How to effectively involve Children & Young People in Commissioning
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All appendices are hyperlinked throughout the document and a full list can be accessed here.
1. Purpose of the Guide

All children and young people are able to be involved in decision making. As participation and communication are basic human rights, we must support children and young people to participate in and influence decisions and issues that affect their lives. This ‘How To Guide’ is aimed at all those involved in designing, developing and running services for children, young people and families. This guide provides information and ideas about how, with the right attitudes and approach, you can enable children to do this. This guide should be read in conjunction with the Active Participation Strategy Update 2011 which sets out the participation principles and actions that Lancashire Children and Young People’s Trust have signed up to.

There are so many opportunities for children and young people to take an active part in shaping the ways in which we all live but particularly in terms of the services they use and local and national organisations who work with and for them. Children and young people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them and this is promoted in law, policy and guidance; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), the Childrens Act 2004, current Government policy such as Positive for Youth, Lancashire Children and Young People’s Trusts and inspections to name but a few. Children and Young People’s participation is key to achieving change; to improving policy and services and ensuring the best outcomes for them. One way that Lancashire Children and Young People’s Trust is keen to ensure that this is happening is in commissioning our services in Lancashire.

The governance of commissioning is at the heart of this how to guide and the purpose of governance is to scrutinise, question and hold to account. ‘Children and young people are active citizens and not simply consumers of services. To counter balance the trend within commissioning to see local people as consumers (or customers) children and young people must be part of the bigger picture of governing commissioning’ (Participation works. How to Guide. Page 10-11)

This ‘How to guide’ has been developed by members of the Lancashire Participation Network (LPN) and includes case studies from members of the network. The LPN brings together professionals from services and organisations across Lancashire to support the implementation of the Active Participation Strategy. The network is a sub group of the Contribute and Engage Priority Group.
2. How to Use this Guide

The guide can and should be used by any setting, service, organisation, Children and Young People’s Trust or indeed any other partnerships with an interest in involving children and young people in commissioning.

The aim of the guide is not to give you the ‘fail safe way’ of involving children and young people but rather it is a document which sets out to make you aware of the background, methods, approaches and best practice that you could utilise when involving children and young people in commissioning processes.

Active participation is a journey that all those involved including staff, managers, volunteers, children and young people go on and will always be different according to the setting and particular circumstances that surround the commission. Sticking to some basic principles and values, included in this guide, will keep you on track whilst giving you flexibility to develop something that works for you and the children and young people involved.

‘In a model of best practice the involvement of children and young people should be based upon how they themselves feel they should be involved in the process’. Their Voice, their choice; involving children and young people in recruitment, selection and induction. North West Regional Youth Work Unit (NWRYWU). Therefore the goal any organisation, service or Partnership has for children and young people’s active participation in commissioning should be defined by the children and young people themselves. Every part of this guide should be viewed with this point at the forefront; ‘what do children and young people tell you about how they would like to participate’.

When using the guide feel free to adapt, develop and change ideas or simply lift them directly from the guide. The key to participation is being creative. When and where possible seek advice and support about developing your mechanisms for involvement from colleagues from across the Children and Young People’s Trust in Lancashire as well as from children and young people.
3. What is Commissioning

The Commissioning Support Programme describes commissioning as being:

‘The process for deciding how to use the total resource available for children, young people, parents and carers in order to improve outcomes in the most equitable, effective, efficient and sustainable way’.

The commissioning process has four stages which enable public sector decision makers along with children, young people and families to make informed decisions about what support should be in place to meet specific needs and subsequently improve outcomes. Different organisations across the public sector may describe the four stages differently but in essence all follow the stages of ‘Understand, Plan, Do and Review’. Like any cycle the process is continuous and each stage feeds into the next. Details of what each stage involves are provided within Chapter 5 of this guide along with examples and suggestions of how to effectively involve children and young people.

Lancashire Children and Young People’s Trust has developed a Commissioning Framework which aims to achieve a consistent approach to commissioning across the partner organisations of the Children’s Trust and can be used to provide further information of the commissioning process. This can be accessed via the following link [http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/cypplan/](http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/cypplan/). The Trust has also developed an E-Learning package: An introduction to Outcomes Based Commissioning which may also be a useful tool to develop further understanding of the process.

4. What and why participation?

Participation is a process by which someone is involved in and influences a decision about their life and this decision leads to change.

