

Report to the Warwickshire Public Service Board

22nd September 2008

“Hear by Right”

**Report of the Lead Officer within Children Young People and Families for
Involving Children and Young People in Decisions**

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Board:

1. and its member organisations adopt Hear by Right (or Warwickshire Award for Involvement for voluntary sector organisations) as the approved nationally recognised indicator to demonstrate young people’s involvement in decision making.
2. supports the proposal for establishing young people’s panels to work alongside new locality forums

1. Introduction and context

- 1.1 “Hear by Right” is a tried and tested standards framework for organisations across the statutory and Third sectors to assess and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people (11+ years old) in decision-making processes around services affecting them. It is recognised by the LGA and Government departments as an excellent tool to map and then plan the development of young people’s involvement in local decision making. A simple overview of Hear by Right, a young person’s version, is attached as an Appendix
- 1.2 "Participatory Budgeting: a draft national strategy – Giving more people a say in local spending" is a Government consultation paper (consultation ended 10th June) exploring how to give local people a real say in budget setting by 2012. The paper makes reference to the “Duty to Involve” coming into force in 2009 (Section 138, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) and there is specific reference to the role of Youth Services and the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds. In Warwickshire these are excellent examples of young people’s active involvement in decision making.
- 1.3 Linked to the above, new guidance on the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds has been published, replacing previous guidance issued in March 2006. It sets out the policy context and aims, strategic management

and monitoring arrangements for the funds, local authority funding allocations and includes monitoring templates. In respect to this discussion it also suggests that local authorities use the Hear by Right standards to review their young people engagement strategies.

- 1.4 “Aiming High for Young People: A 10 year strategy for Positive Activities” (March 2008) contains specific reference “that young people are actively shaping decisions on 25% of funds devoted to Positive Activities” by 2018.
- 1.5 The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a cross-party working group to ‘scrutinise’ Youth Participation and the achievement of Hear by Right. Councillors Dill-Russell, King and Shilton were nominated to form the Working Group and have held several meetings with officers. The Working Group has been monitoring progress against the actions in the plan presented to the Committee in December 2006 and, more recently, the “Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn” Children’s Trust participation strategy. The realities of, and mechanisms for, involving children and young people have been central to those discussions.
- 1.6 In Warwickshire, the Children and Young People’s Plan contains a specific target, agreed by the Children and Young People’s Partnership, of achieving the Hear by Right *Established Standard* (i.e. the mid Standard) by 2010. The Children and Young People block of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) contains the same target though there is no target for other aspects of the LAA or for Warwickshire County Council itself.
- 1.7 This situation could be considered to be against the principles of a single Authority and its partners working towards a common goal – the full inclusion of the community and service users, including young people, in influencing decisions. The Working Group was of the view that Warwickshire County Council should lead by example and set out a clear commitment to achieving the Hear by Right Standard.
- 1.8 Hear by Right is considered too complex for small voluntary sector organisations resulting in the nationally acclaimed “Warwickshire Award for Involvement” (WAI) being developed initially by Children Fund, the Youth and Community Service and WCVYS. The Youth and Community Service currently facilitates WAI with a training programme and support provided through a designated part-time worker. The role of WAI has been clarified as the appropriate tool that would enable smaller voluntary sector providers to demonstrate good practice and their commitment to involving children and young people in decision making.
- 1.9 With the development of locality planning and community forums, the Scrutiny Working Group has suggested that there is a good opportunity to revise current mechanisms for involving young people via the establishment of young people’s panels to work alongside and with the proposed community forums. To progress such a model, it would be advantageous if the partners involved with the LAA worked towards the same nationally recognised standard to demonstrate their commitment to genuine involvement of young

people. Hear by Right is considered to be the appropriate tool for this. To progress this issue, the Working Group is of the view that the Public Service Board should be used as the mechanism to progress a partnership commitment to Hear by Right and to establishing youth locality forums.

2. Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8th July 2008

2.1 The following recommendations were unanimously agreed:

- That the Committee considers requesting that Cabinet adopt a target of Warwickshire County Council achieving Established Standard against “Hear by Right” by 2011.
- That the Committee supports a recommendation that the Public Service Board and its member organisations adopt Hear by Right (or Warwickshire Award for Involvement for voluntary sector organisations) as the approved nationally recognised indicator to demonstrate young people’s involvement in decision making.
- That the Committee supports the proposal for establishing young people’s panels to work alongside new locality forums and asks the Public Service Board to consider progressing this issue

3. Recommendations to the Board

3.1 The purpose of this report is to seek support from all LAA partners to assess their involvement of Children and Young People against a nationally recognised standard, develop their practice and to support a consistent county wide framework for the involvement of young people in general issues that may affect them.

3.2 The following recommendations are therefore presented for approval:

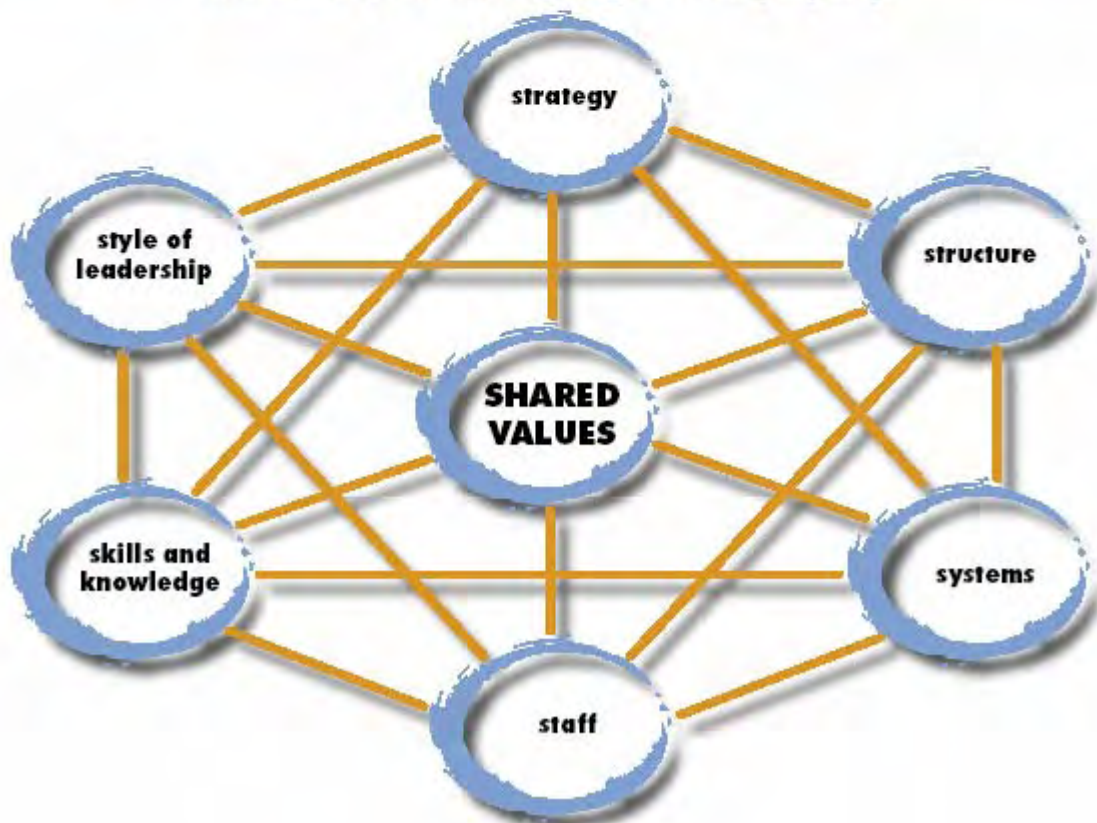
- That the Board: and its member organisations adopt Hear by Right (or Warwickshire Award for Involvement for voluntary sector organisations) as the approved nationally recognised indicator to demonstrate young people’s involvement in decision making.
- That the Board supports the proposal for establishing young people’s panels to work alongside new locality forums

Peter Hatcher
County Youth and Community Officer

Building the active involvement of children and young people



Is like building a house. Everything has to be done right and come together. It's no good having big fancy ideas and plans, but not having the skills to build soundly. And there's no point having the skills if there's no plan that's going to work properly.



