





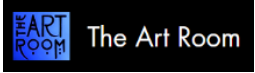

















# Our Voice Progress Report

A Summary of Participation and Projects  
2022-2023

# A very big THANK YOU to all the partners who help us involve children and people in Service Design, Review and Delivery

# All of these agencies have supported engagement with children and young people\*

 <p>HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL</p>	 <p>CRT Children's Rights Team</p>	 <p>THE ART ROOM The Art Room</p>	 <p>Castle Hill School</p>	 <p>Kixx</p>	 <p>EDEN'S FOREST COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY</p>
<p>University of <b>HUDDERSFIELD</b> Inspiring global professionals</p>	 <p>HUDDERSFIELD TOWN FOUNDATION The Club's Official Charity</p>	 <p>Northorpe Hall Child &amp; Family Trust</p>	 <p>hcmf//</p>		 <p>HEPWORTH J &amp; I SCHOOL</p>
 <p>Crow Lane Primary School</p>	 <p>PONY PALS EQUINE THERAPY CIC</p>	 <p>MILLSBRIDGE RASC EST. 1998</p>	 <p>Kirkles YJS Youth Justice Service</p>	 <p>We are: Kirkles Libraries</p>	 <p>pivot</p>
 <p>YOUTH PLAYER DEVELOPMENT</p>	 <p>Kirkles Safeguarding Children Partnership</p>	 <p>Little Deer Wood</p>	<p>* This could be by supporting an ongoing group or by helping with an ad-hoc project</p>		

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# Voice and Influence and participation? What's that all about then?

Our Voice is the Children and Young People's Participation Programme for Kirklees.

We work with anyone aged 4-19 (or 25 if you experience Special Educational Needs and or disabilities, are a young person leaving care or a young parent), who lives, works, or attends school or college in Kirklees.

Our Aim: **To champion participation and involve young people in local decision making.**

We support children and young people to communicate their thoughts, wishes and feelings to the Senior Managers in our Council, Elected Members, Partner Agencies and to the 'Buyers' (Commissioners) of our services. Our ethos is that young people are experts in their own lives. By sharing their knowledge and experiences, we can listen and adapt what we offer to meet their needs, promote inclusion, and create a climate for co-production.

**Why we do this:** We are a restorative service. We believe services should 'work with young people, rather than doing to them'. We value young people's contributions. Our work is underpinned by Article 12 of the UNRC-That children have the right to express their thoughts, wishes and feelings and for these to be taken seriously. We know that by involving children and young people in decision making, it helps them develop skills, feel included and ensures our services can be designed to meet need.

**How we do it:** By having fun! We understand all young people communicate in their own way. Therefore, our sessions are all about building trusted relationships. They are informal, activity and game based. We weave important questions into the activities we do and listen to what children and young people have to say. We collect these messages, anonymise them and with the young people's consent, pass them on to where they need to go. We ensure young people understand why we are asking for their help, what might be the outcomes and how we will let them know the 'so what?'. This creates meaningful participation.

We ask adults who commission projects to ensure they have a budget have to reward the young people who volunteer and that where possible, we partnership work with services to share resources and skills.

**The benefits of participation:** The children and young people who participate receive a local Young Advisors Award, evidencing their contribution. They then become part of an active advisory group. We stay in regular contact and offer participation opportunities. This offer is flexible; where the young people engaging pick and choose what they want to do and much time they can commit to projects of their choice. We work with rewards, expenses, and recognition, valuing the voluntary hours young people give.

Find out what we do here: [Our Voice Web Page](#)

# Meet the Team



Kay Parry-Team Leader

Kay absolutely breathes all things participation.

In every session, Kay shares “I’ve the best job in the world, because I get to listen to and work with young people, each and every day” and it’s true!



Susan Adams-V&I Officer

Susan is the longest standing member of Our Voice-18 years to be exact! Susan is an exceptionally creative fashion designer and lives by the slogan of her favourite book...

“Feel the Fear and do it anyway!”



Harry Duggan-V&I Officer

Harry is our resident tea enthusiast. When Harry isn’t working with us, he’s studying for a Psychology Masters. Harry’s special interest is equality and support for LGBTQIA+ projects...

and playing Dungeons and Dragons!



Lewis Hemingway-V&I Officer

Lewis is all about our environment. Lewis is a Zoologist and works with projects that support Youth Climate Activism. When Lewis isn’t working with us, he’s building cool peddle-powered sound rigs, walking his doggies, and enjoying the outdoors.