Effective involvement of children and young people must be rooted in their right to influence the policy and services that affect them. It should be based on shared values and these are taken from Hear by Right ([http://www.nya.org.uk/quality/hear-by-right](http://www.nya.org.uk/quality/hear-by-right));

- Children and young people’s involvement is visible commitment that is properly resourced
- Children and young people’s involvement is valued
- Children and young people have equal opportunity to participate
- Children and young people’s participation is supported in the organisation/service by effective policies and systems

Treseder, P (1997) has adapted Harts Ladder of Participation (see diagram on page 6) and in so doing allows us to recognise that at different points; in different situations and at different stages we may approach participation in different ways. It’s not always possible for young people to initiate and direct decisions and as long as we are clear, open and honest with them about this then that’s OK. It’s worth noting that we are assuming, by using this diagram, that we are avoiding tokenism, decoration and manipulation of children and young people something that Lancashire Children and Young People’s Trust is keen to avoid.
It is vital that you consider the diagram before involving children and young people in any commissioning process. Different stages of the commissioning cycle may see you adopting different approaches which, in most cases, is perfectly reasonable as long as we avoid tokenism and manipulation. The key is to be open and honest with children and young people about what they can influence, what they can share decisions about and what they can direct.

**Why involve children and young people?**

The table on page 7 lists a number of reasons why we should involve children, young people and families in the commissioning process;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To uphold children’s rights:</th>
<th>Children are citizens and service users, sharing the same fundamental rights to participate as others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To fulfil legal responsibilities</td>
<td>Children and young people have the right to be listened to and their opinions taken into account when adults are making decisions that affect them. This right is formally recognised in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child ratified by Great Britain in December 1991. Ofsted has placed great importance on seeking the views of pupils with the inspection framework 2009 raising the profile of the “pupil voice”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve services</td>
<td>Consulting with children enables services to be improved and adapted to meet challenging needs that children can help define. Participation provides a level of influence and element of choice and can help them understand their own needs and wants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To promote children’s protection</td>
<td>Participation is an important aid in protection. A recurring theme of successive inquiries into abuse has been the failure to listen to children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enhance democratic processes</td>
<td>Representative democracy can be strengthened as children gain new opportunities and are enabled to become active members of their community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To empower and enhance self-esteem</td>
<td>Effective participation can provide a sense of self-efficacy and raise self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enhance children’s skills</td>
<td>Participation helps in developing skills useful for debate, communication, negotiation, prioritisation and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve decision making</td>
<td>Participation leads to more accurate, relevant decisions, which are better informed and more likely to be implemented, be used and become a success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why involve young people in Lancashire?

Lancashire is committed to and has a strong track record in actively involving children and young people. As a county, we are passionate about ensuring that children and young people are being empowered; participating in the services they receive and the communities in which they live.

This commitment is evident at both a strategic and delivery level demonstrated by the endorsement of the Lancashire Active Participation Strategy by the Lancashire Children and Young People’s Trust Board. The values that underpin the Active Participation Strategy are a commitment to implementing a common approach for the participation of children and young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of services and priorities. Alongside this the strategy outlines our vision to empower children and young people to become active citizens within their localities, the county and the country

An action plan was developed and sets out how we are implementing the strategy (for more information: http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/resources/?siteid=6274&pageid=40031).

The Lancashire Children and Young People’s Charter (appendix 1) was developed by young people in Lancashire and includes 13 principles for consulting with children and young people and is a key document to refer to before planning how you will involve children and young people. For more information please go to: http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/resources/?siteid=6274&pageid=40031

Benefits

By actively involving Children and Young People in commissioning we will see

- A consistent standard of participation and involvement within the County
- A cultural change, improving participation levels
- A system of promoting and embedding best practice across the County
- An increase and development of the opportunities for children and young people to be actively involved in decision making for and about them within the services that are commissioned
- Improve access to health services and therefore contribute to reducing health inequalities
- Co-production between children, young people and the local authority

5. Involving Children and Young people through the cycle

For the commissioning process to be effective commissioners should ensure that children and young people are meaningfully engaged throughout the whole commissioning process. In order to do this commissioners should, utilising Lancashire’s Participation Checklist, carefully plan at the beginning of the process how this can be achieved at each stage and ensure a budget for this has been factored in to the overall resource. An example planning template and the participation checklist can be found in appendix 2 and appendix 3.
Cross cutting themes in participation and commissioning:

1. Do not recreate the wheel!

There are many well established children and young people’s participation forums across Lancashire, some are formal constituted groups and others are informal, they include:

**District and County Youth Councils:** an elected and representative group of young people (mainly 13-19) with local, county wide and national representatives. 32,000 young people participated in the last youth council elections in these districts.

