Children and Young People’s Participation Evaluation:

Understanding the impact of children and young people’s participation on The Children’s Society, our wider communities, and the children and young people we work with

April 2014

By Shona Horter, Jamie Mitchell and Julie Ouellet
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Suraya Patel, Participation Manager, for providing extensive information on the range of organisational participation activities, context and relevant contacts. Thank you so much to all of the children and young people who volunteered their time to take part in this review, and gave us an insight into their experiences, as well as to the project staff who helped organise this. Finally thanks to all The Children’s Society staff, including Senior Leadership Team members, who shared their views and experiences in this review.
## Recommendations and Action points from this Review: 2014-15 and beyond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</table>
| Improve the quality and quantity of access to participation activities | - Include participation in business planning – outline exactly how CYP will be involved in existing work and ensure this will be resourced and delivered  
- Include participation in Project Initiation Documents – for new services and future activity  
- Monthly reporting to include participation information through participation performance metrics – to highlight activity, successes and unmet need.  
- Improve the quality of participation in organisational decision-making to ensure it is non-tokenistic – Governance Task and Finish Group recommendations should be implemented, which explored young people’s involvement on the trustees’ board |
| Explore safe expansion of digital platforms and social media to connect and communicate with CYP | - Explore the potential of establishing a digital design group for CYP  
- Establish ‘Connect Space’ – a website where practitioners and CYP can communicate and connect |
| Ensure staff are able to engage, connect and communicate with CYP | - Amend the recruitment policy to clearly outline where CYP should be involved with the recruitment of new staff  
- Produce CYP-friendly appraisal forms so CYP can give their feedback as part of staff appraisals  
- Train all frontline staff on participation  
- Produce and distribute an e-learning module on participation for non-frontline staff, and hold workshops to discuss how CYP can be involved |
| Continually explore creative ways of working with CYP | - CYP can apply to Pot of Gold for funding for creative projects  
- Creativity should be considered in business planning |
| Improve communication with and between CYP | - Feedback all outcomes of the work CYP have been involved in e.g. campaigns, lobbying |
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1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of an in-depth evaluation completed by the Evidence and Impact Team at The Children’s Society in collaboration with 45 children and young people, conducted from November 2013 to March 2014. Within this report children and young people’s identities remain anonymous, to ensure that their confidentiality can be maintained and their well being protected.

The Children’s Society has been working with and for young people in the United Kingdom since 1881, when our founder Edward Rudolf began running children’s homes in response to the increasing poverty that he noticed was affecting the most vulnerable people in society.

We work with disadvantaged children to ensure that they and all children are loved, valued and listened to, helping them not just to survive but supporting them to flourish. We do this through a range of programmes including services for runaways, children’s centres, support for young carers, support for children who are refugees from violence and helping to give those in care a voice. At the core of our work are two main themes we have found to be integral to fighting injustice and protecting from harm: childhood poverty and adolescent neglect.

The Children’s Society is currently made up of 1,123 members of staff (figure at the end of April 2014). In addition to working directly with young people through front-line support, we have teams dedicated to political lobbying, campaigning, and research. We also have teams that enable the organisation to continue to function, such as fundraising, HR and finance.

1.2 Definitions of children, young people and participation

What do we mean by ‘children and young people’?

When we refer to ‘children and young people’ we are talking about those who access our services who are aged 0 to 25 years old. In the 2013-2014 financial year, we worked with approximately 5,025 young people on an on-going, one-to-one basis in our services. This does not include children and young people who accessed groups, who received support through our children’s centres or who received support indirectly.

What we mean by participation?

Participation is a political process that involves children and young people in dialogue that effects change. Some of these changes are immediate and some take longer to be realised. In this report, the term participation refers to two main aspects of our work.

1. Children and young people’s involvement in organisational decisions, such as influencing who we should hire and deciding our brand values (see page 10)

2. Project-based participation groups, where children and young people across England meet regularly as part of our programming to make changes in society, to influence decision-making about things that affect them and to voice their opinions about matters of importance or concern to them. These often focus on a specific issue that they have experienced first-hand (see page 9 for more information on the groups included in this review)
1.3 Why evaluate participation?

The Children’s Society is an impact-driven organisation. We believe it is important to have clear goals and assess to what extent we have met these goals. Evaluation is the process of building this picture. When an evaluation is complete, we can use it to understand, report on and continually improve our services.

Participation has many layers, which makes it especially difficult to evaluate. A person involved in a group might feel she has personally changed as well as feeling that she has contributed to changing her community. Both of these types of change are important but neither can be easily predicted or measured.

Although we knew participation was an important and unique function of The Children’s Society, the full picture of our impact was missing. For these reasons, we chose to invest in an in-depth internal evaluation using several different approaches, which are outlined in section 2. The intent of this evaluation was not to evidence all aspects of participation across the organisation, but to give an overview of participation activities and to focus on exploring, understanding and evidencing the experiences of the children and young people involved in project-based participation groups in depth.

We also felt this review was timely given the external context of fewer resources for engagement of children and young people and with the central government requirement to fulfil structural representation models of participation meaning certain young people, requiring additional support to engage, are at risk of being marginalised. There is therefore need for us to evidence our participation work and understand how it can be improved.

1.4 Values

Although we used different approaches or methodologies for this piece of work, we were committed to upholding following values:

Honesty, respect, accessibility, confidentiality, safety.
2. Methods

We used a mixed-methodology for this evaluation that included both qualitative and quantitative approaches. These methods are outlined below.

2.1 Desk Review and Document Analysis

To provide an overview of the scope and impact of participation across our organisation over the last year, information from a variety of sources was gathered. Information and documents reviewed included: recruitment records; evaluations and reports received from the Participation Manager; from Include (Young Carers’ Programme); the Listening to Babies and Younger Children Training; and Standing Tall after Feeling Small work. Policy documents received from the Senior Policy Advisor on children and young people’s involvement in policy change were reviewed; as well as minutes and agendas from Trustee Board and Task and Finish Group meetings.

2.2 Staff Surveys and interviews

Sixty-four staff members based at The Children’s Society headquarters in London completed an anonymous survey that was developed to capture the perceptions of employees who do not directly work with young people on a day-to-day basis. These staff members work across a number of departments including fundraising, campaigns, research, policy, church partnerships, and marketing. We also conducted two semi-structured interviews with a member of the Trustees Board and member of staff involved in The Children’s Society’s brand work. These both lasted around 30 minutes.

2.3 Qualitative Interviews and discussion groups with children and young people

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 23 children and young people and three focus group discussions (with five, three and six children and young people respectively). Interviews lasted between 10 minutes and one hour, with the majority being around 45 minutes in length.

With the help of project staff, young people from a range of participation groups were invited to take part based on criteria that included length of engagement with The Children’s Society, age range, and potential level of risk. Each young person was given an information sheet and was made aware that declining to participate would have absolutely no effect on the quality of service they were receiving. They were also informed that they could stop an interview at any time, retract parts of an interview, or not answer certain questions. Voluntary informed consent was received prior to each interview, including consent for interviews to be recorded. In some cases, project workers felt it was more appropriate to interview young people in small groups rather than individually so we held three focus group discussions that followed a similar structure to interviews with the addition of some short activities.

2.4 Participatory Action Research focus group

One Participatory Action Research (PAR) focus group was held which was two hours in length. Before the discussion took place a group of approximately 15 young people developed questions they wanted to ask senior members of staff from The Children’s Society. Three young people volunteered to lead the discussion with five members of the Senior Leadership Team facilitated by two evaluators. This session was audio recorded following voluntary informed consent from all participants. PAR is a method that seeks to fully involve participants in all stages of the planning
and evaluation process. This can help mitigate the power imbalance that often exists between researchers and the people they are interviewing. Knowledge and lived experience are seen as equally important learning tools that help create a mutual understanding of the ideas being explored. One benefit of this approach is that researchers and participants generate action items that can be carried forward, thereby creating change through the research process.

2.5 Analysis

All interviews and group discussions were transcribed verbatim. Thematic content analysis was used, with transcripts being read and re-read and coded to identify emergent themes, patterns and concepts from participant responses [1]. These codes were compared both within and between cases, to refine the data and actively seek discrepancies (deviant cases), thus ensuring the findings presented were a true reflection of participants’ responses. This approach to analysis draws upon some of the principles of grounded theory [2]. Unfortunately, we did not have time to include young people in the analysis of the PAR focus group, as we would have liked. Instead, we drew on dialogical analysis, which looks at the significance of interactions between participants of a conversation, whose voice is being heard, and the consequences of the communication that takes place.