Anna Gledhill

Anna has just become the Team’s link to the Senior Leadership Team and our Decision Makers.

Anna likes being outdoors, whether that’s walking her dog, climbing mountains birdwatching, or growing flowers.

\*Kirklees has been committed to Voice & Influence since 1996: We were formerly known as IYCE (Involving Young Citizens Equally), the team has evolved over time: but endured. This is with thanks to being valued by our children, young people, our partners, and Decision Makers

Find out what we do here: [Our Voice Web Page](#)

# Our engagement journey...

**1350** children and young people have engaged with the Our Voice Team in the past year.

**12** Our Voice @ Groups were established across **10** provisions. This means we've built ongoing, working relationships with **113** young people.

We've continued to develop young people's involvement in **3** service commissioning projects, for local mental health services, our new SEND & SEMH Schools, and LGBTQ+ Services. Young people have participated in **4** strategic recruitments too, including the Chief Executive, Director for Children's Services, Service Director, and a Head of Service post.

We've completed **12** other projects, including bringing young people's voice and influence to the development of the Homelessness Prevention Pathway, SEND Transformation Plan, Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Youth Partnership Board. Young people's voice has been central in the development of the Emotional Health and Well-Being Partnership, and we continue to support the evaluation of the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF).

Find out what we do here: [Our Voice Web Page](#)

June-July 2022: Our Space Capital Grants, responding to the SEND Green paper & LGBTQIA+ Commission:

84 young people help allocate £1million of [capital grants funding](#).

74 young people create a response to the Government's [SEND Green Paper](#).

19 Young people help develop the LGBTQIA+ service specification.

Assistive Tech and VR engagements begin. 21 Eco-Ambassadors create content for the 2022 Climate Fest.

August-September 2022: Summer Programme visits and outreach take place.

We head out to HAF groups to meet 562 young people and 39 providers



January-March 2023: SEND Strategy Refresh, Short Breaks Review, Youth Proofing and

Work begins to refresh our SEND Strategy in partnership with 63 young people. It is hoped we can use this learning to create a glossary for all services and some guidance on child-friendly communications. Alongside this young people start to review the short breaks offer.

The themes from the response to Everyone's Invited are taken to DSL and Heads Network meetings and become a focus of the KSCP priorities.

11 Young people youth proof our Year 9 Survey.

April-June 2023: Recruitments, Homelessness Prevention, and the NHIR Substance Misuse Project

94 young people support the development of the homelessness prevention pathway.

98 young people help develop substance misuse resources in partnership with the University of Huddersfield.

32 young people participate in virtual strategic recruitments and 18 in a face-to-face panel.

October-December 2022:

SEMH New Build Engagement, Young Adult Loneliness and The Emotional Health and Wellbeing Partnership

We work with 22 young people to understand their needs for a new school.

We supported the launch of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Partnership with young people. This was informed by the 2021 commissioning engagement.

Visits start with the YJS participation sessions and Our Voice @ Groups are established.

Work continued to understand Young Adult Loneliness

# What creates meaningful engagement? Our approaches on a page

Participation is not a one size fits all and so we have a variety of ways to reach the young people we work with.



## Virtual Engagement

Our less used and least preferred method of engagement.

Essential during the pandemic and favoured by some young people.

Although you can be relatively creative, this method lends itself to questionnaires (another thing we try not to use) or getting young people who live far apart 'together'



## Outreach Approaches

Our approach to engage young people who might not usually participate.

We grab our trainers and head out to our parks, open spaces, and estates. We tend to do this on a seasonal basis as we meet more young people in the spring and summer.

We also link in with the Detached Youth Service



## Indirect Work

Our approach to work with young people who might not want to do face-to-face but have something to say!

This might include sending surprise games or activities by snail mail or creating a resource for colleagues to use with young people they work alongside.

This year we have continued to develop our community connections and ask trusted workers who support young people's groups to share their young people's messages.



## Direct Work-Our absolute fave

We visit young people in their community groups or provision. This means we are on 'their turf' in a known space. The young people don't have to travel to places to participate. We can spend money on rewards, rather than travel reimbursements.

Our Voice @ Groups were formed in...

2 Specialist provisions

1 Additionally Resourced Provision

2 Alternate provisions

1 College (North and South) with 2 groups

6 Schools

1 Community Group

2 groups for elective home-educated young people.

