



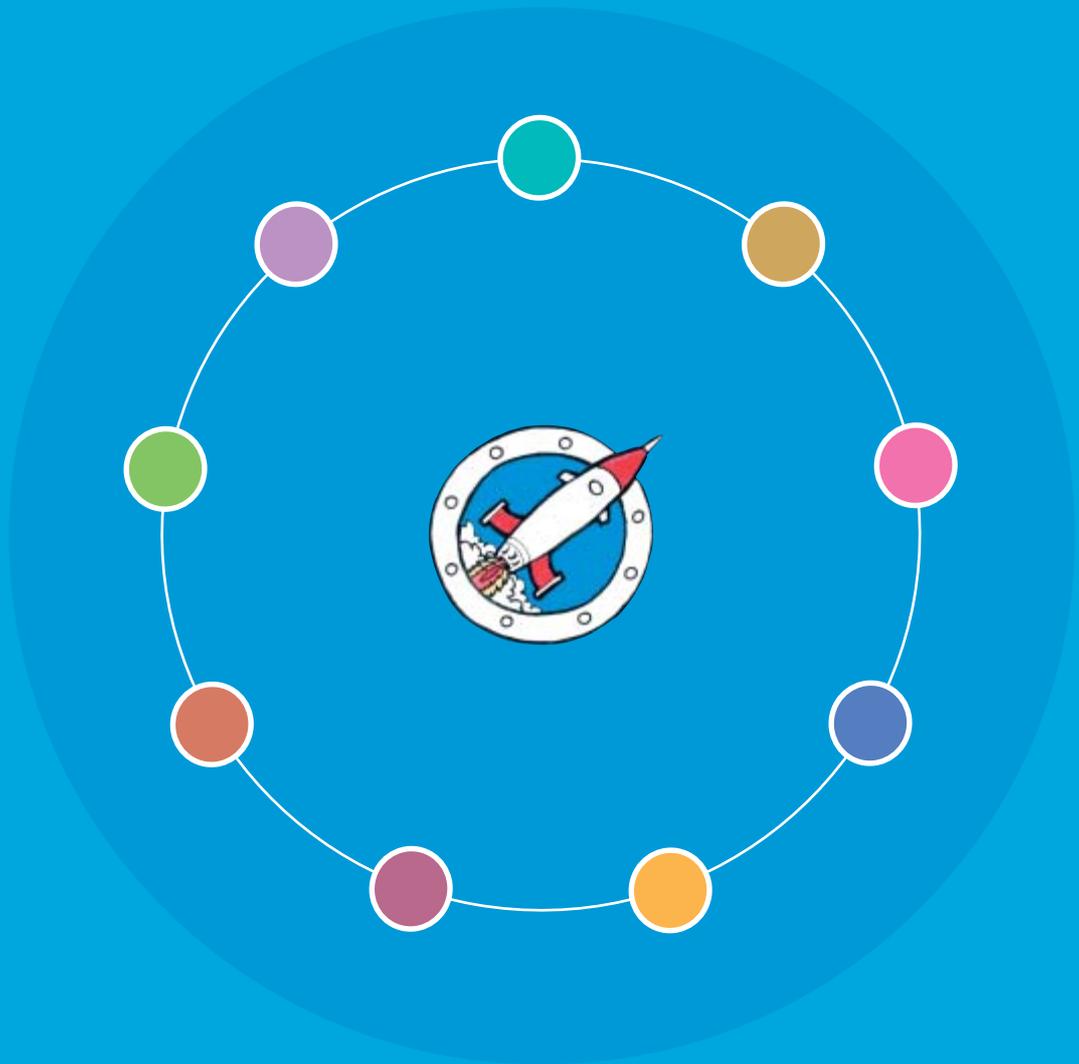
## GUIDES TO INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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### PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH JUSTICE



changing lives  
reducing crime



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## ? What will this guide tell me?

This guide aims to assist youth offending teams (YOTs) and others who are interested in children and young people's participation in the youth justice system to think about how the principle of participation as described in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) should inform their work with children and young people. The objectives of the guide are to:

- give practitioners information about participation and what it means within a youth justice context
- provide information about how practice might be developed
- provide examples of good practice
- signpost resources and sources of help and information.