**Children in Care Council:** a central group of children in care aged 11-24 years who are currently or have been looked after by Lancashire County Council.

**Young Carers groups:** there are groups in throughout Lancashire and a countywide Young Carers Forum.

**Young Advisors:** young people aged between 15 and 21, who show community leaders and decision makers how to engage young people in community life, regeneration and renewal. Young Advisors are trained and employed consultants who guide local authorities, housing associations and other local partners about what it is like for a young person to live, work, learn and play in their neighbourhood.

**Staying Positive:** Specialist support groups for young people living with long term health conditions.

**PULSE:** Lancashire’s county wide children and young people’s health and well being board supported by Children and Young People’s Integrated Health Team in the Children and Young People’s Directorate of Lancashire County Council.

**The Crew:** Lancashire wide young people, and parents and carers (whose family use the service) who have previously used the acute inpatient mental health service (CAMHS tier 4). The group works in close partnership with management and commissioners in respect of service development and improvements.

**Health Action Groups:** a group for any young person aged 11 to 21. Group members actively participate with health providers and commissioners to improve health services for children and young people.

**Pupil Parliaments:** in place in Lancaster and brings together representatives from primary schools from throughout the District.

There are also a number of specialist groups who specifically represent or give voice to those children and young people who are most marginalised, for example through homelessness or disability.

All these groups have their own agendas, campaigns and particular areas of interest. Some of these groups may be able to partake in consultations whilst others may undertake pieces of work on your behalf, as commissioned organisations. Many of these groups have experience of using peer research to ensure a wide range of children and young people’s opinions are heard.

We would recommend that you contact these local established and supported mechanisms to who will be able to advise you about how you proceed.
2. Training and enabling children and young people:

It depends at what stage you are involving young people in the process. Ideally children and young people should be involved from the start of the process and as such they would need to be trained and supported to understand:

- What commissioning is
- What the commission is for or why we are commissioning
- At what stage of the cycle we are at
- To what extent they and other children and young people can influence decisions

There are a number of methodologies that could be used to try and explain this to children and young people but we have attached one (Appendix 4) which was used by Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust.

It is also preferable that they should be able to make decisions about the process, for example they may be able to: design the questionnaire, to co-facilitate or facilitate focus groups in which case they will need training specific to the task.

The more involved children and young people are in the process the more time and training you will need to put in place but the greater the benefits there will be. The below is a rough guide as to what training and information children and young people should receive;

3. Representation and specific needs

Children and young people will have different experiences of services based upon a number of issues including their gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or ability, beliefs/non beliefs and living circumstances. These differences will need to be addressed with sensitivity. For example, consideration needs to be given to access issues and specific needs of any of the children and young people taking part.

It is vital that a wide range of children and young people are enabled to participate and steps are taken to actively include those children and young people who are often overlooked, such as looked after children, those from black minority ethnic groups and disabled children and young people.

Ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to participate regardless of their circumstances is a principle of equality upon which effective participation is based.

It is recommended that where applicable the children and young people involved should have experience of using the services the position will be delivering. For example, commissioning for a mental health provider should involve some children or young people that have used these services. Having said that it is imperative that you consider what barriers may exist for children and young people from different backgrounds and where possible address these barriers.
4. Different approaches to participation

The below table is based on work carried out by the British Youth Council around participation. It explores the different approaches to involving children and young people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td>Targeted and focused Time limited Cost effective Immediate relevance Results</td>
<td>Exclusive or unrepresentative Lack of follow up Lack of ownership No momentum Seen as a quick fix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Initiatives</td>
<td>Direct impact Working with adults as equals Payment, vocational relevance Use of knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Not rewarded properly Opportunity to the few Adults take over the results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>The potential numbers involved Multi purpose Building on existing resources Fun and engaging Children and young people involved Used in formal and informal settings</td>
<td>Needs dedicated and skilled input Specific and an adequate budget Publicity to make it known Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory or reference group</td>
<td>Influencing development Ownership Representative Established and ongoing</td>
<td>Time consuming and drawn out Rubber stamping No authority Drawn out and time consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee places</td>
<td>Direct access to governance Long term influence Knowledge and expertise Continuous input people rather than in own right Overcome misunderstandings Requires changes in attitude , representing children and young people</td>
<td>Tokenism Not treated as equals Used to represent views of CYP Demanding of skills and commitment Pressure to be seen as successful Significant cultural shift for an organisation / lose touch with peers Significant resources, staff support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Structures</td>
<td>Elected membership and mandate Confidence and authority Influencing organisational policy Reserved places on a committee</td>
<td>What real authority and power? Poor range of representatives Fractures from adult organisation Divisive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger Scale Events</td>
<td>Inclusive Shared identity Fun and energetic Accountability A lot of work – quickly!</td>
<td>Preparation and planning Time and money Needs good follow up Needs commitment to action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Rewards and incentives**