We completed ad-hoc engagements in an additional 8 provisions and HAF sessions

We use the [Lundy Model](#) of participation in our projects with young people:

### SPACE

We create a safe space

In the environment and our behaviour

### VOICE

We facilitate communication

We build relationships, using games, tech, or whatever works

### AUDIENCE

We truly listen and advocate

We share what we have learned

### INFLUENCE

We act on what we hear

We work together to make change

All 4 elements of the process happen, in this order, to make children and young people's participation, meaningful.





# A snapshot of local children and young people's current priorities

The Youth Development Programme Board was formed in 2019 to bring together Community, Voluntary Sector and Local Authority Youth Services together. It aimed to coordinate and develop a quality, out-of-school youth offer. In May 2023 the board had a 'Reset Day' to review its achievements, purpose and plan. We asked 268 young people in schools, colleges, and community provisions to tell us their current priorities to help shape the board's vision, principles, and actions.

## 1. Family and Friendship

Family, friendships, and connections were the children and young people's number one priority. Some young people spoke positively about the support their families offered in keeping them happy and healthy. Around 5% spoke of worries that pressures in the home could cause tensions and difficulties. Bullying, being left out or alone, was another strong theme. There was a desire from young people to help develop healthy connections and know how to overcome challenges or difficulties in relationships.

## 2. Money and Housing

Most of the young people we spoke with valued their home (and bedroom) as their safe place. Current concerns about money meant some people worried they might lose their homes and the very place they felt safe. Small children used terms like *'Inflation, Skyrocket, and Crisis'* when talking about money. Older young people expressed a desire for life skills to be more central in their learning and to have access to work experience/paid opportunities.

## 3. Safety

Younger children, particularly in North Kirklees, spoke about road safety being important, being able to get to and from play spaces, each other's homes, and school. Older young people aged 12+ spoke about street safety and knife crime. About two-thirds worried about this, whereas a third spoke of direct experiences. Internet safety is a commonly discussed issue for young people whatever their age.

## 4. Mental Health & Wellbeing

Common themes were being able to manage challenges and difficulties, having trusted people to talk to, and not having to wait too long if you needed a service.

Exam stress and peer pressure were mentioned by older young people, as well as worries around social networking and 'living up' to expectations. Most young people could describe the things needed to be healthy, such as a nutritious diet, a safe and loving home, to be active, to have connections and interests-but not all had the resources to achieve this.

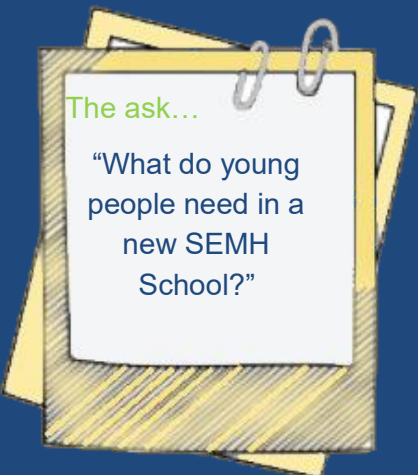
## 5. Learning

Some children who experienced SEND are worried about school. They spoke about bullying and worries around work. Achieving expected exam results was raised by most young people of secondary school age.

## 6. Things to do

Lots of the young people who spoke with us have hobbies and interests outside of school. Sports Clubs, Drama, Dance, and Uniformed Groups were all prevalent. The enablers to attending these activities tended to be if they were based locally and affordability. For children and young people with multiple siblings, there was some discussion about activities being too costly. Some children also worried that as the cost of living was rising, their parents and carers may no longer be able to afford to pay.

# Engagement in Action: a commissioning project on a page



## Why did we work with children and young people to understand this?

We know there is a need for more places in schools that support children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. As part of the SEND Transformation plan, a new school provision will be built. Who better to help us design and shape the new provision than the children and young people who currently attend an SEMH school?

## Which approaches did we use and why?

Young people aged 7 to 15 helped us in this engagement. We used lots of approaches from a farm-themed treasure hunt and assistive technology to explore virtual reality relaxation spaces. We even built our dream classes in Minecraft®. Sessions were kept short and snappy with games, tech, and movement to increase engagement.

## Who did we reach out to, for help?

22 children and young people in weekly workshops, all 68 students did a golden envelope activity.