This document is a summarised version of a fuller report produced by Nacro Cymru, called *The Participation of Youth Justice and Participation in Wales*, which can be obtained from Nacro's website [www.nacro.org.uk](http://www.nacro.org.uk) and from the Participation Workers Network for Wales [www.participationworkerswales.org.uk/participation](http://www.participationworkerswales.org.uk/participation)

## ? Why is it important to promote children and young people's participation in the context of youth justice?

All children and young people in Wales have a right to express their opinions and be respected, for their opinion to have an effect and to take part in decision-making at all levels. This right is enshrined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that:

***'Children have a right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.'***

Full and meaningful participation by children and young people helps them to be active citizens and to develop skills, experience and self-confidence as well as gain access to opportunities. Providing opportunities for children and young people to participate fully in this way also has benefits for organisations and individuals by helping to develop more effective policies and services for children and young people in Wales.

(See Blast Off! Guide 1- Introduction to Participation for more information)



Whilst the first part of Article 12 relates to the general right of children and young people to express their views in matters affecting them, it continues with specific relevance to the criminal justice system:

***'For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial or administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.'***

The right to be heard is fundamental to children and young people's best interests and to being dealt with fairly in criminal justice proceedings at all stages from the point of arrest onwards and when engaging with YOTs.

The approach outlined in this guide emphasises that in order for children and young people to participate in the youth justice context it may require changes in the way an organisation works as well as the encouragement of children and young people to engage with what is on offer. *The National Children and Young People's Participation Standards* are a tool that YOTs can use to assess their processes of participation to help achieve a meaningful participatory experience for children and young people. (Please see Appendix 1 of Nacro Cymru's report *Young Justice and Participation in Wales* for examples of self-assessments completed by YOTs against the *National Children and Young People's Participation Standards*).

(For more information about the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards see [www.participationworkerswales.org.uk/participation](http://www.participationworkerswales.org.uk/participation) and also Blast Off Guide 8: Monitoring, Evaluation and Audit)



## What are the policies and expectations regarding the participation of young people in a youth justice context?

- The *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy*<sup>1</sup> indicates that:

***'young people should have the opportunity to participate in decision making on all matters that affect them'***

The accompanying delivery plan for 2009-11<sup>2</sup> gives a commitment to working with the Children's Commissioner for Wales to 'mainstream consultation with, and the participation of, children and young people in the youth justice system' and a project group has been established to take this work forward.

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2004) *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy* Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Assembly Government and Youth Justice Board (2009) *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy: Delivery Plan 2009-11* London: Youth Justice Board.



- Youth Justice Board guidance

The Youth Justice Board has developed guidance called key elements of effective practice (KEEP), which describe the features of effective services. Each of the KEEPs contains a section on individual needs that relates to promoting the engagement of children and young people to ensure their individual requirements are taken into account, their views valued, and their opinions listened to. The KEEP relating to engaging young people who offend<sup>3</sup> identifies that:

***'Techniques for engaging young people who offend are concerned with the question of how to gain young people's interest and willing participation in interventions or programme of interventions intended to prevent or reduce offending'.<sup>4</sup>***

The KEEP relating to assessment, planning interventions and supervision<sup>5</sup> also makes reference to the importance of actively engaging young people in these processes and how that might be done.

YOTs are required to produce an annual youth justice plan in which they are asked to describe how they seek feedback from children and young people about the quality of services received and how they use this to inform service development and improvement.

- HMI Probation joint YOT inspections

The joint YOT inspection criteria require ongoing and evidenced engagement and involvement of young people and their parents/carers in assessment and intervention planning processes. Inspections have found good evidence of this in YOTs:

- having information leaflets in a range of languages that explain orders and programmes (websites can also perform this function)
- encouraging young people to complete 'What do you think?' and 'Over to you' self assessment forms and using them to influence supervision plans
- asking young people to complete feedback forms following programme sessions
- undertaking consultations and research with young people
- having a culture of encouraging children and young people to participate in the development of services
- having a culture of encouraging children and young people to participate in the development of services.

<sup>3</sup> Mason P and Prior D (2008) *Engaging Young people who Offend Source Document* London: Youth Justice Board

<sup>4</sup> For the full definition go to the document which can be found at <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/Publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=386&eP=>

<sup>5</sup> YJB (2008) *Assessment, Planning Interventions and Supervision Source Document* London: Youth Justice Board



## What are the challenges to promoting participation in a youth justice context?

Young people involved with YOTs are usually engaged with them because of compulsory requirements, although involvement can be voluntary if referred through preventative routes or subject to final warnings.