It is important to recognise the work and achievements of children and young people who play an active role in the development of children and young people’s services in Lancashire.

Please refer to appendix 5 which is a guide to ensure a consistent, thoughtful, legal and ethical approach to recognising the contribution children and young people make to Lancashire. The guidance is largely taken from work developed by Blackpool youth service.

5.1 **Understand**

The Understand stage is often, but not exclusively the first stage of the commissioning cycle. As the name would suggest its aim is to ensure that commissioners have a thorough understanding of the area they are looking at, thus enabling them to plan in an informed way. There are four key components to this stage which commissioners need to develop an awareness of, these being:

- **Needs Assessment** - Understanding the demographics of the children and young people commissioners seek to support, e.g. age, gender, disability, location. Are some young people more likely to require services than others?
- **Consultation** - Asking service users, potential service users, current providers and wider stakeholders what they think works, where the gaps are and what they think is less effective.
- **Resource mapping** - What is the total resource available, what services are currently in place to meet needs/outcomes, how effective are they, are the right people using them, what are the pathways into them.
- **Policy, Guidance and research** - What does the law and guidance inform us we should do? What does both local and national research tell us is effective in achieving the desired outcomes?

**How to involve children and young people**

In most cases the understand phase is carried out using a variety of the methods but focuses on a wide reaching consultation. This could be developed and carried out by adults or children and young people could act as Peer Researchers (for more information; [http://www.uclan.ac.uk/schools/school_of_social_work/research/the_centre.php](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/schools/school_of_social_work/research/the_centre.php)). As with all consultations the decisions will need to be taken about gaining quantitative or qualitative data but many commissioning processes try to tick both boxes.

This is not to say that young people cannot take more of an active role, beyond being consulted, in the understand phase however, this is often not the case due to the realities of the way we commission and run our services. Please refer to appendix 1 and appendix 3 for Lancashire’s Children and Young People’s charter and checklist.
When you are consulting with children and young people you may take one or a few of the following options:

- **Questionnaires**
- **Focus group exercises**
- **Large scale consultation events**

Each of the approaches is explored in more detail below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hints and tips</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questionnaires</strong> (this can be paper based, on line or both)</td>
<td><strong>Focus group exercises</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Keep it short - less than about two sides of A4 is about right</td>
<td>- Plan the session well in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Think about how you will explain what you’re doing in a brief paragraph at the start</td>
<td>- It’s often best to go to pre-existing groups where they meet rather than organise your own focus group and invite children and young people to it. Reasons for this include: an environment the children and young people are familiar with, no need to find and possibly pay for a venue, no need to deal with transport challenges/costs, more of a ‘captive’ audience, it’s easier for you to get to them than them to get to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Be clear what you are asking and what difference it can make</td>
<td>- Think about how you will explain what you’re doing and why briefly at the start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Include an opportunity for young people to get more involved by filling in personal details and sending them back. This could be the start of an advisory group for example. NB: think about data protection and child protection</td>
<td>- Be clear what you are asking and what difference it can make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Keep it anonymous - if you do have a returns slips then make sure it can be detached from the answers</td>
<td>- Use participatory methods and activities to engage children and young people (training about participatory methods is available please contact <a href="mailto:cyp.childrenstrust@lancashire.gov.uk">cyp.childrenstrust@lancashire.gov.uk</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Offer a prize draw/prize for those who return the questionnaires</td>
<td>- Include an opportunity for young people to get more involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Be prepared to feedback to organisations and services who may have promoted this opportunity. As its anonymous you won’t be able to feedback to all the young people directly but will be able to feedback to those who filled in their details.</td>
<td>- Be prepared to offer incentives like snacks, food or other refreshments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Be prepared to feedback to organisations and services who may have promoted this opportunity.</td>
<td>- Be prepared to feedback to organisations and services who may have promoted this opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Advertise and communicate opportunities well in advance but also do another push leading up to the focus group (1-2 weeks before)</td>
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</table>
The key to making any of the above a success is ensuring that you make contact and work with pre-existing structures (some of which are listed in the introduction to Section 5). The benefit to working with groups who already exist and have a mandate (be that by election and/or because of their experience/knowledge base) is that you will hear from groups who are used to voicing their opinions, have thought about representation in some way and have support from staff/volunteers. This does not mean that you will not hear the voices of those who are vulnerable or marginalised.