2.6 Participant Break Down

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project or Department</th>
<th>Participant involvement</th>
<th>Participant information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenwich Young People’s Participation Council (GYPYC):</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Number: 4, Age range: 15-16, Gender breakdown: 1 M, 3 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A group of young people representing schools in the Greenwich area</td>
<td>PAR Focus Group</td>
<td>Number: 3, Age range: 15-16, Gender breakdown: 1 M, 2 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young trustees: young people who participate on TCS’s board of trustees.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Number: 1, Age range: X, Gender breakdown: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hub: Youth Club in Cheshire for young people aged 8-13 years</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Number: 7, Age range: 10-13, Gender breakdown: 1 M, 6 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Harm Group: A regularly held group for young people affected by substance misuse. The group is implemented through Essex Young People’s Drug and Alcohol Service (EYPDAS)</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Number: 4, Age range: 13-18, Gender breakdown: 1 M, 3 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YAGA: a regularly held group for young people with different abilities</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td>Number: 5, Age range: 16-25, Gender breakdown: 3 M, 1 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Carers in Focus: A national support and awareness raising group made up of young people who care for one or more</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Number: 2, Age range: 18-25, Gender breakdown: 1 M, 1 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Description</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salford Children in Care Council:</strong> A regularly held group for young people in care to support other young people in care.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lancashire Care Leaver’s Council:</strong> A regularly held group for care leavers to support other care leavers.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purple Monsters:</strong> A group of children and young people in Lancashire who have gone missing from home or experienced sexual exploitation, to reduce risk for other children and young people and improve support.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability Advocacy Project:</strong> A group of young people with different abilities to support other young people with different abilities.</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pot of Gold (Team Gold):</strong> A group of young people who allocate funding to other groups of children and young people that access our services.</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior TCS Staff Members:</strong> Senior representatives from a range of directorates including but not limited to human resources, operations, and business development.</td>
<td>PAR Focus Group</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TCS Headquarters Staff:</strong> A wide range of roles and levels were represented from directorates including marketing, research, fundraising, church partnerships, and operations.</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TCS Headquarters Staff:</strong> Staff from higher levels of the organisation who were knowledgeable about particular areas of participation.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* X = age/gender not provided to maintain confidentiality or because it was not known
3. Desk Review and Quantitative Findings: the impact of participation on the organisation and our wider communities

3.1 Young people’s involvement in organisational decision-making

The following chart shows some of the key ways in which participation of young people directly influenced organisational strategy and decision-making last year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Who was involved?</th>
<th>What was the result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment of TCS staff:</td>
<td>57 children and young people</td>
<td>Children and young people interviewed candidates and made suggestions, which influenced the recruitment of 27 new employees.¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCS aims to involve children and young people in the recruitment process for direct practitioners and Senior Leadership Team staff, as we believe it’s important that staff are approachable and youth-friendly. A policy clearly outlining the expectation for this is to be developed (see action points p40)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a new brand:</td>
<td>60 children and young people from Bath, Torquay, Preston, Manchester, Leeds and Cheshire</td>
<td>Workshops with children and young people were held in Bath, Torquay, Preston, Manchester, Leeds and Cheshire. Three of the four brand values that were chosen came directly from young people themselves: Brave, Supportive and Trusted. These will steer this organisation for the next 10 – 20 years, informing our vision, mission, brand and organisational culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people played a key role in the re-branding of our organisation in 2013/14.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees’ board:</td>
<td>Five young people actively sit on the trustees board</td>
<td>Young trustees shared their views and contributed to decisions about the future of the charity, and held the senior leadership team to account. They were recently involved in a Task and Finish group called Young People’s Participation and Governance which will shape future processes to involve young people in key decisions for years to come.²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are five places on the trustee board for Young People, allowing them to directly feed in to decision-making. While they bring an important perspective to our work, it is recognised that they do not represent the views of all young people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot of Gold and Over the Rainbow</td>
<td>7 young people helped plan the annual Over the Rainbow</td>
<td>These young people organised and held a successful event and designed the annual Over the Rainbow booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot of Gold is funding which children and young people on Team Gold decide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ Since October, we appointed around 251 staff nationally excluding children’s centres. It would not be appropriate for YP to be involved in most of these interviews, Children’s Centres for example only work with the 0-5 age group. Four of the 27 appointments were for senior roles.

² To be recruited to the board, young people will have received a service from The Children’s Society, have experience of getting involved in project activities; and will enjoy listening and actively taking part in discussions. The young trustees are from different geographical areas. At the moment there are four girls and one boy who are between the ages of 15 and 20.
where to allocate, by reviewing applications made by children and young people outlining specific projects they would like funded, and deciding which projects to allocate resources to.

Over the Rainbow is an annual event that celebrates young people’s successes and achievements, including the projects they have undertaken through Pot of Gold funding. This actions principle seven of our Participation Strategy by enabling children and young people to share practice with each other.

Rainbow event this year (Team Gold) (outlining the projects that have been possible through Pot of Gold funding), made a video of the 2014 Over the Rainbow Event (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzBbwxMMYvs), and worked with social media

| Listening to Babies and Young Children: | Listening to Young Children is an innovative approach, recognised for its excellence in supporting early years professionals to enable young children to participate routinely in the services they receive. |
| 38 practitioners from Central Bedfordshire, The Art Room, Greenwich Intergenerational project, Lewisham and Bournemouth | These staff received two days of training in the Listening to Young Children approach. They learned to use this technique to react to the immediate needs of children and to include their voices in decision making e.g. about the services provided. During the second day of training staff presented the ways they had involved children in decision-making at their Children’s Centres subsequent to the first training day. |

### 3.2 Policy, Campaigns and Awareness Raising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Who was involved?</th>
<th>What was the result?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safeguarding Unaccompanied Children:</strong></td>
<td>33 children from Oxford, Manchester and Birmingham who were young asylum seekers shared their personal experiences with officials from the home office and investigators</td>
<td>The ‘Into the Unknown’ report was written which made a series of recommendations to the government and contributed to a parliamentary inquiry on the rights of unaccompanied children by the joint committee for Human Rights. There has been newly published statutory guidance for local authorities on the care of unaccompanied and trafficked children and a commitment to a review of how the best interests of children are considered in children’s cases. A reform programme was established to provide practice guidance for local authorities on assessing the age of unaccompanied young people, this is being taken forward by the Strategic Group of Age Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guardianship for unaccompanied children:</strong></td>
<td>17 young people participated in the Home Office-commissioned research into the care arrangements for</td>
<td>The report produced from this research, ‘Still at Risk’, was published in September 2013. There have been a number of</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **number of years. In the last year TCS was involved in parliamentary lobbying and worked with officials towards achieving this goal.** | **trafficked children together with the Refugee Council.** | **parliamentary debates on this topic including an amendment to the Children and Families Bill and the Immigration Bill to bring the need for guardians for unaccompanied children into law.**  
The Government have commissioned a trial of ‘children trafficking advocates’ |
| Destitute Care Leavers:  
Currently, when a young person is leaving care and turns 18, they may be made destitute (homeless and without financial support) by statutory agencies because of their immigration status. This is because current immigration law allows local authorities to cut off support, including care leaving support from young people to encourage them to return to their country of origin. | **5 young people’s case studies were included in our report ‘I don’t feel human’ in 2012, which is being used to work with government and local authorities to change the law and regulations around this.**  
Clearer guidance has been given by the Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) regarding the law in this area.  
A meeting is planned for young people and a government representative in order to ensure this issue is highlighted in the next government Leaving Care Strategy, which is due in October 2014. |
| Young Carers’ Legislation:  
Champions from the Young Carers in Focus (YCIF) programme have been meeting with government officials and The Standing Commission for Carers to input into changes required in legislations to provide better support for young carers and their families. | **3 Champions from the Young Carers in Focus programme (YCIF)**  
The following changes to the Children and Families Act:  
- it will consolidate and simplify the legislation relating to young carers’ assessments, making rights and duties clearer to both young people and practitioners;  
- the right to an assessment of needs for support will be extended to all young carers under the age of 18 regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it;  
- the Act will make it clear to local authorities that they must carry out an assessment of a young carer’s needs for support on request or on the appearance of need,  
and provide the appropriate links between children’s and adults’ legislation to enable local authorities to align the assessment of a young carer with an assessment of an adult they care for.  
This Act will work with provisions in the Care Bill that also support the combining of assessments, and the forthcoming regulations on a whole family approach to assessing and supporting adults. Together they will provide a clear legislative framework that will support local |
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Children’s Commission on Poverty:</strong> This national committee was formed in July 2013 to look at the impact of poverty on children, as their perspectives have been largely absent from the policy debate.</th>
<th>16 young people from around the country</th>
<th>The commission meets once a month to reflect on the views and opinions of a wider group of children that has been gathered through one-to-one interviews, informal groups and focus groups. The official launch of the commission took place in October. The commission aims to uncover and highlight new evidence on children and young people’s experiences of poverty, and then target and influence the policy agenda in the run up to general elections 2015.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of the Standing Tall after Feeling Small booklet</strong> Young people who have experienced sexual exploitation (CSE) and are involved in Street Safe, our project in Lancashire</td>
<td>These young people were commended by Ofsted for being integral to influencing CSE policy when they wrote and published this booklet, which is targeted at professionals and aims to improve the way professionals respond to vulnerable young people, through both identification of need and approach to support offered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young Carers champions:</strong> The Children’s Society’s Include programme aims to ensure that children and young people are protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop, achieve and enjoy a positive childhood.</td>
<td>80 children and young people</td>
<td>With the support of the Include programme, these self-identified young carers engage in outreach, advocacy, awareness raising, blogging, and peer support for other young carers across the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children in Care DVD:</strong> This was an initiative proposed by young people to support other young people in care.</td>
<td>9 children and young people aged 11 – 21 in Salford</td>
<td>These young people were allocated funding through Pot of Gold (see above) then wrote, filmed, edited and distributed the DVD with support from Salford Children’s Rights Service. During the process of making the DVD young people learnt film making skills, self-confidence, acting and public speaking skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **The Good Childhood Team:** Each year The Children’s Society’s Good Childhood Team conduct a well-being survey and consult directly with children and young people on issues ranging from family relationships and school experience through to ideas about improving the area where they live. | In the last year, over 9,000 children completed the survey and over 2,000 were consulted face-to-face. The team worked in 14 areas including 4 local authorities. | Several local authorities and schools have taken action and introduced changes following the suggestions of children and young people through this team’s work. These include: 
  - Isle of Wight: The Children and Young People’s Plan incorporates findings from this team’s research
  - Schools: changes including one school responding to the team’s findings by overhauling its School Council and introducing staff |
3.3 Perspectives from Staff at Headquarters