The population of young people YOTs work with is not static and the length of the court orders determines the level and duration of contact required. This presents a number of potential difficulties with regard to participation:

- In a significant majority of instances there are rules and boundaries to observe that are non-negotiable, for example requirements under the *National Standards for Youth Justice Services*. These determine some of the main components of service delivery and the timescales within which they need to be achieved by.
- For those subject to statutory orders, reporting requirements, the level of contact with the YOT and the components of a supervision/intervention plan are often non-negotiable.
- One of the conditions of engagement with the criminal justice system is compliance, which can affect choice and what young people may or may not want or be able to do.

Young people involved with YOTs may also be from 'disadvantaged or vulnerable' backgrounds and additional barriers to participation may be felt by them because they:

- have experienced difficulties in their lives and may therefore lack the confidence to take part
- may be less motivated if their views have not been taken into account in the past
- may mistrust the intentions of adults
- have been subject to negative assumptions and stereotypes.

(See Blast Off Guide 7: Ensuring Inclusion for more information)

The fact that YOTs deal with diverse populations (voluntary, statutory and those whose contact is of different durations) suggests that when considering the development of participation strategies there needs to be clarity on what young people can or cannot contribute to and recognition that there will be variances within the different groups YOTs are dealing with. These factors should not be a barrier to developing participatory practice but indicates consideration should be given to how it can be most effectively achieved.



## What are the benefits of young people participating in a youth justice context?

The practice of participation can be used to:

- ensure that children and young people understand the processes and procedures they are involved in whether in the police station, court, whilst on a court order or in custody
- encourage children and young people to play a part in planning the interventions they are going to be subject to and to share their views on what may or may not work for them and so be relevant in helping to reduce and prevent re-offending
- promote engagement and compliance by involving and consulting with children and young people with regard to the decisions and outcomes that will affect them
- help children and young people to achieve their potential, gain confidence and self-esteem
- provide children and young people with the opportunity to give feedback about the interventions and services they have received, what they perceive to be a good quality service and discussion of any difficulties experienced.

(See Blast Off Guide 2: Making the Case for more information)

### Nuts & Bolts: Process and Methods

In developing a participatory approach consideration needs to be given to the contributions children and young people can make.



This could be achieved through the following:

- A.** ensuring there is the right to be heard in **processes and procedures** that affect children and young people, as intended in Article 12 of the UNCRC.
- B.** asking children and young people to provide feedback about the provision they have received, **listening to and incorporating their views** into reviews of the service and how it might develop.
- C.** identifying **opportunities and activities** that can assist in developing an organisational culture of involving young people in the wider work of the YOT.



## A. Processes and Procedures

There are a number of mechanisms and ways in which children and young people involved in the criminal justice system can be supported, provided with information or consulted about and involved in what is going to happen to them at each stage, from the point of arrest onwards. This can help them to:

- understand processes and procedures
- contribute views and ideas
- understand consequences and outcomes
- be helped to make informed choices.

### 1. In the police station

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 provides a range of safeguards for suspects during arrest, detention and questioning in the police station.

Additional protection exists for young people aged 10 to 16 years of age and for vulnerable 17 year olds as an 'appropriate adult' is required to be present with them during questioning. The role of the appropriate adult is to ensure the police interview is carried out fairly and properly and to facilitate communication between the police and young person to enable them to comprehend and contribute to the investigation.

Nacro has produced a good practice guide, *Acting as an Appropriate Adult*<sup>6</sup>, which sets out how the rights of children and young people should be safeguarded in the police station.

Additionally, the Children's Legal Centre and National Appropriate Adult Network have produced *At the Police Station: Children and Young People's Rights*, which sets out what to expect at the police station. This is available from [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com).

### 2. Appearing in court

Children and young people should be provided with information when they are appearing in court about:

- general court proceedings
- orders and requirements
- sources of support
- partner agency information
- etiquette and behaviour.