## What did young people say?

“That the farm/allotment is our favourite part of our current school and it’s important that this is part of the new build. Outdoor spaces to play sports and walk/run/climb and pace are great for feeling calm and relaxing. We feel that zoned classroom spaces where we can spend time together or apart would help our learning. We will have girls and boys together in the new school, which will be a change from our male-only provision, so learning to all get along is something we like to start to learn”.

## That’s great-so what do we do now?

We shared the approach and positive outcomes with the SEND Commissioning Group, to how we can creatively involve children in the designs of our services, places, and spaces. The young people’s ideas have been added to the ‘decision-making matrix’ which helps the Decision Makers see where we all have similar ideas or differences, to consider in the new design.

This kickstarted an ongoing relationship, where young people can help shape their new school. Future decisions will be shared with and influenced by the young people.

**Planning the new school: What's important in a classroom**  
 On Wednesday 12th October, 2022, The Our Voice Team, School Staff and 20 Students at JNA worked together to continue conversations about new school. We used Minecraft to build our dream classrooms. We will use your Minecraft designs in the report. Here is what we heard, in the session.

**For those of us aged 7-10, bright colours are nice.** We like both in banks. We like red, blue, yellow, purple and green. We like lockers. Things that are soft, soundly, bouncy and slimy.

**Space within our classroom to tidy away is important.** At the moment we make beds and easy tables by turning the furniture upside down, stacking and draping it. A proper area would be safer and better.

**Some things would be nice to sit on, they'd need to be big enough for us though and robust.**

**We like using technology, at the moment we don't have a laptop each.** We also talked about a library space and a science area.

**Ladders or built in climbing would be great. That would help us with 'the floor is lava'.**

**Some of us aged 9-11 were really keen on lockers.** At the moment we have trays and people can just reach your things. It would be nice to have safe spaces to store the things that matter. To us...

*My dream space is made from lockers and slides...*

**For those of us aged 11-13 we still like the idea of a safe open space in the room.** This is because we like being able to create space between one another, sometimes.

**We liked the idea of a 'round' approach to our classroom space, where we could talk, chill, read, use tech, or sit together to learn.** Having a library area that could be locked away too, sounded good...

**We spoke clearly about how people banging on our class windows or door can mean it's hard for us to concentrate and focus.** It also means that if someone is banging and we want to leave we walk into them. This made us consider that two doors might be useful. Having our own area and separate play space. For break or break out time, might also be an alternative. We liked lockers too!

**Although we know things furniture works, because people can't touch them, soft covers might help make them softer.**

*I need easy access to my ear defenders, when I can hear everything next door, it's hard to concentrate...*

**For those of us in key stage 4, aged 14-15, we spoke how the school really can feel like a prison (in reference to separated and lockable spaces). Therefore, our class room space needs to lend itself to our interests. Technology and music were the things that we really like...**

**We talked about built in sound systems and headphones too.** This would allow us to listen as a group or individually. A large screen area where we can sit and watch things together would be great. We thought this could be used for both teaching and relaxing time.

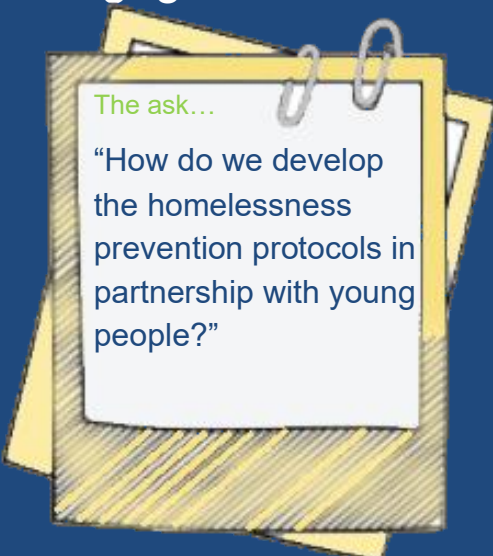
**Some of us recognised that we had the most young person friendly classroom in the school.** Our area is away from all the other groups. We don't have to manage the distractions or disturbances some of the other groups do. We also have our very own outdoor space and a small 'break out' room attached. This is really valuable as it works well and allows us 1:1 for advice and support too.

**Thinking about KS5 and a new sixth form offer, we spoke about wanting to prepare for agriculture at college, industry as a mechanic, training as a firefighter or developing our coding skills.** Having facilities to support careers advice and a place to develop 'life skills' were all things we thought mattered.