Sixty-four staff from various teams based at TCS headquarters, and a handful from children’s centres and programmes, responded to a survey that aimed to capture views on young-people’s participation in The Children’s Society. The results are summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>Comments analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How important is it to involve young people in decisions that affect their lives? | - Just under half (48%) felt The Children’s Society does a good job at involving young people in decisions:  
Staff comment: ‘We always actively try and involve YP although timescales are sometimes a challenge’ |
| | - Many commented on the fact that things are good but there is room for improvement  
Staff comment: ‘There is huge room for improvement but I am encouraged by frequency and genuine nature of young people’s involvement e.g. Board meetings, recruitment, service design’ |
| | - A number of staff commented on the perceived lack of systems, processes and policies which would allow them to embed young people’s influence in their work  
Staff comment: ‘[We need] systems in place to allow this to happen’ |
| | - A number of staff commented that participation can be tokenistic or sporadic, especially around work in HQ  
Staff comment: ‘In some areas we involve CYP but once |
| 2. Does the Children’s Society do a good enough job of including young people in decisions? | - A number of staff commented that participation can be tokenistic or sporadic, especially around work in HQ  
Staff comment: ‘In some areas we involve CYP but once |
you get outside of the Children and Families Directorate it does feel a bit tokenistic’

Staff comment: ‘I believe level of participation is variable. We do not consult on most important issues. There is almost no knowledge of when/how and where we consult - arbitrary and often simply lip service’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 3 &amp; 4</th>
<th>Comments analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Have you involved young people in your work?</td>
<td>• 31% of those asked said that they involved young people in their work in some capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘YP have blogged and tweeted for us’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘The team has asked YP to contribute to prayers and sought their views on our campaigning at events’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘We have consulted YP and have held focus groups and surveys to feed into govt. consultation responses. I have supported YP to give evidence in parliament, give speeches at events and meet MPs and ministers to feed in their views. We’ve also had YP shadow us’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘In the recruitment process (e.g. interviewing professionals and volunteers) asking for feedback, meeting MP’s and other policy makers, speaking to the media’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘Children’s commission. Handing in petitions. Quoted in materials. Selling the youth activism group’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>It is overwhelmingly apparent that all staff (100%) who have included young people in their work have found it beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘[Young people’s involvement] makes a huge difference. Facilitating young people to talk to media means people are more likely to listen to our messages and our campaigns are much stronger’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘[Young people] Helped us create a [evaluation] tool that was relevant to YP. Also it was important to practitioners to know that YP were involved’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘Yes, where the Child Commission on Poverty is concerned it’s critical, also think it’s important for our credibility as a children’s organisation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pie chart" /></td>
<td>Staff comment: ‘We’re working on the issues they want to campaign on other than our own perceptions’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ![Pie chart](image) | Staff comment: ‘It is embedded in YP’s views and derives
Question 5: Do you have any other comments about involving young people in decision making?

Comments analysis

- Many staff commented on the importance of the participation of young people in our work but called for more of it

Staff comment: ‘I think it’s vital to get YP directly involved in our work’

Staff comment: ‘I feel that if children and young people are given the chance they can actively help to transform the organisation’

Staff comment: ‘It is imperative that they are involved’

Staff comment: ‘We could and should do more. Get ideas from them but if we do involve them it should not be tokenistic’

Staff comment: ‘We should do more and resource it properly! There should be an element of it in every piece of work we do’

- Again, the need for clear processes, policies and systems for involving children and young people came up in this section

Staff comment: ‘We could do with a wider appreciation of the benefits of participation and ideas/details on how it can be incorporated across the organisation more successfully’

Staff comment: ‘I don’t think TCS currently has a good clear process for doing this. Often teams don’t know how to access young people or at what point/ in what forum decisions are being made which CYP might have a vested interest in - e.g. they have no input into decisions about what work to tender for’

Staff comment: ‘Possibly developing more mechanisms for YP to input opinions - flexible informal opportunities for young people to give their input on more decisions- digital engagement’

- The other theme that came out of this section was the need for inclusivity and getting a wider representation of views from a broader section of young people

Staff comment: ‘Find methods of involving children who wouldn’t generally be engaged in dialogue, children in trouble with the law, out of school, using solvents and alcohol as opposed to ‘professional children’

Staff comment: ‘The voices of under 5’s are not captured on TCS website and through our work. We should use the up to date research about brain research and early intervention and impact on early intervention, the formative years plus - we need to do more on social and emotional neglect’

Staff comment: ‘I think it’s important to make sure as many YP as possible, including those who may not usually feel comfortable with speaking up, get a chance to be heard’

Staff comment: ‘I would hope that we had a representative sample of YP giving a balanced opinion’
4. Interviews with Young People: the impact of practice-based participation on young people

Analysis of transcript data from 23 semi-structured interviews and three focus group discussions with children and young people from our project-based participation groups gave rise to themes which evidence the impact of participation on the children and young people involved, and the processes which facilitated this impact being experienced. Here these findings are presented in two sections: impact and process.

4.1 Impact

Participation was found to impact young people primarily in five main areas. These areas are summarised in the table below and subsequently explored in more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Impact detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increased confidence</td>
<td>Specifically mentioned by 16 out of the 23 children and young people (CYP) interviewed (and indirectly by others)</td>
<td>CYP experienced raised confidence including higher self-esteem and reduced self-doubt through their participation. Having more confidence meant young people felt more able to speak out and express themselves, connect with other young people and make friends, instigate change in their communities or in areas they felt passionate about, uptake and engage in opportunities including fun activities, hobbies, events and work experience, have ambitions and plans for the future, engage with education and develop key skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Improved social networks</td>
<td>Specifically mentioned by 23 out of the 23 CYP interviewed</td>
<td>Reduced isolation and improved social support for CYP, increase in number of friends. Less negative friendships than before involvement with participation group – e.g. bullying, peer pressure. CYP developing positive, healthy and real friendships, learning skills for managing difficulties or conflicts within their friendships as well as having more confidence to meet people and make friends beyond the groups, for example at school or in their wider lives. CYP connecting with like-minded people, sense of solidarity and shared experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increased voice and expression</td>
<td>Specifically mentioned by 14 out of 23 CYP interviewed (and implied</td>
<td>CYP feeling more able to speak out and share their opinions, ideas, recommendations and experiences with a range of audiences through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>by others)</td>
<td>participation, including raising awareness and challenging decision-makers. CYP enabled to overcome fears of judgement which could prevent voice before. Collective voice facilitated through participation seen to give more power and influence than isolated voices. CYP involved in participation groups speaking out on behalf of other CYP.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Increased sense of agency and empowerment</td>
<td>Specifically mentioned by 11 out of 23 CYP interviewed (11 YP who did not mention this directly were from groups with a different focus)  Independence mentioned by all CYP from participation groups for different abilities. Participation groups were asserted as empowering CYP to make a difference – to help and support other YP, to influence policy/laws and to contribute to change in their communities. Involvement in the process of contributing to change-making was seen to give CYP sense of value and feeling worthwhile. Increased independence was experienced by CYP with different abilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Personal development</td>
<td>Specifically mentioned by 21 out of 23 CYP interviewed. Raised aspirations, sense of self and direction for the future. CYP feeling more able to engage with school and learning, some CYP mentioned attendance and school achievements improving following involvement with participation groups. Increased access to and uptake of opportunities, engagement with more hobbies and activities - exposure to different experiences and people opened doors for some CYP; and increased confidence and self-awareness enabled CYP to put themselves out there and take part in activities or apply for jobs, for example. Some CYP went on to achieve things that they felt they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to e.g. degree, job. CYP developed skills, including social skills, team work, public speaking and presenting skills.</td>
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4.1. Confidence

16 young people out of the 23 that were interviewed specifically referred to their confidence increasing as a result of their involvement with a participation group. Many expressed that before joining their group they had low confidence levels, experiencing shyness and self-doubt that was sometimes debilitating, but which gradually changed as they participated in group activities and meetings. Many of the young people who did not make specific reference to confidence mentioned an improvement in related areas like feeling happier, more energised, having more friends, and being able to speak out. The majority of young people involved in the group discussions also mentioned their confidence improving following involvement with the groups.