<sup>6</sup> The guide can be obtained from <http://www.nacro.org.uk/publications/youthcrime.htm>



This should be supplemented with written information, which should also be available in their language of choice (English, Welsh or other). YOT staff will be the first point of contact for young people made subject to bail programmes or court orders and should advise them of the requirements of the programme or order, the consequences of non-compliance and the date, time and location of the first appointment with the YOT.

The Youth Justice Board have produced *Making it Count in Court*, which is a video and handbook that aims to assist YOT practitioners to work effectively in court. It can be obtained from [www.yjb.gov.uk](http://www.yjb.gov.uk)

### ***3. Understanding court processes***

All aspects of court processes should take into account the need for interpreters and that written information is provided in language of choice (English, Welsh or other). Efforts should be made to ensure that young people are able to contribute to and engage in the processes that are affecting them, taking into account their age, maturity and levels of comprehension.

Nacro's good practice guide *Working in the Courts*<sup>7</sup> identifies that engagement with young people in the court setting should be to assist them to understand the situation they are in, what the potential outcomes are and, the implications of bail and remand hearings and the impact of custodial remands or sentences if imposed.

HM Courts Services have produced a leaflet '*You have to go to court, what do you do?*'<sup>8</sup> These have been distributed to police stations, YOTs, youth, magistrates and crown courts.

### ***4. Making decisions in court***

When making remand or sentencing decisions about them, courts should ensure that the child or young person's welfare is a paramount consideration and within the context of the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts take into account and give consideration to their wishes and feelings.

<sup>7</sup> A copy of the guide can be obtained from <http://www.nacro.org.uk/publications/youthcrime.htm>

<sup>8</sup> A copy can be obtained from <http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk>



### 5. Information about orders and interventions

Providing young people (and their parents/carers with information), about programmes, and orders can help them to understand what is expected of them.

Such information should set out expectations in terms of:

- standards of behaviour
- the requirements of engagement with the YOT
- the importance of attending appointments
- the consequences of non-compliance.

Some YOTs also use contracts and agreements that young people are asked to sign up to reinforce these requirements.

### 6. Interviews

A significant element of engaging with children and young people in the youth justice system requires that interviews are undertaken with them and their families. This is necessary when compiling reports for court, referral order panels, *Asset and Onset* assessments and planning and progress reviews in the community and custody.

Interviews provide a valuable opportunity to find out about the child or young person and to consult with them about what is proposed. They should be conducted in language that children and young people and their families can understand and be culturally relevant. Techniques that are likely to promote engagement are asking neutral and open-ended questions, exploring feelings as well as factual information, active listening, reflecting and feeding back.

### 7. Assessments

Assessments form the basis for planning interventions that will be undertaken with children and young people. YOTs use standard assessments when identifying individual the factors that contribute to risk factors or support protective factors. *Asset* is used for young people on statutory orders and *Onset* for young people with whom the YOT is working in a preventative capacity.

*Asset and Onset* should not be used as interview schedules, where practitioners simply read out a list of questions as such an approach will make it difficult to engage with children and young people. The focus should be on engaging and motivating children and young people to share their experiences and feelings and to use these assessment tools as a framework for gathering information so that a good insight into the individual is gained. This will allow practitioners to identify interventions that might work best for the young person in order to prevent and reduce their offending behaviour. Young people's perceptions add value to the professional assessment.



## 8. Pre Sentence Reports

The Nacro good practice guide to *Pre Sentence Reports for Young People*<sup>9</sup> provides advice and information on using information conveyed by the young person and their family to produce good quality reports. Young people (and their parent/carers) should be provided with a copy and be encouraged to comment on any aspect they are not happy with. Young people should also be clear about:

- the purpose of the pre sentence report
- the expectations and requirements of any proposals contained in it
- the consequences of not complying with the proposals being made.

## 9. Referral Orders

The Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 (section 23(5)) requires referral order panels to produce a written record of the programme agreed by the child or young person in a language capable of being readily understood, or explained, to them.

The informal nature of the referral order panels is noted to promote discussion and consideration about how best to respond to needs, with children and young people being encouraged to help decide what is contained in their contracts, be given the opportunity to tell their story and be listened to.

The Nacro good practice guide, *The Referral Order*<sup>10</sup> has a useful checklist for panel meetings and stresses the need to ensure that all information given to children and young people is understood and that they are encouraged to take part in discussions.