Many of the groups identified in section 5, and others who exist across Lancashire, have a large and varied mix of children and young people. If the groups you make contact with do not represent particular voices or sections of the population then you can identify routes to hearing these voices ideally with the children and young people. In fact we have more and more examples in Lancashire of young people carrying out peer research with other children and young people to identify issues, priorities and gaps. Recent examples include peer research projects with UCLAN’s ‘The centre’, a participatory research centre, and also with Chorley and South Ribble Youth Councils.

It is important to pay particular attention to how you are going to analyse any data you receive. The analysis of this data is no small task and should be viewed as an integral part of the process, a particular task that someone or several people will need time to complete. This is important in order to effectively use the information as it will never influence the process if it is not coherent. It is also vital to have this information to be able to feedback to children and young people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large scale consultation events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Try to find a venue that is exciting or interesting to children and young people (football grounds are good as are theatres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food is very important – try it before hand with children/young people if possible!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be prepared to offer incentives and rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruit a team of strong facilitators (paid or otherwise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advertise and communicate opportunities well in advance – use all pre-existing structures to do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take a decision about whether you want groups or individuals to attend. It’s easier if its groups accompanied by staff as they can then be parentally responsible for the children or young people and can support them to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take a decision about supporting staff roles at the event - are they there to support their children or young people or do you want them in a separate area/workshop. Sometimes it’s good to give children and young people space to be open hence offering a staff workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be prepared to complete risk-assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan the event well in advance taking advice and tips from those with experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Think about how you will explain what you’re doing and why in a brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be clear what you are asking and what difference it can make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use participatory methods and activities to engage children and young people (training about participatory methods is available please contact <a href="mailto:cyp.childrenstrust@lancashire.gov.uk">cyp.childrenstrust@lancashire.gov.uk</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include an opportunity for young people to get more involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be prepared to feedback to children, young people, organisations and services who may have promoted this opportunity.</td>
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</tbody>
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Case study

Case study - Lancashire Childrens Rights Service, Involving Children and Young People in all stages of the commissioning process

Hannah Peake and Lesley Tiffin

Lancashire Children’s Rights is a significant commission, a value of approximately £250,000. The service provides Children’s Rights/Individual Advocacy Service; and an Independent Visitor Service for children and young people who are ‘looked after’ (including care leavers) and/or have a disability for whom Lancashire County Council has a responsibility of care. Children’s Rights and Advocacy are linked activities where listening and responding to children and young peoples’ concerns become an integral part of everyday practice. There is significant national legislation and guidance which places a duty on Lancashire County Council to have a Childrens Rights Service in place.

The process:
Funding was made available from the commission to involve children and young people in the commissioning process for food, travel etc. A questionnaire was sent directly to every looked after child on Lancashire’s database and a prize draw of an iPod was offered. Some of the questions on the questionnaire included: who would you confide in if you had a problem and why would you choose this person to confide in? Each question had a list of possible answers so young people could tick the one/s that applied to them. There was a very good response to the questionnaire - 141 (which is statistically good as it is approximately 10% of the looked after children).

The tender was broken down 70% to quality and 30% on cost. The young people (existing Participation Assistants linked to the Children in Care Council) had their own panel as part of the tender process and were allocated a portion of the decision making power (a portion of the 70%). The young people devised their own panel questions and agreed that they would like those applying for the commission to do an activity with them which explained children’s rights and advocacy and what it offered young people. They also asked a number of questions to the providers. After each provider was interviewed the young people scored them individually and then discussed them coming up with a group score and feedback. The young people also rated all the providers from their favourite to their least favourite largely based on the score but not exclusively.