‘I just feel like now, compared to how I was then, I feel so much more confident and so much more happy within myself... it has made me not doubt myself. I used to doubt myself a lot’ (Interview 01)

‘I used to be a really shy girl, but now I’m really outgoing’ (Interview 07)

‘I have more self-esteem within myself’ (FGD 01 –1)

4.1.2. Social networks

The importance of social networking (both virtual and in person) was a strong emergent theme. All 23 of the young people interviewed and those involved in the three focus group discussions mentioned their friendships improving, with many young people experiencing positive change in the number of friends they had and quality of those friendships. This seemed to be particularly significant for the younger young people (aged ten to thirteen years). The increase in friends was associated with more confidence in meeting and connecting with people, as well as the participation groups bringing young people together:

‘It’s fun, it’s fun! I like meeting and playing... I made some more friends’ (Interview 06)

‘I don’t think I would have the confidence before the group, I would just be on my own, if I didn’t come to be involved with the Children’s Society and that. And I think it’s just increased my confidence. I wouldn’t have made that many new friends this year if I hadn’t had this confidence’ (FGD 01 – 2)

Several young people felt that the group’s support enabled them to have more positive friendships and manage difficulties or resolve conflicts within relationships more effectively:

‘[now] I’ve got more friends and better friendships’ (Interview 07)

‘I used to stay with one group and used to get in trouble all the time with that group and now I told them ‘I’m not going to hang around with you anymore’... I’ve found a lot of different people to hang around with and they don’t get me into trouble... I don’t have to do bad stuff to just talk and get in with a crowd... I just have to be myself’ (FGD 01 – 4)

‘One of my mates was a drug dealer... I stopped hanging around with him... I’ve got some new friends’ (Interview 15)
Young people also felt that being involved with participation groups enabled them to connect with a wider range of peers than they might otherwise, as well as with like-minded young people and those who had been through similar experiences. This instilled a sense of solidarity and collective, which was seen to reduce isolation through being able to share experiences. Solidarity was particularly important for young people who were involved in groups that met to discuss and address issues specific to them such as being in care, being affected by substance misuse, running-away, and having different abilities:

‘To see other people in the same sort of situations... I don’t feel as alone anymore. I feel like I’m not the only person going through this’ (Interview 13)

‘It can be quite isolating being in care... you kind of feel like you’re the only one... but if there are places like this around, it kind of makes you realise that there are people out there who are in the same situation as you’ (Interview 19)

‘They just make me feel so happy and like I belong with them. They make you feel wanted... we’re one big happy family’ (FGD 01 – 4)

4.1.3. Expression/Voice

An increased sense of confidence coupled with a platform from which to speak out, gave the majority of young people a sense of voice that they felt they lacked prior to joining the groups. They expressed feeling more able to talk about their experiences and views which in turn allowed them to raise awareness, challenge policies, and contribute to decision-making.

‘When I started coming here my social worker started listening more because I had the confidence to actually start saying stuff to her’ (FGD 01 – 6)

‘The young carer is the expert, they’re the expert in their life... they’re helping to reduce the stigma by coming here and having their voices heard’ (Interview 12)

Young people mentioned initially experiencing feelings of shame and fear of judgement, which prevented them from being able to speak out. Involvement in participation groups was associated with increased openness and honesty in their expression and communication:

‘I used to hide it a lot... I felt I was going to get judged quite tremendously... I’d feel I’d have to lie just to cover up what was really going on. And then throughout my time coming here I felt ‘why should I lie? I’m not in the wrong, I’ve done nothing wrong’... now I feel like I can talk to anyone about it’ (Interview 14)

‘I’d been up on stage and I realised people weren’t staring at me and trying to judge me for who I was. So I just thought ‘I might as well’, because I’m not going to lose anything’ (FGD 01 – 1)

Several young people also highlighted the importance of speaking out for other young people who were less able to do so which made them realise the strength of collective voice and sense of community:

‘I wanted to know that I could be a voice for young people, knowing that this is what young people actually go through’ (Interview 01)
‘Since I’ve been a part [of the group] I’ve got more of a community spirit. That kind of cheesy vibe’ (Interview 02)

‘You have more power when there’s quite a few of you. If you’re by yourself the local authorities will say ‘Uh, they don’t really matter.’ When there’s 20 of you, they’re going to listen. It just strengthens it in a way. When people all say the same thing they can’t really deny you, can they?’ (Interview 22)

Fourteen respondents out of 23 and all group discussion participants specifically mentioned feeling more able to speak out for both themselves and for others. Many other young people implied that this was an area that changed without specifically making reference to it. A large proportion of those who did not mention expression or voice specifically were the younger young people attending the youth club (seven young people aged ten to thirteen years).

4.1.4. Agency and empowerment

Many of the young people we interviewed said they felt more empowered to make a difference as a result of being involved in participation groups. They felt more able to help and support other young people; to make changes to public attitudes; to influence policy or laws that affect them; and to contribute to their communities. This was mentioned by 11 out of the 23 young people who were interviewed. Those that did not specifically mention elements relating to personal agency included the seven young people from the youth club (aged ten to thirteen years) and four young people from Hidden Harm. This is most likely to be because the youth club is for young people up to age 13 and focuses on fun, respite and friendships rather than effecting external change. Hidden Harm is a support group for young people affected by drugs and alcohol which could explain why the focus was on confidence, support and expression as opposed to working towards external changes. The final young person who didn’t mention experiencing this area of change was a twelve-year-old young person who wanted to increase confidence and make friends.

‘The decision-makers that we’ve met and some of the MPs and police officers, I think we’ve made attitude changes to them’ (Interview 02)

‘Hopefully we made a difference talking to that school, maybe it had a difference on some children’s lives’ (Interview 03)

‘There is a lot of action and things actually do happen as a result of what you do’ (Interview 11)

‘This is one of the few places where we’re making tangible changes to the Children’s Services’ (Interview 19)

‘We recently had a policy change around safeguarding young people’ (Interview 19)

‘It’s been really good to see some of the things I’ve been saying... seeing that actual change take place. For example, with the Children and Families Bill going through, it’s one of the things, I said, needed to happen... It’s the first time that they’ve sort of been recognised in legislation’ (Interview 21)
In several cases it was difficult for young people to know whether the work they had done had directly led to changes, and there often seemed to be a feedback gap in terms of young people being made aware of changes that occurred subsequent to their involvement, for example in campaigning. However, feeling able to contribute to change was seen to provide a sense of empowerment and feeling worthwhile to young people:

‘It gives you a sense of achievement as well. That you are actually doing something good’ (Interview 12)

‘It’s nice to know that you have that power to change people’s lives, that you can help people in bad situations and I guess when seeing that being put into place… you made that change and you put your contribution in to make that experience’ (FGD 01 – 2)

All of the young people involved with participation groups for children and young people with different abilities mentioned associated increase in their independence following their involvement in these groups, and highlighted the importance of this in enabling them to engage in activities including using public transport:

‘Independence! No parent’s telling me what to do! That’s what I loved about it’ (FGD 02 – 3)

‘Going on the trains… you can do it by yourself’ (FGD 03 – 1+5)

5.1.5. Personal Development

Twenty-one out of the 23 young people interviewed, as well as the majority of young people in the three group discussions said their involvement in participation groups had a large impact on their holistic personal development. They expressed that their groups gave them access to opportunities that they would not have been exposed to otherwise. The two young people who did not mention elements of personal development specifically were younger young people, who did feel that their friendships had improved and they had engaged in fun activities such as cooking through the group. Some areas of self-development that the participants talked about were exploring different areas of interest, meeting people with positions of power, and attending events and performances that they were passionate about:

‘Something about [participation group] is that it definitely opens up loads of opportunities for people to go and do other things… it opens a lot of doors’ (Interview 02)

‘It’s opened the opportunity to doing many different things that you wouldn’t have a chance to do otherwise… Now I know a lot more. It’s pushed that interest that I had further and encouraged me more to study politics at A level and maybe take that further on’ (Interview 11)

‘I think it’s brilliant the level of opportunities available. The fact that you’ve got young people who’ve been interviewed for national television, who have been featured in national newspapers, who’ve met with MPs, met with the Children’s commissioner, and just actually providing as many opportunities as possible, even if they don’t think they might be interested, just something for a young person to put on their CV… Actually having as much positive stuff to put on their CV as possible is beneficial for them and can help them in terms of when they’re applying for jobs’ (Interview 21)
The vast majority of young people identified specific skills that they felt had developed. These skills included social skills (interpersonal skills, communication skills, managing relationships); teamwork; leadership; public speaking and presenting; listening and analytical skills.