## 10. Planning interventions

Involving young people when planning interventions should take account of what they feel about what might work best for them as well as other commitments they have.

Some interventions will have to be compulsory when there is a close association between a particular factor and the assessed risk of re-offending or when it is a specified component of bail or remand conditions or a court order. However there is still scope to determine where choice can be exercised, so that the planning process becomes a more active than passive experience.

<sup>9</sup> A copy of the guide can be obtained from <http://www.nacro.org.uk/publications/youthcrime.htm>

<sup>10</sup> The guide can be obtained from <http://www.nacro.org.uk/publications/youthcrime.htm>



Also, of importance when developing an individualised and inclusive approach is using appropriate resources and approaches that can help young people to:

- set their own goals
- think about the consequences of their actions
- plan their own futures.

Materials should be age appropriate and take into account learning styles, abilities and diversity. Many YOTs also provide young people with the opportunity to gain accredited qualifications, such as Open College Network courses, which make available a record of achievement. Opportunities can also be offered within programmes to participate in activities that are designed to develop self-confidence, self esteem and provide the motivation to try new and different things.

### ***11. Restorative justice***

Restorative justice processes aim to help children and young people to assume responsibility for their conduct and to agree actions that may make amends to individual victims or the community. Reparative activity offers wide scope for participative activity in terms of the restorative options that could be available and tailored to individual circumstances. Young people should be provided with good information, support and encouragement about restorative justice options in order for them to make an informed choice about whether to meet identified victims or to take part in other forms of reparation. YOTs can also consider wider forms of community engagement such as involving young people in charitable work.

### ***12. Information for young people entering and leaving custodial facilities***

Providing young people with information about what to expect when they enter custody is important, so that they are aware of what is happening to them and where they are going.



### Case Study - Developing documents with young people

The Children and Young People's Strategy Division of the Assembly Government commissioned Dynamix to work with young people in Hillside Secure Children's Home and Parc young offender institution (YOI) to develop information for young people entering these establishments. They produced *'Hillside Inside'* and *'Welcome to Parc'*. The young people were given training on consultation and producing young person friendly documents. They worked with Dynamix and an artist to develop the wording, the artwork and the overall style of the booklets, both of which are also available bilingually. Copies are given to all young people on entering Hillside and Parc. Barnardo's Cymru Cyfle project has also developed a *'Sion gets it right – a young person's guide to life in custody'* for those entering Stoke Heath YOI.

The youth-justice-trust has produced a short booklet for those leaving custodial establishment, *'A guide to leaving custody/secure accommodation'*. It can be downloaded from their website [www.youth-justice-trust.org.uk/news/leaving-secure-guide](http://www.youth-justice-trust.org.uk/news/leaving-secure-guide) and may be of assistance in planning for resettlement.

### 13. Committed to Rights

*Committed to Rights* is a set of materials written to assist youth justice practitioners to take a rights based and participatory approach when working with children and young people. Section three contains a series of self audit checklists that can be used to ensure that young people have been as involved as possible in decisions affecting them before sentence, in court and in the planning of sentences and their administration.

The full set of materials that contain other useful practice information can be downloaded from <http://www1.barnardos.org.uk/committedtorights/resources.html>



## **B. Listening to and incorporating their views**

Providing young people with an opportunity to contribute their views and ideas is an important component of participatory practice. This should involve asking children and young people about the progress they have made on a particular order or intervention, the service they have received from the YOT or other matters that may be of relevance or importance within the youth justice context. Methods through which views can be obtained are:

### ***1. Self assessment materials***

'*What do you think*' (which accompanies *Asset*) and '*Over to You*' (which accompanies *Onset*) are to be used alongside practitioners' assessments of risk and protective factors. They generally completed at the start and end of orders or contact with the YOT and are used to measure the progress young people have made on the interventions and programmes they have taken part in

They are to be used to capture the young person's perspective, by:

- giving them an opportunity to provide their views
- ensuring that assessments take them into account
- highlighting issues that might not otherwise be apparent
- comparing the young person's views with the professional assessment
- involving young people in the assessment process and the production of an individualised intervention plan
- encouraging reflection and to assist planning for the future.

Practitioners should invite children and young people to complete these self-assessments at the start and end of orders or programmes and provide any necessary assistance to do this.

