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“
MY SAY
MATTERS
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Barnet Child Participation & Family Involvement Strategy **2022 – 2025**



BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH



Barnet Child Participation & Family Involvement Strategy **2022 – 2025**

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1. INTRODUCTION

ARTICLE 12 United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out that ‘Every child has the right to express their views on matters that affect them, and for these views to be taken into consideration’. This means that when decisions are made about children and young people, they have the right to share their opinion and for this to be taken seriously.

Why ‘My Say Matters’

Children and young people under the age of 19 make up a quarter of the total number of people living in Barnet. That’s almost 100,000 children and young people using local services and attending our schools and colleges.

With this many children living in our borough we want it to be ‘Family Friendly’ by making sure Barnet is a great place to live and go to school. To help us get it right, we want the children, young people and families that live here and use our services to tell us how well we are doing, what we need to do differently and help us make the changes that children and young people want to see.

In developing this strategy, we spoke with a number of children and young people, many of which have told us that they know they have a right to be heard. They hope that this strategy will ensure that their voices are listened to and, that the impact of their ideas, opinions and feedback will be obvious and evident.



PURPOSE AND AIMS

‘My Say Matters’ is what we have called our Child Participation and Family Involvement Strategy, this document sets out the way we are going to work to involve children and young people so they can tell us what they think, help us make decisions, design and shape our services.

In Barnet Family Services, we think children, young people and their families can help us make decisions and by working together we can teach and learn from each other. We want to include children and young people of different ages and up to 25 years, and parents for younger children, from different backgrounds and experiences so we can make sure that we get lots of different views and ideas. There are already a number of groups in Barnet where children and young people can share their views and we want to build on these and bring their ideas together.

These are:

- Barnet Youth Assembly
- Takeover Day
- #BOP (Barnet on Point – Children in Care Council)
- Youth Parliament
- Youth Ambassadors
- Barnet Youth Board
- BING (Barnet Inclusive Next Generation, Barnet’s SEND youth voice forum)
- Youth Perception Survey
- Barnet Young Commissioners
- Barnet Parent/Carer Forum



My Say Matters has been developed with children and young people, some who are involved in the groups listed above. They told us how important it is that equalities, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of ‘My Say Matters’ and we totally agree.

This strategy is for all children, young people and their families especially those from racially minoritised communities, migrant families, LGBT+, children with disabilities and any other marginalised groups whose voices may not be heard as often. We will make sure that everyone is supported to share their voice and express themselves fully.

We have made great progress, already, involving more children and young people from different backgrounds by using their ideas and by setting up activities that are creative and fun, making sure the children and young people helping us are well supported by adults and get rewarded for giving us their time.



2. OUR VISION

Barnet’s Children and Young People’s Plan 2019 – 2023 sets out 7 key areas that aim to make sure that all children, young people and families are safe, healthy, resilient, knowledgeable, responsible, informed, listened to and involved.



■ Safe & Secure

Children and young people are safe and protected from harm



■ Family & Belonging

Families and children are together and part of a community that encourages resilience



■ Health & Wellbeing

Children are supported to achieve a healthy start in life, enjoy a healthy lifestyle and to build resilience



■ Education & Learning

Children and young people can learn about the world around them and have access to excellent education opportunities



■ Culture

Our attitudes and behaviours enhance the way we work with children and young people



■ Cooperation & Leadership

We include children and young people in planning and decision making that affects them



■ Communication

Information is shared effectively to children, young people and families across the borough, and they are kept informed of what happens with their contributions



The parents, children and young people we consulted agreed that our vision is helpful and ambitious and particularly liked the importance placed on safety, belonging, culture, and identity. They thought that being safe and secure was the most important theme as this was needed before a sense of belonging, identity needs, strong communities and learning could be strengthened.

They also agreed that the importance of clear communication and authentic cooperation from leaders in the council is vital to realising the vision, alongside, diverse representation and adequate resourcing.

This feedback has helped us to develop methods for sharing regular feedback, build in accountability processes that include children and young people and think about how we manage publicity about My Say Matters.

There are some other plans and strategies you might be interested to read; these cover a number of different areas of Family Services work.

- The Barnet Plan 2021 – 2025
- Children & Young People’s Plan 2019 - 2023
- Community Participation Strategy 2020
- SEND and Disabilities Strategy 2021 - 2024
- Corporate Parenting Plan
- Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2022 – 2025

We will be consulting with children and young people on the development of these strategies in 2022:

- Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy 2022 - 2025
- Youth Justice Plan 2022 – 2025
- 0-19 Early Help Strategy 2022 - 2025



3. ‘MY SAY MATTERS’ PRIORITIES

We want ‘My Say Matters’ to become part of what everyone does so we will be providing training to the children and young people supporting us in this work and also to Family Services staff and volunteers who will be supporting children and young people to get involved. We hope to make sure that children and young people are giving us feedback, helping us think about problems and new opportunities and taking an active part in changing how we do things at every level from the top to the bottom.