‘Public speaking is one that I’ve been able to sort of develop, as well as presenting and discussing in a group. A good example is when we had the meeting with the councillors and business people and Charlton Athletic had a big group of people and you’re able to discuss and listen to their ideas and also build on their ideas. And I think that’s something also developed, which is working as part of a big discussion’ (Interview 11)

‘It’s also leadership as well. I can feel confident to go into a room and lead a group because they taught us all what good leadership is. And even just the flip side of it, working as a team, doing different things’ (Interview 12)

‘Listening and helping other people, being patient… I’ve grown up a lot… Being patient and caring more about people’ (Interview 16)

Several young people mentioned going on to achieve things that they felt they would not have been able to had they not been involved with participation groups and had that support, collective experience, expression and sense of agency:

‘It’s got me an apprenticeship…I’m working in the participation team [at another organisation]’ (interview 22)

‘I’d never have been able to go on and get a 2:1 in law at one of the top universities if it hadn’t been for the project’ (Interview 21)

Overall, being involved in participation groups was found to raise aspirations, facilitate a clearer sense of direction and identity, and help young people overcome fears of failure. Young people talked at length about feeling surer of who they were, what they wanted to do in life, and what their values were, which they felt their participation experience had enabled.

‘The Children’s Society… helped me to develop into a new person. I just feel so much happier, so much more confident, and better at expressing how I feel and the thoughts I have towards certain aspects… That’s helped me in my GCSEs and going through my A levels’ (Interview 01)

‘Since I’ve started it, I’ve only been to two different fosters since being here, I’m doing well at school and stuff like that, I have something to aim for and it’s like having a fag, really, it de-stresses you. It releases you from stress and gives you something to focus on’ (FGD 01 – 4)

‘It’s about being yourself really, but with that confident side to it… I think the most important thing is to actually accept who you are, and to be happy with who you are’ (Interview 17)
4.2 Process

In addition to looking at the impact the participation groups had on the children and young people, we were interested in unpicking the components of our work that facilitated those changes. We wanted to know about the process that enabled some of the transformative outcomes we discussed in the previous section. Once again, five main themes emerged from our analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Safe space</td>
<td>Having a safe space to escape daily life</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularity of group sessions giving sense of consistency and routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Particularly important for CYP experiencing difficulties at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Encouragement and support</td>
<td>Peer support and staff support experienced through participation groups seen to help young people realise their potential, speak out and have raised self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Quality of relationship with staff</td>
<td>Importance of staff relationship to CYP - Participation group project staff seen to hold qualities that enhanced the CYP-staff relationship, made CYP feel heard and understood. These qualities helped CYP trust staff and feel they could be honest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key elements of this relationship for CYP: feeling like staff genuinely cared and that the relationship was authentic and human rather than purely professional or linked to duty only.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Key staff qualities identified by CYP: being thoughtful, considerate, listening to young people and treating them as individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Being heard</td>
<td>CYP feeling listened to both within the groups and in external meetings with politicians and various stakeholders was a key factor associated with the changes young people experienced.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>This helped CYP gain a sense of agency and voice through which they became able to express themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Creative outlet</td>
<td>Creative outlet importance to CYP - providing alternative avenues of expression, helping CYP to process and learn more about themselves, enabling fun and enjoyment of activities.</td>
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Each of these processes are described in detail below:
4.2.1. Having a Safe Space

Many young people said that the participation groups provided them with a safe space where they could escape daily life, relax, recuperate and have fun. The regularity of group sessions supported a sense of routine and consistency that was important to some young people:

‘When I went it was initially just to try and get away from everything’ (Interview 01)

‘Just to have some chill out time and respite’ (Interview 12)

‘Before I came I wasn’t quite sure about coming here and now it’s like a routine thing and I really enjoy coming here, because it escapes from home life’ (Interview 16)

4.2.2. Encouragement and support

Participation groups were seen to provide young people with encouragement and support, this was particularly important for the issue-based groups. This support included peer support and staff support, which was associated with raised levels of confidence, reduction in fear of judgement, feeling able to fulfil your potential and follow your dreams as well as processing difficult experiences and speaking out. In some cases there was an intergenerational element to this support, with a sense of family and older young people and staff supporting younger young people:

‘I do feel quite motherly to some of them. But I quite like it, though, I quite like it’ (Interview 13)

‘We all figure out problems together’ (Interview 16)

‘Seeing myself and them go through the same types of things, the same struggles, they’ve helped me and I’ve helped them. It’s like leaning on each other’s shoulders’ (Interview 17)

‘Some of us are from really disadvantaged backgrounds, it may be the only meal we get for the week... for some of us, especially those of us who aren’t that able to get dinner tonight, it’s providing that support’ (Interview 13)

4.3.3. Relationship with staff members

Almost all the young people who took part in interviews and focus groups highlighted the importance of staff-young people relationships. Positive, caring and real relationships with staff impacted on their engagement with the group and their willingness or drive to participate as well as their personal development and the changes they experienced:

‘The thing that I like the most is all the staff. They’re friendly’ (Interview 04)

‘One thing I enjoyed is meeting the staff because they’ve been really kind and friendly to us... They make us feel welcome when we come in the room’ (FGD 02 – 2)

‘Without these two ladies [practitioners], I don’t know where I would be’ (FGD 03 – 2)
The key elements of this relationship that young people felt were particularly important were related to authenticity of relationships, with staff going beyond the professional requirements and showing genuine care, being open and honest with young people and really listening to them and taking their views and opinions on board. Certain young people including all members of FGD 01 likened staff to family.

‘They actually listen’ (Interview 08)

‘They’re always there for you... you have somebody you can rely on’ (Interview 22)

‘I basically consider [practitioner] to be my Auntie, because she’s such a lovely person... we have such a nice relationship’ (Interview 23)

‘They’re not like other people who you work with. With some social workers it’s like... they’ll pretend to be nice just because they get paid for it and you can feel that. They think that you can’t feel it, but you can tell the difference between people who are paid to be nice and people who are genuinely caring. And you can tell the way that the staff act. They genuinely care about people’s needs and getting them out of bad situations. They’re really nice and they help us and you can tell that they’ve got good intentions, you know, not like other people’ (FGD 01 – 6)

Several young people mentioned trust as being important, feeling able to trust staff members meant they could be open and talk to staff about things:

‘Because I feel more comfortable around [practitioner] and that, it’s easier to sort of tell the truth, you know what I mean? Because sometimes with a question like that you can just sort of lie and be like ‘yeah, I’m fine’ when really you’re not. But because you feel comfortable, it’s easier to tell the truth’ (Interview 13)

‘I feel like I can tell her much more. I trust [practitioner] with everything’ (Interview 23)

Young people also appreciated the effort staff went to, showing thought and care through listening to young people, considering each young person as an individual and adapting their support or going the extra mile to ensure young people were comfortable:

‘One of the boys has an obsession with marshmallows so they always make sure there are marshmallows if they know this boy is coming’ (Interview 23)

‘she’s picked up on what I like and listens to what I talk about and if she sees something that reminds her of me, or she thinks I’d like it, she would buy it for me... that’s really personal. I think it’s brilliant’ (Interview 23)

4.4. Feeling heard

Feeling listened to and being heard was another change process that young people highlighted as being important to them. Where young people’s opinions were actively sought and their ideas and suggestions were subsequently actioned this encouraged young people to speak out and express themselves, building their confidence and empowering them to be agents of change.
'In sitting through it and them actually stopping and asking do you have anything to say, made me feel like they want us to contribute, they want the young trustees to actually contribute to the meetings, not just sit there and feel so overwhelmed by everything. And again that meant like the world to me because it was like all these adults, and they’re so high up in their professions but they still make the time to actually fit in bringing young people in and hearing what we have to say’ (Interview 01)

‘Having that voice heard and opinion makes young carers believe in themselves’ (Interview 12)

4.4.5. Creative Outlets

Having a creative outlet was seen to be an important process for expression, personal development and individuality by many young people. This included music, drama, singing, poetry and spoken word, dancing, creative writing, and art:

‘I do a lot of poetry and every time we have an event [practitioner] forces me to do stuff and that has been good for me personally, and a lot of people said they enjoyed it’ (Interview 02)

‘Poetry and music, that’s a way to get your voice heard a lot. Even writing stories is quite a big thing. If there’s more platforms for young people to be able to do that, I think there will be less crime, less young people within prisons and jails and correctional facilities’ (Interview 17)

‘Here we get to have our own individualities… we can show who we are, our personalities and everything’ (FGD 01 -3)

‘We did activities, making stuff… art. That was so emotional, I would do that again. That was so good for me’ (FGD 02)
5. Participatory Focus Group: finding better ways to work together

Our Participatory Focus Group involved three young people and five senior members of TCS Staff. Primarily, over the two-hour conversation, we looked at ways in which the perceptions and experiences of young people differed from, or aligned with, those of the senior members of staff and what this might mean in terms of our ability to co-create with young people at different levels of the organisation. We also agreed on actions that we recommend should be pursued. Approximately 15 young people developed the questions that were used to steer the conversation and three young people aged 15 to 16 volunteered to participate in the focus group. This analysis centres on four main areas of conversation that emerged in the focus group: building awareness across the organisation; creating authentic connections across generations; self-expression, experimentation, and identity; and mental health and participation.