### ***2. Complaints procedures***

The Children Act 1989 contains provisions about children generally and about those in the care of the local authority specifically. Children and young people have a right to complain about services they have received from social services. A duty is also placed on local authorities to ascertain the wishes and feelings of children and to take them into consideration before making a decision that will affect them.

When initially engaging with the YOT, young people should be informed that there is a complaints procedure and how to make a complaint if they are unhappy.



Children and young people under 18 years of age have the right to have access to an independent advocate when making a complaint. The main independent advocacy provider in Wales is Tros Gynnal – [www.trosgynnal.org.uk](http://www.trosgynnal.org.uk)

The Children's Commissioner's office in Wales offers advice and support to young people (and adults) who may have exhausted other options. For more information go to [www.childcom.org.uk](http://www.childcom.org.uk)

### 3. Reviews

Formal reviews should occur at regular intervals to monitor young people's progress whilst on a statutory order in the community or in custody.

Reviews should involve young people and incorporate the views of their families and relevant agencies and:

- allow the young person the opportunity to reflect on their progress and be congratulated if there have been positive developments
- let the young person discuss any areas of difficulty
- encourage the young person to contribute their views
- engage the young person in the process and find ways of making this a meaningful experience for them.

### 4. Consulting with young people

*What Do You Think* and *Over to You* were designed to ask young people about themselves and their lifestyle in relation to crime and the factors that might be influencing how they behave. The questionnaire on the following page, which has been based on the *National Children and Young People's Standards for Wales*, could be used to ask young people specifically about their experiences of engagement with the YOT.



Experience of the service	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
I knew why I was attending the YOT				
I knew what the YOT was helping me with				
I was asked for my views				
Feedback was given back to me about my views.				
I was asked about and involved in my plan				
I felt that staff helped me				
I felt comfortable with my worker				
I felt listened to and understood				
I was encouraged to talk about my life and problems				
The YOT was a safe and positive place to be				
I know what would happen if I did not attend my appointments				
What was the most positive thing about your contact with the YOT?				
What did we not get right and why?				
How can we improve?				
How can young people be involved in what the YOT does?				



## 5. Online Tools

Feedback from young people can be sought by other means for example by using a computer-assisted interview questionnaire. One such example is Viewpoint, which has the capacity to use cartoon graphics and spoken questions.

A number of YOTs in Wales use Viewpoint to find out young people's views about different things. There are a number of different versions of Viewpoint that include versions of *Over to You* and *What Do You Think* as well as questionnaires relating to preparing for a referral order panel, detention and training order reviews and substance misuse. Viewpoint can also be used to ask questions about the quality of service received from the YOT and the practices of the team, for example whether young people knew why they had to come to the YOT, whether supervision plans discussed with them, what were they helped with, whether they felt they were treated fairly and what had improved for them? For more information about Viewpoint go to [www.vptorg.co.uk](http://www.vptorg.co.uk).



### Case Study - Finding out views

Some YOTs such as Bridgend and Wrexham ask young people to work through Viewpoint with a volunteer, to encourage frank and honest responses about their experiences, others use support workers or other practitioners who have not been involved in the case. Newport ask young people to feedback their views at the end of the referral order panel experience, as well as those on other court orders. A number of YOTs collate the information provided and disseminate it to all case holders. For example Blaneau Gwent Caerphilly have a member of staff who is responsible for gathering together the feedback provided and producing a report for the management team. The team are starting to consider how they can effectively feedback the information provided to young people.

Other approaches have included using outcome questionnaires and postal surveys to canvass young people's views.



## 6. Research involving young people

Research involving young people is a useful tool for discovering their attitudes on various matters relating to youth justice.



### Case Study - Research with Young People

Cardiff Youth Offending Service undertook a research study that was conducted by external consultants, SALFRAN in 2008 to find out more about the views of young women, young carers and young people from black minority ethnic groups about a variety of topics. This was called the Realisation project.

The research asked questions about young people's experiences of stop and search, being arrested and held in custody and of being in court. Young people were also asked about their experiences of being a victim and how they felt about their engagement with the youth offending service.

The findings indicated that young people were generally unaware of their rights in relation to stop and search or when held at the police station, and some indicated they had not been treated as well as they felt they could have been in both processes. Those who had experienced victimisation were reluctant to report their experiences.