‘MY SAY MATTERS’

We think we can do this in three ways:



LISTENING TO



WORKING WITH



ACTING UPON



The children and young people we spoke to wanted us to know that they thought our priorities interlink and mutually influence each other.

They also wanted us to know:

“IF YOUNG PEOPLE WERE LISTENED TO, YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF SELF THAT WERE CONFIDENT AND MADE GOOD STRONG DECISIONS REGARDLESS OF WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN THROUGH”

“MY SAY MATTERS”

“IF YOU DON’T ACT ON WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY THEY WON’T KEEP PARTICIPATING”

“BE MORE APPROACHABLE, ONCE YOU ARE APPROACHABLE YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE MORE COMFORTABLE AND APPROACH THE SERVICE FOR HELP, HAVING THE SKILL TO FULFIL ALL NEEDS AS NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL”

There is a model of participation called **‘The Lundy Model’** which we will be using to guide our work as it is well regarded internationally as an excellent way to involve children and young people.

The four phases of the model are set out below:

SPACE

Give children and young people safe and inclusive opportunities to form and express their views:

- Have the views of children and young people been actively sought?
- Is it a safe and accessible space where they can express freely?
- Are staff appropriately trained and supported?
- Have children and young people been pro-actively recruited from diverse backgrounds?

VOICE

Provide information and support to children and young people to express their views:

- Have they been given the information they need to form a view?
- Do they know their participation is voluntary?
- Are accessible and creative activities being used?
- Is enough time being scheduled to explore issues?



INFLUENCE

Make sure the views of children and young people are taken seriously and acted on where possible:

- Have the views of CYPF been considered, and how was this recorded?
- Have CYPF been told how their views have influenced a decision, and if not, why?
- Is there a process in place for CYPF to hold decision-makers to account?
- When and how will CYPF see the impact of their participation?

AUDIENCE

Make sure the views of children and young people are communicated to the right people:

- Are the right decision makers involved and engaged?
- Is there a clear and agreed process for communicating the views of CYPF?
- Do CYPF know the audience their views are being shared with, and what will happen afterwards?
- Does the audience have the power to make decisions?

Children and young people told us that they like this model as an approach to working with each other, but it is really important to them that they know what we want from them and why. They want to know who the information is for and how we will make them feel confident to participate.

They mostly want us to make sure spaces and opportunities for engagement are safe and meet diverse needs. Some told us the option not to participate is also important and we agree that everyone has a right to make up their own mind about what they want to be involved in and how they will contribute.



PRIORITY 1

LISTENING TO

This priority sets out the expectation for children, young people, and families voices to be heard and for their views, wishes, experiences and aspirations to be at the front and centre of what we do. To do this there must be a shared understanding of what children need, and adults working with them should be curious about what life is like for children and young people in Barnet.

3.1 Listening to – what we expect from professionals

- Opportunities for listening to children and young people fit around them in spaces and places in which they feel most comfortable
- The voices of all children are given a chance to be heard, particularly those that are impacted by disadvantage or discrimination of any type
- Young people are invited to participate, contribute and influence our strategic priorities, plans and activities and are rewarded in ways that benefit them
- Children and young people are seen as experts in their own lives and helped to tell their own stories about their experiences and relationship with local services



PRIORITY 2



WORKING WITH

This priority recognises meaningful participation with children and young people in all areas that affect their lives and their communities, as a fundamental human right. Adults have a responsibility to find creative ways to engage the voices of children and young people at an individual and/or group level to shape and influence decisions that affect their lives.

3.2 Working with - what we expect

- Allocation of time and resources to enable children, regardless of their age, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, ability, gender, or family circumstances and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who suffer inequalities and social injustice, to participate and have their say
- Children and young people are valued as equal partners and their ability to create change in their own communities
- Children and young people are able to tell us about the ways in which they want to engage with professionals and services and understand how they can get involved
- Engagement, participation and working alongside children and young people becomes ‘business as usual’ practice



PRIORITY 3



ACTING UPON

This priority aims to ensure that what children, young people and their families tell us results in change in the way that we do things or the decisions that we make.

We must work to create opportunities for children that promote a strong sense of their own cultural, racial, religious, and linguistic identity and build their self-esteem through access and inclusion in education, employment, training, and positive activities.