The young people also discussed if there were any providers who they would not like to get the tender. The young people led their panel, a staff member supported them to facilitate the process; giving out and collecting individual score sheets, facilitating discussions after each provider had finished, keeping a record of the group score and comments, time keeping and ensuring that all the young people had voiced their opinions and were happy with the outcome. The young people’s panel then provided feedback to the adult tender panel and the staff member acted as a support to the young people (although they were given the option to feedback without the staff member). Over the next week or so the scores of the adult panel, young people’s panel and shortlisting were all worked out according to their allocation of the final scores and the providers were informed. The young people were informed about who the tender had been offered to as soon as the decision had been agreed and accepted.

Feedback from the commissioners: ‘the feedback received from the young person’s panel was instrumental in the outcome of the tender with the highest scorer from the young person’s panel winning the tender. As a commissioner I felt their contribution was invaluable, not only because they were highly professional in their approach but also they added another dimension to the process. Most importantly we were happy to offer the tender to a provider that had been ‘quality checked’ by young people who would be the future users of the service’
5.2 Plan

The planning stage consolidates the learning from the understand stage, identifying the gaps between what is available now and what is needed in the future. Commissioners will use this stage to plan how these gaps can be addressed within the resources available. During the planning stage commissioners will consider a number of options to address gaps these can include developing existing workforces, changing the capacity of existing support, improving partnership working, creating more simplified pathways, procuring new or additional support and/or enabling children, young people and families to develop their own support. Commissioning strategies are often produced at this stage to capture the details of the previous two stages.

The participation exercises for children and young people at this stage can involve:

- Priority setting exercises
- Designing new pathways into services
- Delivering training to the workforce
- Exploring options with CYP

When involving children and young people in this phase it is often best to combine this with whatever you do in the understand phase. This requires good planning and use of time but practically it is beneficial to link the ‘where are we now’ conversation with the ‘where would we like to be and how could we get there’ conversation. This is particularly true if you have organised focus groups or, particularly, an event as practically getting those children and young people together again is unlikely.

Alternatively the understand phase is a good opportunity to recruit a smaller group of children or young people to work with intensively in the plan stage to say, develop and write a strategy or training package. The young people may participate as members of a committee along with adults, sit alongside adults in a parallel structure or as an advisory or reference group (see above for benefits and limitations of these approaches). The benefits and added value will be evident to all those involved but it is important to note here that taking any of these approaches will have resource implications. Not least of which will be staff time in preparing sessions, typing up notes and ensuring that things are accessible to all those involved. Refer to the rewards and incentive guide in appendix 5 and ensure that transport cost are always reimbursed.
Re commissioning of Children and Young Peoples Diabetes Service
Anna Bailey, Central Lancashire PCT

In 2011 a Health Needs Assessment (HNA) for children and young people with diabetes was carried out by NHS Diabetes working in collaboration with NHS Central Lancashire. The commissioning of diabetes services cannot be effective without an understanding of experiences and recommendations.

In February 2011, NHS Central Lancashire commissioned “Getting Sorted” from Leeds Metropolitan University to run a family event which saw around 35 children and young people aged between 18 months and 17 years old attend. We involved siblings, parents and carers and we spent the day looking at the pathway that children, young people and their families went on from diagnosis through to self care and management. Also in attendance were key members from the Children’s Commissioning Team who played an active role in the event working with all groups.

The day was interactive and the feedback from everyone was really positive. An invitation was extended to all the children and young people involved to come and feedback their thoughts to the Childrens Commissioning Group three weeks later.

A small group of young people attended and their feedback was invaluable to the re-design of the pathway and service in NHS Central Lancashire.

Some examples of changes as a result of the young people involvement include;
1. Children, young people and their families have “ownership” of the public notice boards to promote the support groups and activates that are delivered in Central Lancashire
2. The young people identified that educating their peers, teachers, youth workers and other professionals would be of benefit to help to reduce any stigma and to allow the young people to share their experiences
3. One of the young people went on to train to be a Young Verifier and continues to support NHS Central Lancashire to deliver the You’re Welcome quality programme
4. One young person is now as active member of PULSE – Lancashire Children and Young People’s Health and Wellbeing Board
5.3 Do

At this stage Commissioners along with partners will look to implement the changes agreed in the planning stage. This will include the development of service specifications and if decided to commission externally, then the procurement process. Young people’s participation at this stage can include:

• The delivery of training to the workforce
• Personalisation - Young people being involved in designing their own care packages/ and being key contributors in their reviews.
• Involvement in the procurement process

In this guide we are focusing on involving children and young people in procurement as we believe it presents very good opportunities to embed active participation. The key to involving children and young people in procurement is;

• Preparation - do not underestimate the extra time it will take if you involve children and young people!
• Being creative – make this fun and engaging or the children and young people may choose to disengage. Remember you are being paid to understand the jargon, read all the paper work and attend lots of meetings. They usually aren’t!
• Be flexible - be willing to; share the power, change meeting times to suit children and young people, think about and explore how you we listen to and act upon what the children and young people tell you

The BIG do nots:

• Do not write the questions or design the procurements process for or without the children and young people, as this is tokenistic and does not empower them in the process.
• Do not forget to provide them with refreshments, travel expenses etc.
• Do not make your decision before taking feedback from the young people.

An example of a session plan for training children and young people is included in appendix 6 and appendix 7 is an exercise to enable children and young people to understand the commissioning process.
Children and Young people’s training should include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training area</th>
<th>Potential method</th>
<th>Method in more detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal \ opportunities - to explore the negative impact that stereotyping can have on the recruitment process</td>
<td>Prepare small cards with occupations written on them e.g. plumber, librarian, teacher, farmer, banker, doctor. Fold the cards and put them in a box.</td>
<td>1. Invite members of the group to come up one at a time and take a card out of the box. They then have one minute to draw the type of person they think would apply for the job. 2. Other participants guess which occupation the drawing represents 3. Repeat activity until all cards have gone 4. Discuss drawings and responses. Challenge assumptions e.g. why are plumber always male? Teachers always female? 5. Move on to discuss stereotyping e.g. boys like football, girls like pink etc 6. Explain that to ensure we select fairly we need to be aware of our own bias against people e.g. those from particular cultures or ethnicities, people with piercings, different clothes etc 7. Discuss ways to treat each candidate fairly 8. Close by explaining that we score people on the answers that give to our questions and not how they look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and closed questions – to assist in recognising and preparing questions</td>
<td>Prepare a number of open and closed questions on separate cards. Prepare two sheets of flip chart with ‘open questions’ written on one and ‘closed questions’ written on another</td>
<td>1. As an energiser split the group into pairs. Explain that person A has 1 minute to ask person B questions however, person B cannot answer yes or no. Repeat the activity swapping roles as soon as the person makes a mistake. 2. Bring the group back together and split them in two. Ask them how easy/ hard they found the activity. Ask them if they found out a lot of information or if it was limited. 3. Ask one person to come forward and pick a card. They return to their group and have 10 second to decide if it’s an open or closed question. They stick them on the relevant flip charts and then explain why they made the decision. 4. Repeat until all the cards have gone. 5. Bring the groups back together and ask them to think about; what are the differences between the questions and answers and which questions provide the most information. Reflect on the first activity here and what the group said. 6. Explain the difference between open and closed questions. Open questions allow people to reflect and speak openly and freely like ‘what do you think about…’. Closed questions are used to find out a specific piece of information. They usually lead to a yes/no answer e.g. ‘do you like chips?’ 7. Review the questions on the flip chart and move any that the group now agree are in the wrong place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality - emphasis the importance of and what we can tell and can’t tell</td>
<td>Make two signs; ‘can tell’ and ‘can’t tell’. Stick them at opposite sides of the room and ensure the pathway is clear between both.</td>
<td>1. Ask participants to move to the centre of the room 2. Explain that they should move to either sign depending on what they think the answer it to the questions you read out 3. Read out questions like: How many organisations were there? Who was on the panel? What were the names of the people we interviewed? How long did the interview last? What did people say? Who got the job? Come up with your own questions and discuss after each one, ask a few participants to explain why they are where they are. Explain the answer to each question and why, then move on to the next. Did you know any of the candidates? 4. Explain that certain information needs to be kept confidential. Discuss what this means e.g. Data Protection act 1998 means that application forms cannot be shown to anyone who is not involved in the recruitment process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scoring and recording; explain that we need a record of the interview to ensure that they have made a fair and just decision and to help remind the panel of each organisation (see appendix 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring and recording</th>
<th>Get the young people to think how they are going to score each question- out of 5 or even 10 or just with smiley (or not) faces.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Show participants the score sheet. Explain each part of the table.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ask the young people to agree how they want to score their interview. Double check that they don’t think one part of the interview is more important than any other as, if it is the scores will need to be weighted appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is often easiest if the final scores can up to 100 or a derivative of that as it makes it easier to calculate the percentage of the overall score</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Smiley faces are often easier for younger children and those with SEND and scoring out of 5 is often easier than 10 as there is less variation.