5.1 Building awareness across the organisation

Many of the questions the young people chose to ask centred around the ways in which The Children’s Society staff involve young people in their work. The fact that these young people were not aware of The Children’s Society’s broader participation work could demonstrate a gap in the how the organisation distributes information to young people, how accessible that information is to them, or a potential misjudgement of what we as an organisation feel is important to share. The staff could name several initiatives that had taken place over the last year and specific examples of how young people’s participation directly impacted those initiatives (many of which have been listed in the sections above). They also talked about more permanent systems that are in place like the young trustees and the ways in which young people were involved in recruitment of new employees. It was clear that the senior staff identified strongly with the idea of participation and associated it with both the organisation and its impact. Some of the areas young people have been involved in that were highlighted included:

Staff 1: We take the real life experiences of young people in the programs and take them to talk directly to the people in power. In other words, the government...So we facilitate and allow their voices to ask the questions of the people that make the big decisions...What we actually did [recently] was bring the young people to London and met with the children’s minister and the young people...had actually put a rap together, which I think the minister was really taken by...he then went away and did some work to try and sort out the particular problem we were talking about...

Staff 2: We do a lot of work around child poverty, it’s a big issue. We spend a lot of time arguing with the government around what the definition of poverty is, how many children live in poverty, but no one really sits and listens to children’s experiences living in low income households. We speak with children and they tell us...nobody gets to go to parties, nobody gets to go on school trips – all the stigma that’s associated with it. So we set up a special commission of young people called the Children’s Commission on Child Poverty. (The commission) is going to produce a report in this time next year...we hope it will have some quite spiky things that will sort of shape the election campaign...

Staff 3: There are five different bids in Manchester in different areas. We could have done the normal thing which is say ‘we know what the answer is, you need a blue one, a yellow one, and a green one so let’s do those’. But by asking the communities and
children and families, we’ve come up with five very different propositions which should meet the needs of the community much better...

The young people were not aware of most of the examples given by staff. The conversation that followed suggested the need for more horizontal mechanisms of connection and communication rather than vertical ones. The young people explained how important it was that they have access to, and knowledge of, the peer groups, committees, councils, and campaigns other young people were leading. They felt that having increased awareness of these parallel initiatives could have a direct impact on their personal wellbeing and that of their friends.

Evaluator 1: Did you know all of those things or was that new to you?

YP 2: It’s new...

YP 1: We need to know what each of us (other young people) are actually doing. Because although we might not be in the same group, for example the children in care council, some of us who are not in the group are still in care. So we need to know what changes are happening there because we might also have friends who might need help and we need to talk to them. We are part of the young people. If we’re not giving our friends and the people around us a voice, what’s the point of doing anything?

YP 3: We’ve been trying to get more presence on social media [in our work] because you can’t be working to get young people’s voices heard when you’re not going back to the young people in the community.

Both young people and senior staff agreed that an increased presence on social media would help spread awareness of TCS initiatives to young people around the country while simultaneously increasing access to communities for young people with different abilities.

Staff 2: Social media would be a very useful communication vehicle. It’s absolutely something we should do more of.

YP1: I think something simple like a Twitter page with motivational speeches for people who are going through issues at home, a number to contact in a situation...

One member of staff suggested that while social media was important, it was equally beneficial to have more opportunities for young people to come together across participation groups, and different levels of the organisation, to talk about what they were working on.

Staff 4: I think that probably sometimes just sitting down and talking is really important isn’t it? Being in the same room. Sometimes we forget that.

This was met with agreement and triggered an important point that became a central theme throughout the rest of the conversation. While the young people were enthusiastic about sitting down and having conversations, they were adamant that these meetings proceed in an authentic and connected way. This echoed some of the comments we heard from the staff we surveyed around the danger of creating tokenistic connections between young people and the organisation.
5.2 Creating authentic connection across generations

The young people in this focus group referred to many personal examples of relationships with adults and authority figures that they felt were disingenuous, too professional, or lacked any real connection or intimacy and explained that this had a negative impact on them.

YP 3: Sometimes we feel misunderstood, especially at school, especially with professionals understanding the students, they are quite dismissive of things, and in some situations they know you’re going through this situation and they always have to be professional about it. Sometimes you don’t need a professional, you just need someone to understand where you’re coming from.

YP3: We pick up on everything…your facial expression, the way you act about it…sometimes there’s sarcasm and it gets to quite a lot of [young] people. It’s the reason some young people leave school...

One staff member suggested having a school take over day where young people and teachers reverse roles as a tactic for creating empathy across the divide. The young people felt this was useful in some instances but not in others. They found it useful when creative approaches to learning were used like poetry and motivational talks. It was clear that when given the opportunity, the young people were more excited about opportunities to learn in ways that fostered real connection. They wanted to learn about each other and themselves while also learning the subject matter.

Staff 1: Maybe we can help equip teachers better...is that what you’re saying? What about school takeover says? What would it look like if you were running the school?

YP1: I did that, me and a group of my mates we had [a school take over day]. Most of [the students] just decide to listen to youtube videos all day.

YP3: When I did it in English. We found motivational speakers, poets, quite young ones, who talk about modern things. We got people to write a poem that would describe them. We found one [poem] about how life is like a recipe and we got people to write their own recipes of their lives, and people read them out.

Staff 2: So you want interaction...you’re actually quite discerning customers...you know what it looks like when it’s good, not just easy.

The young people went on to say they felt connected to adults when they were heard and understood by staff but where boundaries were also respected and maintained.

Evaluator 1: What’s the difference in your relationships with your TCS workers and other adults?

YPS: With [our TCS worker] we have banter, but we know when to compose ourselves, when to listen and stuff like that. At the same time, they care about what we say...I also have two teachers in my school, I think it might be because they’re quite young, but he understands where we come from, we have banter, but then we take him serious, it’s quite all around.
Staff 2: Is that last point important? You respect teachers who care about what you say, not just let you get away with stuff?

YP 3: With my English teacher, she’s like most young people, she’s just like ‘do what you want’. I think she’s a hipster. Where my history teacher like (strikes the table), but I get a lot more done in history. Sometimes I say I hate those teachers but I really do like them...when they acknowledge what you say, instead of just dismiss it or it gets right past them.

Staff 1: What is it that our staff do that’s different than the ways the teachers work with you?

YP 1: I didn’t have a voice at all until I joined [this group]...With The Children’s Society, we can actually get our own ideas across, rather than the professionals giving us ideas, we’re giving them to ourselves.

When the staff members asked how The Children’s Society could facilitate greater connection between young people and adults or people in authority, the young people responded that they thought it was important to have more opportunities to come together and talk in ways that honoured difference and personal experience. One staff member agreed, but thought it was challenging for some adults to be vulnerable and share their personal experiences, while maintaining their roles as professionals.

YP3: I like it when we come in and we all sit down and just debate about things and stuff like that. Because there are so many different personalities and backgrounds...

Evaluator 1: Would you feel more comfortable with adults who can be vulnerable with you and tell you more personal stories about themselves and their own experiences?

YP3: I think with adults, when they show their vulnerability, not a lot, but a little bit of vulnerability, I feel like you can tell them almost anything about yourself. Because they’ve not put their guard up, they’ve cracked a bit, and when you see the cracks you think ‘oh they’re really human’.

Staff 2: People like to know that you’re human, that you’ve got follies and frailties and that you didn’t do it right the first time, because it makes you feel comfortable that you’re not perfect. But adults are often in positions of authority...we do need to be guarded because there’s a specific role we have. In one piece of work we were doing, community members were saying ‘we want to relate first, and intervene second’. The challenge is if you go in [to a community] and you don’t earn anything, you just expect it...then you become part of the problem. So I do think relationships are pretty critical to this.

Everyone present agreed that it was important to create more opportunities for young people and TCS staff at different levels of the organisation to connect on a personal level. The conversation suggested that facilitating real connection should be an on going process that cuts across all areas of the organisation and does not just have a home in initiatives that identify as ‘participation’ projects and that staff at all levels of the organisation should strike a balance between being an authority figure and being a relatable ‘real human’ when trying to increase the participation of young people.
5.3 Self-expression, experimentation, and identity

The young people told staff members that they wanted more opportunities to express their individual identities and experiment with their personal interests and future career choices. They felt like their schools and community environments limited their ability to do this and they often felt rejected or shut-down by adults who did not take their dreams or self-perceptions seriously, which led them to rebel. Staff agreed that self-expression and experimentation were important to a young person’s development into adulthood and that a lack of safe spaces in which to do this was a problem that could impact a child’s development into adulthood.