The majority of those surveyed indicated that their involvement with the Cardiff Youth Offending Service had been positive. They felt helped and supported by their caseworkers, (but indicated they would like to see improvements to the reception area of the building). The youth offending service has since taken forward a number of the recommendations and suggestions made by this group of young people.



## C. Opportunities and activities

Whilst participation in the youth justice system is primarily about ensuring that children and young people are able to engage in the processes they are subject to, other activities can be used to ensure they are able to take part more widely in decisions that affect their lives. These might include:

### 1. *Young People taking on an advisory role*

Young people can work with YOTs in an advisory capacity, for example, by being asked to design leaflets and information and to comment on its content to ensure that it is understandable from their perspective. YOTs may wish to consider auditing the existing written information and leaflets they give to young people to establish whether it would be beneficial for these materials to be scrutinised by them. Seeking young people's advice is also something YOTs could incorporate into design processes when any new information is produced.



#### **Case Study - Young people advising on information design and content**

Young people working with Gwynedd Mon youth justice service assisted in the revision of a leaflet about information sharing. The young people were attending a Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and undertook the work as part of their Open College Network course. They designed the appearance of the leaflet and provided feedback about the language used and how understandable it was. The leaflet, *Who Knows What About Me*, explains what information is held about individuals, how it is kept confidential and why it might be shared with other agencies. It also explains young people's rights in terms of data protection and how they can access the information held about them.



## 2. Representation on youth forums

Involvement and representation at youth forums provide the opportunity for young people to become involved in activities in an advisory capacity. Children and young people's partnerships should have arrangements in place locally for children and young people to elect representatives to the three Funky Dragon Grand Council seats for each area (statutory sector, voluntary sector and schools councils). These include the arrangements for special interest groups that include young people in the youth justice system.

Other ways that young people can be asked to contribute in an advisory capacity apart from youth forums are through:

- a children and young peoples' group that operates as a parallel structure to an adult led decision making body
- offering committee places for children and young people on an adult led assembly
- advisory groups, where children and young people direct and inform on a particular piece of work.



### Case Studies – Involvement in local partnerships

Several YOT in Wales have good links with local authority partnerships in which participation is a theme, whether through children's partnerships or involvement in groups that are seeking to obtain the views of young people in planning processes. For example in Merthyr groups of young people from both the YOT and youth inclusion programmes (YIP) have for several years been involved in local decision making. An early project was the establishment of a young person's advisory group, which was set up to give grants to groups of children and young people in the area. Young people decided on the themes for funding and whom to award the grants to. YOT staff supported young people in this process. More recently, participation has been identified as one of the key priority areas in Merthyr Tydfil *Children's Plan*. Out of this, two youth apprenticeships and a youth major have been appointed, who will work with the local authority to set up reference groups for young people to share their views about issues that are of important to them.



### 3. Recruitment of Staff

Involving young people in the recruitment of staff is another way that children and young people's views and contributions can be heard and provides the opportunity to assess how candidates interact with them.



#### Case Study - Recruitment of Staff

Bridgend YOT has involved young people in recruitment processes on two occasions: in the recruitment of an education, training and employment worker and Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) support worker. The YOT ensured that the young person taking part had some experience of the work the staff member was being recruited for. The interview panel had six questions, one of which the young person had helped to formulate and then asked. The young people were fully involved throughout the recruitment process and in the deliberations about whom to appoint.

A useful resource in this respect is *The Recruitment Pack* produced by the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights and Save the Children. It offers practical experience for those wishing to involve young people in recruitment processes. It can be found at <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/the-recruitment-pack.pdf>. The pack contains information about the entire recruitment process and engaging young people in it, from the initial planning stages through to the induction of new workers.

### 4. Other participative activity

There are a number of other activities that YOT in Wales have involved young people in, that include:

- choosing a charity for the YOT to support
- taking part in fundraising events as part of reparative activity
- designing art work and posters for the YOT
- being involved in planning and contributing to and speaking at conferences and events.



The following are other examples of some of the activity that young people have been engaged in:



### **Case study – Speaking from experience**

Several YOTs have involved young people in organising and delivering events, notably to showcase the work of their team and to celebrate and recognise the progress young people have made. Young female offenders from the Monmouthshire and Torfaen areas developed a dance routine to the music '*I Believe I Can*', which focused on the positive way in which the girls were moving forward with their lives and gaining confidence, self esteem and self worth. The dance routine was performed at an event held in conjunction with the other youth offending services from Gwent and also Gwent ISSP, whose main aim was to draw attention to the work ISSPs undertake.