For children who are disadvantaged, we must be ambitious for their futures and ensure effective measures are in place to not only hear and work together but to address the harmful impact of social and racial inequalities and injustice. We must ensure that all agencies demonstrate that Black Lives Matter in Barnet.

3.3 Acting upon – What we expect

- **Training is available to promote ‘cultural competence’ in the development of policy, practice and engagement with children, young people, and families from racially minoritised backgrounds**
- **Children and Young People, have their involvement and participation and contributions acknowledged, supported, recognised, and rewarded**
- **Clear pathways for children and young people are created to help them to influence our policies, strategies and services**
- **Provide transparent processes for children and young people to hold services and professionals to account – when they say they are going to do something**




4. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY


The Learning and Development Team organises the implementation of My Say Matters and training for Family Services staff and some other agencies like schools, health and police. The team will work closely with our communications teams to promote My Say Matters events, training, and overall impact of participation work. This will ensure that awareness about the need to involve children and young people is raised and make sure we celebrate good examples of the impact of engagement and co-production with young people when this has happened. The creation of our logos and design are shown below.

During the developing of My Say Matters, children and young people have consistently told us that using many forms of communication is the best way to reach them, e.g., digital campaigns, social media (e.g., Instagram), live recording of events, newsletters, posters and most importantly themselves! They would like us to promote the strategy in their schools and places they use and visit.

BARNET "My Say Matters" — TIMELINE —

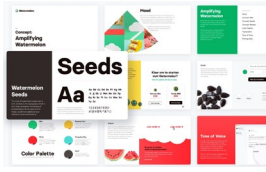
Session 1
08 February

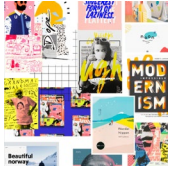





Session 1

- Introductions
- Outline of mood boards and their purpose
- Brief given to young people

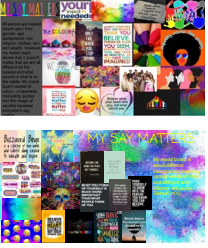





Session 2
15 February



OPTION A




OPTION B



Font: Arial


OPTION C




Session 2

- Young People present their mood boards to Good Impressions and then to management
- Good Impressions to work up ideas

Session 3
21 February




B




CHOSEN PRIMARY BRANDING

A



C





CHOSEN SECONDARY BRANDING

The main branding is option **B** this will be used on all leading communications for "MSM". The two secondary branding designs can be used for specific age group communication. Option **A** will be used for a younger audience and option **C** will be used for older children. Graphic elements from options **A** & **C** can be used in conjunction with the main branding, but only in moderation


Session 3

- Good Impressions presents 3 versions of branding
- Discussion and vote on 3 branding concepts
- Final branding chosen





THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART, YOU WERE ALL AMAZING



5. MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ‘MY SAY MATTERS’

Our participation and service development officers, with the Family Services Managers will track the progress being made against the feedback we have received from children, young people and families. They will plan participation activities, establish an events calendar and create a consistent approach to collecting feedback. They will also deliver training for and with children and young people and work with them to create communication campaigns.

A report will be written every year to outline the work that has taken place, and this will be presented to the Performance, Quality and Assurance sub-group of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Leadership Forum of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children’s Education, Learning and Safeguarding Committee. Regular updates will be reported to the Executive Director of Children’s Services, the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Barnet, the Lead Member for Children and Chairs of wider partnership boards to ensure ongoing connectivity between policy and practice as they relate to children and young people in Barnet.

The reports will focus on:

- **The numbers of children and young people engaged in our participation events and forums**
- **How children and young people are engaging in and leading changes to Family Services policies, strategies, and services**
- **Ways in which services are developing and the training that has been provided as a direct result of family involvement and feedback**
- **The impact of involvement of children and young people on the improvement of services**
- **What children and young people have to say about what we are doing**

We are ambitious in our aims, and we hope that our work with children, young people and their families at key development, implementation and evaluation stages will facilitate a much stronger voice of the child and impact on the development of services and in monitoring of ‘My Say Matters’.

Children and young people thought that how we measure the effectiveness of ‘My Say Matters’ was one of the most important areas for us to focus on. They highlighted that monitoring should be focused on what has changed for them and not on satisfying leaders or counsellors. Some suggestions were the formation of a Youth Governance Structure with includes youth inspectors and a youth-led board to which leaders, agencies, councillors are invited to, alongside children and young people joining existing meetings with council leaders. We think these are excellent ideas and will be working together to establish a structure which is based on transparency, balancing these power dynamics and giving children and young people opportunities to hold us to account.

MY THOUGHTS



“YOU
GOT
THIS
”



“
**MY SAY
MATTERS**
”

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