YP1: My teacher is a math teacher and she’s also the headmaster now and she’s like ‘so what do you want to be?’ And I was like ‘I want to become a freelance creative person’. I’ve worked as a freelancer since I was nine. And she was like ‘that’s a bit of a stupid choice’.

YP1: I go to a performing arts college and even now they’re like ‘you can’t express yourself’. A couple weeks ago I went blonde, I dip dyed my hair blue, another girl came to school with a Mohawk, it was a protest, everyone just came with the most dramatic look. And everyone looked like that when Ofsted came into school. When we’re able to express ourselves we go to extremes.

Staff 1: It’s about self-expression and identity. If you don’t get the opportunity to experiment and try, what’s the purpose of that transition between childhood and adulthood? Where’s the tolerance around that? At the moment we want everyone to fit into our little neat boxes rather than appreciate the diversity of that.

It was felt that The Children’s Society could fill a gap in offering more opportunities for young people to participate in practical experience that was more related to areas that were interesting to those young people.

YP 3: I think we have to find out what young people like in society like the arts, or math, and try to find out what’s out there for them, even internships, summer work experience, so they know there are things out there for them to do, instead of stuff on the streets.

YP 3: Although a lot of young people get work experience, it’s like saying ‘oh you want to do something in fashion but you’re stacking shelves’. And a lot of schools are dropping work experience, so it’s bad enough that we don’t get good enough work experience and that they’re dropping it is even worse...

Following on from the previous conversation around a need for increased social media and communication, one staff member recommended that TCS meet both needs by creating a young person’s design group that could support creative communication initiatives, digital design, and offer real work experience. This triggered a number of ideas around using theatre, spoken word, and music to reach young people while also offering interesting opportunities for real experience working in different environments. While the young people seemed to know of many artists and groups that might be willing to team up with them, they implied that they would like support from TCS to implement some of those ideas.
Staff 1: I think what we might want to take away from this specifically is around how we can have a young person’s design group that supports the digital agenda that we want and digital strategy.

YP 3: I was just wondering, do you know if young people’s stories could be put into a theatre group?

YP 1: In our area there’s like five different theatre groups. There are dance groups where they choreograph themselves. They literally just have a programme manager who books space but they do everything themselves.

Staff 2: So if we look at ‘how can we get the messages and the voices out of young people through a different channel’ then that might be where we can fundraise to find some resources that sounds like a really good idea.

YP3: Also, with that, you can get more things going on like spoken word stuff, things like that. There’s someone famous, Tiny Tempo, if The Children’s Society gets the space more young people will come and if he knows about The Children’s Society is about, it can also widen everything, and people will know more and pay more attention, ‘it must be good, he’s wearing a Children’s Society t-shirt’.

5.4 Mental health and participation

An area that was of particular concern to the young people present was mental health. They asked if staff members thought that enough was being done to help those affected which lead to a discussion about resources. While staff acknowledged that mental health was an important issue, they also raised their own concerns about the difficulty in trying to implement too many services across different sectors. One staff member suggested that we do more research into the economic benefits of addressing mental health in earlier stages.

YP 3: Do you think the current services are there for young people who are suffering or are at high risk of developing mental health disorders? Or that those on the verge or are suffering, do you think that the services at the moment are as high as they could be?

Staff 4: In a sense, perhaps you’re seeing we’ve got limited services that we can provide. A key part of that is making sure that we give the right service to the right person at the right time. So actually finding ways of identifying who those young people are and who are at risk of going into Tier 3 and 4 would be interesting. I think what we’re seeing is that at the moment the local authorises don’t have very much money, so actually what we’re doing is focusing the resources. There’s something about trying to understand whether we can get to people at Tier 2 because that might actually be cheaper.

Staff 1: I think as someone who has been in the situation where I have had to argue for resources for children and young people’s mental health, there’s a phrase which is Cinderella. Children and young people’s mental health services is the poor relationship in the mix between adults and other people – it doesn’t get the same amount of resource.

One young person responded that the problem was not just about resource, but also about how that resource was spent. She felt that young people needed more access to psychotherapists and not just academic councillors.
YP 1: I found out recently that the council gives money to the schools and the schools do what they want with it. There are councillors in those school but those councillors aren’t therapists. I don’t know why schools don’t have psychotherapists within the school because that would help a lot.

YP 3: A lot of people come into year seven really happy and then bullying and other things start and by year 9 they have clinical depression, anxiety. At school now, people with anxiety get given a little booklet to give to their teacher. And I’ve seen one teacher be like ‘yeah, ok, I’ll read that next week’ and it’s not moved from that place.

They also felt that there were things that could be done to prevent and address mental health challenges without investing a lot of money. They gave personal examples of their own challenges as well as some of the struggles they watched their friends go through that they felt could have been easily prevented. Two of the participants spoke about a girl they knew who had committed suicide and how even serious mental illness could be addressed early on.

YP 3: if you saw her you would think ‘she’d never commit suicide.

YP 1: she did a whole thing on YouTube...

YP 3: When you look back and join all the dots together you can see it. And it’s just little things like that. She’s asking for someone to talk to, it’s that simple. If it’s expensive, you can get young people to kind of mentor each other kind of thing. Just stuff like that...A lot of people have self-esteem issues and it doesn’t cost money to make people feel good about themselves...A lot of people have depression. They might think ‘oh I’m just a teenager, it happens. It’s a stigma that all teenagers go through moods, but all this can add up to more...I don’t think young people ask for help until something extreme happens, so right before someone takes pills they’ll text ‘I need help’.

Knowing that mental health is so prevalent amongst young people and relatively under resourced, the evaluators wanted to know how staff could be more conscious about creating safe environments in which young people struggling with mental health challenges felt comfortable participating and did not feel excluded or marginalised because of what they were going through. The young people responded that staff members needed to be continuously aware that many young people are dealing with mental health concerns, but also not draw attention to them, isolate them, or treat them differently.

YP 2: You don’t want young people who have mental health issues, you don’t want to make them stand out. They want to be seen as everyone else. They don’t want to feel like they are being treated differently. So I think it’s important for staff members to treat that person similarly to other people, to not make them stand out or make a special case of them. But at the same time, they need to keep in mind that they could have certain issues and might be uncomfortable with things. You need to maintain a balance between the two.

One young person shared a personal example of how she was bullied when she was going through a difficult time, which in turn had an impact on her mental health. She explained how she was stigmatised by her school and that this had an effect on her relationships with other young people.
YP 3: People assume that I’m loud and have a lot of friends. I’m not actually. I’m loud when I need to be loud. But it’s an act, a front, and like if you see someone who looks lonely you automatically assume that everyone is their friend...in one year of school I was picked on by everyone, and there was this one boy and he pushed me downstairs and I broke my wrist, and then the teachers realised I was really overweight and had low self-esteem, and gran passed away, things were happening. They put me in this group and there were a lot of young people with learning difficulties and they said ‘you have an avoidance personality disorder’...People say ‘you’re always alone’...I try to make friends but those friendships break down because I’ve got social barriers with a lot of people.

Ultimately, the conversation around mental health circled back to the importance of building healthy, deep, and supportive relationships. In addition to increased awareness raising and campaigning around mental health, both staff and young people felt that learning how to be more connected to others would drastically improve our ability to identify and support those who might be struggling without stigmatising them.

Staff 1: There’s a common thread here. How do we build relationships that are supportive? How do we construct relationships that are meaningful and supportive rather than critical and challenging?

YP 2: We’re never taught that.

Staff 1: No one is taught that. We think it’s kind of an automatic thing but it’s not.

Staff 4: I’ve learnt, when you get to my age in life, that relationships are actually really difficult, and nobody has got it cracked. So I think we all need to be really honest about that.
6. Conclusions

This review provides an overview of The Children’s Society’s participation activities during financial year 2013-14, including outlining children and young people’s involvement in organisational decision-making; evidencing the impact of their involvement on the children and young people themselves, and exploring the potential impact of participation on wider communities. This was achieved through understanding children and young people’s experiences with project-based participation groups; reviewing information relating to our projects, policy and campaigning work; and gaining insight into the perspectives of The Children’s Society staff.

1. The impact of participation on The Children’s Society

Children and young people have influenced The Children’s Society’s decision-making in several ways, including advising on the recruitment of 27 new staff members, identifying three of the four new organisational brand values, and contributing to decisions via the trustees board. Of the 64 staff members surveyed, 31% have involved children and young people in their work, 100% of whom felt this was beneficial. Both the staff surveyed, as well as the young people and senior staff involved in the PAR focus group, felt that we could do more to involve children and young people organisationally, and to improve the quality of children and young people’s involvement to ensure it is non-tokenistic. The PAR focus group also highlighted the need for more meaningful connections and communication between non-frontline practitioners and children and young people, as well as facilitation of more authentic connections between children, young people and adults generally.

