clear and understood as well as resourced to gain the views, understand what has been said.

Systems – There are clear ways to evidence the actions taken as a result of the views and experiences shared and difference this makes to people and services.

Staff – staff believe that it is a good idea for children and young people to be heard and influence change, young people are employed by the organisation and are involved in deciding who works for the organisation.

Skills and knowledge – ensure that there are ways for young people, staff and decision makers to develop their own skills and knowledge and sharing their skills and knowledge with others

Style of leadership – leaders within our organisation get involved with and have various ways of hearing the voice of children and young people and ensure it influences change that makes a difference to children and young people and the services they use.

9) Voice and Influence Measures

It is important to measure the impact that the child's voice has on service delivery and development. Each service will have different measures, dependent on the type of engagement activities that are happening. An annual report will capture the range of Each service will be able to report on the

% of children's views that resulted in a positive change (this would measure when a young person has given a view that indicates a change is required)

Ultimately, the SCP want to receive assurances that all agencies have the voice of the child at the heart of all they do. Therefore, an additional measure is:

% of SCP agencies reporting that children's views have made positive changes

A summary of all responses and any identified themes will be collated and reported bi-annually by all services via the SCP 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.

10) Mechanism for Overseeing Voice and Influence

North East Lincolnshire Voice and Influence Task and Finish 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

11) Accountability/Action Plan

All partner agencies and service providers are accountable to the SCP 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 Task and Finish group. The V&I Task and Finish Group will report directly to the SCP

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

Outcomes and findings regarding the Voice and influence of the Child including the use of designated tools will be overseen by the Improving Practice Group and Children's Safeguarding Assurance Group .