*Having a common room, a pool table type space, somewhere you can just chill out...*

We also talked about places to be calm and relax. We are going to look more at that next week-using the Virtual Reality.

# Engagement in Action: a safeguarding project on a page



## Why did we work with children and young people to understand this?

There are procedures in place to support children and young people who face homelessness. To ensure everyone is clear about them, it's important young people, families, and all the people who work alongside them know what to do, when a young person is at risk of, or becomes homeless. We worked with young people to understand what they feel may cause homelessness, what they might do if they needed help, and where they might look for support if needed.

## Which approaches did we use and why?

In partnership with Housing Solutions, we used a quiz to open conversations about the most common causes of local youth homelessness. We looked at how to apply for housing and gave up-to-date information about the availability of social housing. The young people then took some time to reflect on the information we had shared and we listened to their thoughts in discussion-based workshops.

## Who did we reach out to, for help?

94 young people aged 16-25 at Kirklees College

## What did young people say?

“Lots! We didn’t generally include hidden homelessness or show an understanding of ‘intentional homelessness’ in our definitions. Although the quiz showed us youth homelessness usually relates to relationship challenges, we tended to focus on financial issues-which impacts how we seek help. At college, we might go to the finance office before seeking pastoral help. Those of us with a good understanding of independent living/housing learned this information from parents or carers. We feel life skills don’t receive enough focus in our learning”.

## That’s great-so what do we do now?

This engagement has enhanced the relationship between Housing Solutions, Children’s Services, especially the Leaving Care Team, and Partner Agencies.

We have more knowledge about where to share the ‘joint protocols’ (process) and young people’s feedback can shape our communication plan.

Housing Solutions have received a request from Personal Tutors at College for learning resources to support young people develop their knowledge of independent living and homelessness prevention and can respond.

**PREVENTING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SUMMARY**

During May 2023, in collaboration with Kirklees Housing, OUR VOICE ran a series of fun interactive discussions with students from Kirklees College to begin the process of exploring the issue of youth homelessness. Here is a summary of what we discovered...

**OUR VOICE** review support change

**THE AIM OF THE PROJECT & THE PEOPLE INVOLVED:**

We ran a series of fun sessions with young people in Post16+ provisions as a way to:

- Understand how young people define homelessness
- Ensure that we share the pathway (support) information with the 'right people in the right places' so that if a young person experiences homelessness, they get help quickly and effectively
- Inspire some young people to help us with the 'next bit' so that we can create a pathway to support in a collaborative way.

**WHO WE SPOKE TO...**

- 94 Young people in total aged 16-19 attending Post-16 education from schools
- 10% Stated that they were part of the SAME community
- 14% Described themselves as LGBT+
- 80% Described themselves as having SEND
- 17% Said they were Looked After had a care experience
- 47% Lived in the Huddersfield area. 14% in Dewsbury. 12% in Batley & Spin Valley

**SOME OF THE KEY ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY YOUNG PEOPLE:**

**SOME YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS...**

- When you don't have a place to call home
- Unable to live in a warm and secure environment without having a permanent location to sleep
- Not having that place which gives you your own security

**REASON WHY YOUNG PEOPLE THINK THEY MIGHT BECOME HOMELESS...**

- Mental health issues (i.e. Anxiety, stress and depression)
- Abuse & Neglect (Physical & Mental)
- Financial pressures and difficulties
- Pregnancy (hidden and unplanned)
- Family problems and breakdown of relationships at home
- Not communicating with parents/ Step-parents
- Drug and substance abuse
- Forced marriages
- Cultural ideas
- Punishment
- Death of parent or carer
- Disability
- Abandonment
- Unemployment

**WHERE THEY MIGHT GO WHO THEY MIGHT SPEAK TO FOR ADVICE & HELP...**

- Partner, Friends and family
- Online (Housing websites, groups and chats)
- Local Council
- Tutors, Pastoral and Safeguarding staff in college
- Boss/colleagues at work
- Doctors
- Support Social workers
- Charities like Shelter and Salvation Army
- Homeless shelters and Food banks
- Fusion housing
- Youth workers
- Local councillor/MP

**HOW YOUNG PEOPLE THINK HOMELESSNESS MIGHT BE PREVENTED...**

- Building stronger family relationships
- Support with communicating with the with parents and family
- Support from key people and members of staff
- Interventionist
- Stable family finances

**THAT'S GREAT - BUT SO WHAT?**

This insight will be used to form the basis of wider discussion with young people and help inform future work.