### **Case study – Taking part in conferences/events**

Encouraging and supporting young people to attend events organised by other organisations is another element of participatory practice. For example young people from Swansea Youth Offending Service took part in a substance misuse conference. They were involved in a group that organised the theme for a workshop and then planned, developed and delivered material with the support of YOT staff. Following the success of the workshop they were invited to attend a community safety partnership meeting to provide feedback on the issues that young people who had attended the conference raised.



### **Case study – Designing how a service or activity should be delivered**

Children and young people engaged with Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service's YIP help to identify what activities should be included in the Splash Cymru programmes. The youth inclusion project manager consults with young people a month before the programme is due to start and encourages them to put together wish lists of activities they might like to take part in. These are voted on and the most popular activities are then included in programmes. The process has been helpful in highlighting pursuits that would otherwise not have been considered.

## ***7. Developing Skills***

The Participation Unit at Save the Children has developed a young people-led training team called Young People Say that is funded to deliver training to adults across Wales. The Young People Say' project was set up by a young person in order to offer young people aged 16 to 21 a chance to influence children and young people's participation across Wales. For more information contact Anna Skeels at the participation unit on 02920 396 838, or e-mail, [participationunit@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:participationunit@savethechildren.org.uk)

### **Top Tips**

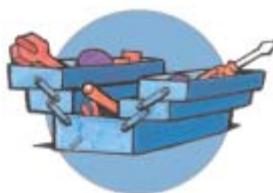
YOTs should ensure that:

- Young people understand the processes and procedures they are subject to in the criminal justice system, from the point of arrest onwards.
- Young people are given information verbally and in writing and in a manner they can comprehend.
- Young people are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas and to acknowledge they have been listened to.
- Young people can make informed choices.
- Young people are asked for their views of the service and interventions they have received.
- Young people are aware they can talk to someone or make a complaint if they are unhappy about something.



Young people can:

- Contribute to the design and content of leaflets and information given to them.
- Check written information for comprehension and understanding.
- Take part in recruitment processes and panels.
- Provide views about activities the YOT is undertaking.
- Design a service or activity the YOT is to provide.
- Represent the YOT on a youth forum.
- Participate in an event or conference the YOT has organised.



## RESOURCES

### **Blast off! Good practice guides to increasing participation of children and young people**

The Participation Unit on behalf of the Children and Young People's Participation Consortium for Wales has developed the *Blast Off* series of guides. They are a set of good practice guides based on the experiences of participation workers in Wales. The topics range from introducing participation to a more focused view of different aspects of it. They can be obtained from [www.participationworkerswales.org.uk/participation](http://www.participationworkerswales.org.uk/participation)

### **Participation, Spice it Up! Practical tools for engaging children and young people in planning and consultations**

This manual by Carol Shepherd, Phil Treseder and Dynamix Ltd provides more than 40 tried and tested activities and games to get children and young people involved in decision-making processes. It can be downloaded at [www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54\\_2346.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_2346.htm)

### **Breathing Fire Into Participation**

This guide by Trudy Aspinall and Cath Larkins was produced for the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales (Funky Dragon). It is intended to help develop the effective participation of children and young people in decision making in Wales. See [www.funkydragon.org.uk](http://www.funkydragon.org.uk)

### **Evaluating Participation Work: The toolkit**

This toolkit by Amanda Mainey has been developed by Participation Works to help organisations evaluate participatory work with young people. The toolkit can be downloaded at [www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk)



## Training for professionals

### Dynamix

Dynamix provides a range of training for professionals on different aspects of working with young people in a participatory way. They deliver 'off the shelf' training as well as designing training to fit particular needs. See [www.dynamix.ltd.uk](http://www.dynamix.ltd.uk) for more information.

### Participation Cymru

Participation Cymru is a partnership of public and third sector organisations that is hosted by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and supported by an advisory panel that provides advice and guidance on strategic development. It provides advice, training, support information and policy direction on participatory approaches to citizen engagement. See [www.participationcymru.org.uk](http://www.participationcymru.org.uk)