We're here to stay. We have a right to take part in building our lives here and now and for the future. We are not pawns in an adult game. There are so many reasons why we need to be involved in decisions that are about us:

We are here – we're not invisible

We want to be involved – we've got loads to offer

We live here too – and we use lots of services like schools, health, parks and leisure, roads and transport ...

Loads of decisions affect us

We have a right to be involved and taken seriously

Everyone benefits from us having a say and getting involved:

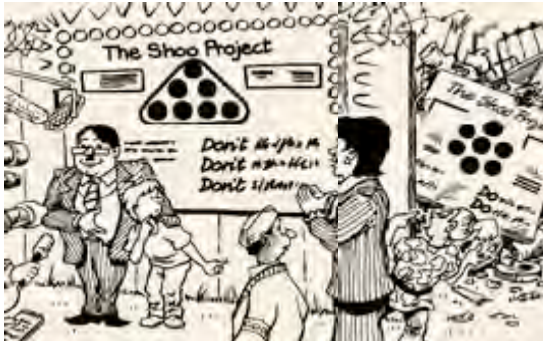
Children and young people

Organisations and services

The wider community

We are a big part of the present and we are 100 per cent of the future

And we have ways to make sure we are involved - properly. To do this right, here is what we think needs to happen. We think that there are **seven important building standards to help adults and children and young people work well together and do a good job developing our active involvement.**



➤ Shared values – WHAT EVERYONE BELIEVES

We expect that throughout the involvement of children and young people, there are clear shared values where everyone is respected and is treated equally, with honesty, openness and sharing of information.

➤ **Strategy – THE PLAN** We expect a strategy for the active involvement of children and young people that is simple, easy to understand, that works for the children and young people involved, is exciting and challenging and is young people friendly.



➤ **Structures –
THE SCAFFOLDING** We expect effective structures for hearing our ideas and helping us take part, which are useful, reliable and simple and include a wide range of children and young people.

➤ **Systems – THE MACHINERY** We expect strong and reliable systems to be in place (like transport and money) that make it possible for us to get involved easily and safely and which use technology in a friendly way.





➤ **Staff – THE WORKERS WHO BUILD** We expect all staff we meet to be good at their jobs and hard working, but also understanding, trusting and extremely friendly. They must also be fair and not patronising.

➤ **Skills and knowledge – THE WORKERS' SKILLS** We expect staff to have skills that are varied and useful, including teamwork and getting on with children and young people. We expect children and young people to have the chance to develop our skills as well.



➤ **Style of leadership – THE BOSS** We expect that there should be a simple, fair and friendly style of leadership. There should be not just one leader and everyone should be able to be involved in all decisions.

What next?

- Is your area, organisation or group serious about involving children and young people?
- How are they making sure they do it well? Are they using Hear by Right?
- You could write a letter, phone or e-mail the boss or key contact to find out what they are doing. Ask them how your ideas and views can be taken seriously.
- Use the Hear by Right map and plan for children and young people to get your views heard.
- curvesLet us know how you get on.

Hear by Right briefing for children and young people was created and written by Alex Renouf, Chris Griffin, Lee Hitchings and Natalee Riley, 2004; with thanks to Dorset Youth and Community Service and to Brick for illustrating the building site of active involvement.

You can contact us via the Active Involvement team at The National Youth Agency: Tel: 0116 242 7406. E-mail: activeinvolvement@nya.org.uk Website: www.nya.org.uk/activeinvolvement