Here are some of our ideas on early interventions that young people might find useful...

**INFORMATION** on substance misuse including what support is available to young people if they live in a household where parents or carers are using.

**UNDERSTANDING** the role of social care/social workers in supporting families and helping young people remain home.

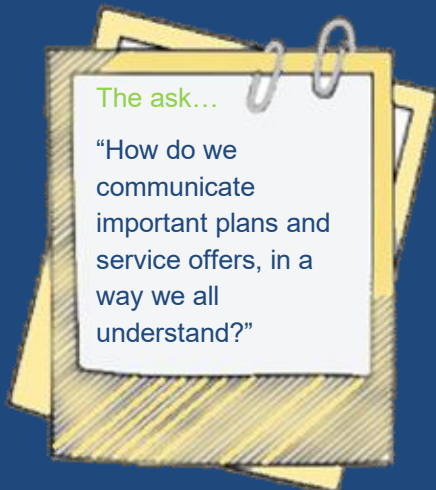
**IMPROVING** parental awareness of mental health.

**BUILDING** skills on how to communicate within families.

**MANAGING** family crisis before problems gets insurmountable using interventions such as Family Group Conferencing/ Family plans

**ARE YOU FEELING INSPIRED, AFTER READING THIS? DO YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS? WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN HELPING MAKE CHANGES? IF YOU'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED, PLEASE CONTACT OURVOICE@KIRKLEES.GOV.UK**

# Engagement in Action: Youth proofing to collaboratively refresh our plans



## Why did we work with children and young people to understand this?

Kirklees Council and Partners have lots of plans and projects to help children and young people be happy and healthy and achieve their goals. We know that sometimes these are complicated and hard to understand. We listened to the feedback *'how can young people, families and partners participate in plans they don't understand?'* So, starting with our SEND Services we have worked with young people to re-fresh 'Our Big Plan' using words that young people and families use. This way, we can all be on the same page and work together to achieve our aims.

## Which approaches did we use and why?

We spent a number of weeks, developing relationships with young people in Schools, Community Youth Provisions, Project Search, and College. We played games that featured the words we currently use in plans and explored what they mean to young people. We recorded what they would say to build a glossary.

## Who did we reach out to, for help?

63 children and young people in 8 provisions.

## What did young people say?

"If things are written, please use words we understand. Some words have a completely different meaning from our perspective. For example, instead of 'inclusion' we might say 'feel welcome' and 'intervention' means 'help'. We prefer shorter documents, with colour and pictures and what we really like to know is what it means for us, if that plan or service works well, how will we feel or what will we see. We like animations or films that are short and snappy".

## That's great-so what do we do now?

The SEND Transformation lead is now working on re-writing the plan using the young people's suggested words. When a draft is ready, we will again work with young people to check it makes sense.

We've started to share young people's preferred words in our reports, emails, and meetings. We hope they start to create a change. We will develop the glossary over the coming year and share this with others.

The Need: We know from working in partnership with Children, Young People and Families that the SEND Strategy is difficult to understand...

**The Action:**

January to May 2023  
We undertake engagement work with young people who experience SEND to 'youth proof' the SEND Transformation strategy

Engagement tools used...

63 local young people from:

- A School
- An Additionally Resourced Provision
- Foundation College Course
- Project Search
- Our Elected Home Ed group
- Two Short Breaks Participation Groups
- A Community Mental Health Youth Group

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE OUR BIG PLAN, AS SIMPLY AS POSSIBLE?

WHAT WORDS DO WE USE AND HOW DO WE EXPLAIN IT?

**The Process:**

Work in Partnership...

1. Workstream leads re-write
2. Direct work is undertaken
3. All information is collated
4. Sense check with young people
5. Share
6. Feedback, thank and rewards

**The Outcomes/Impact:**

We have a plan which children, young people and families are more likely to understand, because we have worked collaboratively to produce it.

Confidence in our system - People will be able to tell us if they understand the strategy.

People see a change-they feel listened to and are more willing to help in our improvement journey

We are embedding collaboration and inclusivity in our work moving forwards by sharing the approach and the learning from the project


our voice  
review support change

Want to know more? Email: [ourvoice@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:ourvoice@kirklees.gov.uk) Web Page: [KCSP: Young People's Voice](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/young-peoples-voice)

# Our Reach: Thinking about monitoring and inclusion.

We believe, first and foremost, that to work with us, you just need to be a young person.