2. The impact of participation on the children and young people involved

The main body of data included in this review relates to the changes experienced by children and young people themselves, which they identified as happening through being involved in our project-based participation groups. Therefore the following points can be concluded most strongly.

Children and young people involved with project-based participation groups associated strong personal development factors with their experiences of being involved with these groups. Children and young people felt their confidence increased, they experienced improved social networks, expression, voice and agency, as well as becoming more self-aware, having raised aspirations, engaging in opportunities and developing key skills. Children and young people felt that they had been able to develop in these areas through the groups’ providing encouragement and support; a safe space for respite, escapism and routine; feeling listened to and being heard. In particular children and young people mentioned the strength of staff-young person relationships and peer support as being an important factor about these groups.

3. The impact of participation on our wider communities

Children and young people’s involvement in The Children’s Society’s lobbying work has contributed to subsequent policy changes including to safeguard unaccompanied children through the publication of new statutory guidance for local authorities, establishing a reform programme and amending the Children and Families Bill to legally require guardians for unaccompanied children; as well as changes to the Children and Families Bill to recognise young carers subsequent to work carried out by our Young Carers in Focus project.
Children and young people involved with project-based participation groups contributed to several changes to wider communities. Examples of where young people felt they had been able to influence changes include producing the *Standing Tall after Feeling Small* booklet in StreetSafe Lancashire, which should have enabled professionals to better identify and support vulnerable young people at risk of sexual exploitation. Young people with our Disability Advocacy Project worked with a local hospital and produced a DVD to improve sexual health services for children with different abilities. Children and young people felt they had been able to influence decision-making and attitudes including through talking to MPs and working with police officers, such as work done by Greenwich Children and Young People’s Participation Council. They also worked to improve access to local services for young people and held workshops to raise awareness on topics including sexual health and relationships, for young people to be better able to make informed decisions and access support. Young people in our Care Leaver’s Council in Lancashire worked to improve support and provisions for other care leavers.

**Limitations**

This review aimed to focus on exploring in-depth the experiences of participation for children and young people involved in project-based participation groups in particular, and the changes they associated with these experiences. Therefore, whilst an overview of participation activities across the organisation is presented, the main body of data relates to the impact of participation on the children and young people themselves. Evidence of the changes experienced by children and young people emerged from the analysis of transcript data from 23 semi-structured interviews and three group discussions. Steps were taken to ensure the validity of these findings, including speaking to children and young people from a range of different project-based participation groups, conducting sufficient interviews to achieve saturation (when themes are reiterated in different participant responses and adding new participants does not add new themes); and exploring any discrepancies from the majority themes. However, these findings may not be generalizable to participation activities in different contexts and settings.

We have explored the potential impact of children and young people’s involvement on effecting change in wider communities; however, we do not aim to infer causality in this area, and explore where change has been contributed to rather than asserting or trying to measure attribution.

Several recommendations surfaced through this assessment, which we hope will be taken on board and realised through the outlined action points.
7. Recommendations for The Children’s Society’s Future Participation Activities

This review has identified certain areas which young people feel are important to them in terms of their participatory experience. The following points are key recommendations and action items that emerged from this review, which should be followed up on over the financial year:

- **Increased access to The Children’s Society for CYP**
  - Increase access to The Children’s Society’s support and services, for CYP who are not currently involved.
  - Ensure that our project-based participation groups are open to all, increasing diversity of group membership e.g. different backgrounds and ages represented in groups.

- **Connecting and communicating with wider audiences**
  - Hold wider consultation with CYP in communities who do not access participation groups – represent their views and hear their voices.
  - Resource horizontal communication mechanisms – so CYP can share information across The Children’s Society

- **Exploring digital platforms and social media**
  - Explore the safe use of digital platforms and social media (including Facebook and Twitter) – connecting and communicating with CYP via methods that are relevant to them
  - Look into setting up a CYP’s digital design group

- **Exploring creative outlets for young people.**
  - Include elements of creativity within the structure of project-based participation groups – CYP highlighted the importance of creativity for their expression, experimentation and identity, including dance, music, art, graffiti, writing and drama.
  - Explore embedding wider creative outlets beyond project-based participation groups - for young people involved with the organisation to experiment with things they might like to do

- **Creating authentic connections across generations**
  - Ensure the key staff qualities identified in this review are upheld in our work and in future service delivery - including being able to listen to CYP, relate to them, build trust through being honest and non-judgemental, treat CYP as individuals and have genuine human relationships with them.
  - Involve young people in staff recruitment and consider CYP-related staff qualities in the recruitment process
  - Work to create connections between CYP and adults at different levels of the organisation e.g. through round-table discussions and training for staff on communicating effectively for young people

- **Maximising the involvement of children and young people within the organisation**
  - Ensure involvement of young people in organisational decision-making is authentic rather than tokenistic.
  - Expand and improve the quality of young people’s involvement in the organisation e.g. involving CYP with an interest in fashion in designing our retail displays
  - Improve feedback mechanisms to ensure CYP that are involved are kept informed of any outcomes or changes that happen following their involvement e.g. in lobbying for policy change or campaigning

- **Mental health and participation**
o Build in mechanisms to ensure we are aware of and accessible to young people with mental health challenges. Relationship building, mentoring and peer counselling are also areas that should be considered in future participation work and are areas for future development.

Certain elements of these recommendations are reflected in the seven Participation Principles which guide The Children’s Society’s approach to participation, including Principle One: respect, inclusion and no discrimination; Principle three: self-expression and autonomy; and Principle Four: informed decisions and avoiding tokenism.

7.1 Action points for 2014-15 and beyond

The above proposed recommendations should be fulfilled over the next financial year through the following action points:

- **Staff engagement with young people – qualities, communication and connection**
  o Children and young people’s involvement in recruitment of staff will be routinely upheld through amending the recruitment policy and agreeing the level at which young people should always be included on the interview panel of frontline practitioners, as well as senior staff.
  o Children and young people should be involved in staff appraisals, with the production of CYP-friendly appraisal forms and HR commitment to encourage all Children and Families Directorate staff to involve young people in this process.
  o All frontline staff are trained on participation as part of their induction programme. An e-learning module is to be created and distributed on participation for non-frontline staff and workshops will be held to discuss the importance of participation and how young people can be involved.

- **Digital platforms and Social media**
  o We should explore how we can safely expand on the use of social media to connect with children and young people. We are establishing ‘Connect Space’ – an online Moodle system where children, young people and practitioners can communicate. There is a young person’s Twitter account which can be accessed under supervision.
  o We will explore the potential of establishing a digital design group for children and young people.

- **Improving the quality and quantity of young people’s involvement**
  o Participation should be included within business plans, to outline how young people will be involved in our existing work and to ensure this will be resourced and delivered.
  o Project initiation documents should include a section on participation to ensure this is embedded in all of our future activity.
  o We now include participation in monthly reporting metrics so we can routinely report on the extent of our participation work within the organisation, capture feedback from young people, key participation messages and measure unmet need.
  o We should consider prioritising resources for participation to ensure we involve and engage young people as much as possible and in the most meaningful way that we can.
The Participation Strategy should be implemented and the Principles upheld to ensure involving young people in organisational decision-making is part of our everyday working.

Findings and recommendations from the Governance Task and Finish Group’s work reviewing young people’s involvement in the trustees’ board should be implemented.

- **Creative outlets**
  - We need to continually explore creative ways of working with and engaging children and young people
  - Young people can apply to Pot of Gold for funding to carry out creative projects

- **Communication**
  - We need to ensure we are communicating with wider children and young people and feeding back the outcomes of children and young people’s involvement in our work.
References


Appendix 1 – Recruitment Breakdown
Headquarter Staff Recruitment and Young People Involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of post/role</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of CYP involved</th>
<th>Candidate appointed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Trustees – vice chair/fundraising &amp; marketing role</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioning Manager (Adolescent Neglect)</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Families Director</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No, young people contributed to the decision not to appoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Director</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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Children and Families Directorate Staff Recruitment and Young People Involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Person/Role Recruited</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Young people involved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keighley/Bradford and Calderdale</td>
<td>Safe Hands</td>
<td>Preventative Worker</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
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<td>TCS Oldham</td>
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<td>5 Independent Visitors</td>
<td>July/August 2013</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Family Support</td>
<td>Volunteer Coordinator</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swindon Children’s Centres</td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>Family Support Worker</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPP Wessex</td>
<td>Stay and Play</td>
<td>Traveller and Gypsy Play Worker</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>SCARPA</td>
<td>4 Project Workers</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
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<td>August 2013</td>
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<td>June 2013</td>
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<td>Advocacy</td>
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<td>November 2013</td>
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