So, we've always swayed away from collecting lots of demographic data. One reason for this, is that once we ask young people to fill in forms, or give information about themselves, it sometimes causes worry that their voices are not anonymous. Young people might be working out their identity too. As a team we try not to put people in boxes. However, we also recognise that we need to try and understand who we are reaching in terms of representing varied voices and understanding the 'context' of the messages we receive.

 Our youngest volunteers are aged 5, from reception classes in primary schools. Our oldest volunteers are 24, who we reach through College and University Networks.

## We value inclusion.

This year saw the trial of the very anonymised monitoring form, which we used during the Homelessness Prevention work. It worked well and allowed us to understand...

- The age range of the volunteers
- The locality area young people live in
- How people defined their gender
- If people defined themselves as LGBTQ+
- If young people experienced SEN/D
- If young people were currently looked after or had care experience
- The ethnicity of the young people who participated.

We've altered the wording on some of the questions, based on young people's feedback and it's a team priority to ensure we collect this information in every contact; should young people wish to share it.

We continue to build relationships with youth provisions and partners, who focus on working with children and young people who have protected characteristics. This way we can hear lots of varying experiences.

Find out what we do here: [Our Voice Web Page](#)



We try to work with young people across our locality. We know our places and spaces are meaningful to young people. Maintaining connections in Spen, Batley, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Denby Dale, Kirkburton & Mirfield, and the Valleys, we know we are gaining a better understanding of the issues that affect young people, both generally and in the context of their local communities.



## Looking to the future...shoot for the stars and you might just reach the moon

Last year we promoted the desire to have over-arching participation principles, that everyone understands and works to achieve. A draft document has been created, to share with our decision-makers and we are currently working on a plan of how to 'roll out' an approach.

To ensure we support others to develop their understanding of participation and why it is important, we've delivered circle exercises at staff engagement events and created a skills-building training session, which has already been delivered to partners and will be available to workers in Children's Services from October 2023. We are working on developing some online resources too, which we can start to share through 'My Learning' Kirklees Council's learning platform.

Alongside meeting and developing networks with more young people, we have plans to support children and young people to be involved in the roll-out and impact evaluation of the new mental health and well-being offer 'Kirklees Keep in Mind'. There is engagement planned with the young people who will be attending the new SEND School, to help us develop and shape it. We will do this using all the lessons we've learned in the previous SEMH engagement.

### **Everything we do, can be more participatory and more restorative. So, let's work together.**

Children and young people have so many solutions and add value to our decision-making processes.

Working together doesn't mean asking us lots of questions-then saying, 'We asked'. It means saying, we hear your answers and trying to work on changing these things, wherever possible, together.

That way, we don't just tick a box. We shoot for the stars, and we might just reach the moon.

If you've learned anything, been inspired, or made changes based on what you've read-please tell us. The Our Voice Team will pass on anything you share, with us. You can email us at [ourvoice@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:ourvoice@kirklees.gov.uk) or reach us on our socials (on the back of this report).

THANK YOU

Find out what we do here: [Our Voice Web Page](#)

## Glossary: So, we all have the same understanding

Word	What it means	Word	What it means
Additionally Resourced Provision	Specialist teaching and learning spaces for young people who experience Special Educational Needs and or Disability, within a non-specialist school.	LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans and Questioning
Alternate Provision	Education for children who experience Social, Emotional, Mental Health or Physical Health needs	Looked After	A child or young person who is cared for by the Local Authority
Commissioner	A person who 'buys in' services	Monitoring	A record/check of who we work with
Collaboration	Working together	Network	Connected people or groups
Community Group	A youth group or activity which takes place in a local area	Outcome	The changes that come from an action or project
Co-Production	When we create together, equally	Outreach	Meeting people in their local places or spaces
Decision-Maker	The people who Manage Services	Participation	To join in
Elected Member	A local Councillor	Partner Agencies	Non-Council organisations who work with the Council to help children and families.
Engagement	To involve others	Protocol	Procedure/instruction
HAF	Holiday Activity Fund Projects	Provision	An organised place/activity young people attend
Inclusion	Making everyone welcome	SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
Influence	To affect a change	Voice	Communication
impact	Changes to systems or services		



## Our Voice

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Read our [blog](#) here

Find out what we do here: [Our Voice Web Page](#)