Agenda of the tender interviews (see appendix 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda of the tender interviews</th>
<th>Ensuring there is a clear plan for the interview. CYP need to be aware of timings and roles.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This will usually involve;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asking the applicants to take a seat (don’t forget to decide whose doing this as there is often a nervous moment at the start of the first few interviews. This is about where the power between adults and children and young people lies. The children and young people need to be supported to ‘take the power’ during the interview)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Welcome and introductions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explaining the plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• introduce activity/ question 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• introduce activity/ question 2(repeat as necessary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• any questions for us</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• thanks and good bye</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Explore who will do what and how long things will take.

Encourage all the children and young people involved to have a task

See appendix 10 which can be given to children and young people at the end of the training session as a summary. A handout of this type is also useful for those who like to learn in this way.

The interview format should be chosen by the children and young people, if it is not it runs the risk of being tokenistic and disempowering. There are a great variety of approaches that can be used in an interview which are outlined below, the following suggestions may help you decide on a suitable format but don’t let them constrain either your or the children and young people’s imaginations! The only constraint will be time so, make sure you advise the panel about how long activities may take- don’t let them choose to do a presentation and an object if they only have 15 minutes per candidate or if each interview will end up taking more than 45 minutes - 1 hour (including scoring) as this is about the limit for any panel.

Before reading them it is just worth noting a few points:

- Most frequently we have set up a young people’s panel which interviews candidates in parallel with an adult panel and/ or to have a child or young people represented on a panel alongside adults. The children and young people’s panel may be held in the evening and the adult panel during the day but children and young people should feedback directly to the adult panel where possible.
Having said that, children and young people have been and visited providers and 'inspected' or interviewed them ‘in situ’ and this can be a fantastically enlightening and rewarding approach. If the children and young people choose to visit providers then most of the methods listed below can still be used but in the providers setting. The down side to this approach is that it is: more time consuming; more costly in terms of transport, refreshments, staff time etc; involves more health and safety and; elongates the process.

Some of the approaches will require the candidates to prepare things in advance or be given time to prepare things at the venue before they go into the tender panel. Make sure you discuss this with the children and young people so they can choose how they would like candidates to prepare tender panel. Make sure you discuss this with the children and young people so they can choose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions and answers</td>
<td>With the support of staff/adult panel the children/young people come up with their own questions. They may look at the whole Specification or one element such as the participation of children and young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Candidates are asked to bring an object into the interview which they discuss as part of the interview. The object could describe the person, how they would be as the provider or something that reminds them of something/a piece of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenarios</td>
<td>During the interview children/young people ask candidates how they would respond to certain situations. The children/young people assess their response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open night</td>
<td>Candidates are invited to a youth club, school etc. Candidates are asked to get involved, act as they would if they had the Tender. Children and young people judge the candidates on how well they interacted with them etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Candidates are invited to prepare an activity and run it with a group of children or young people. The theme of the activity is decided by the children and young people who judge how interactive and informative the session was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Candidates are asked to give a presentation on a given topic. This could be to a children and young people’s panel or mixed with stakeholders and staff as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal chat</td>
<td>A meet and greet panel of children and young people chat informally to each candidate as they arrive. They may get them a brew or indeed show them around the school or centre. The informal chat may also take place over a buffet. Children and young people assess how the candidates interact with them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children and young people may choose more than one approach. This is often a process of elimination and each one needs to be discussed and explored. The agenda of the interview should always include time to discuss and explore each organisation, the member of staff (or facilitator) need to record comments and individual scores on a piece of flip chart. This acts as the group record of the process.
Hints and tips;

Preparation is key, children and young people should have the opportunity to come up with their own approach.

- Children and young people will feel more confident and prepared if they know in advance what is expected of them. The more decisions that the children and young people can make the more empowered they will feel.
- Get the panel to consider, in advance, what will be a good or bad answer. It may be a good idea to include this on the score sheet so the panel members can refer to it when they are scoring.
- Get the panel to consider how many and who they would like to interview i.e. the manager, the staff who will run the service, front line workers or some children and young people. Different people will provide a different ‘experience’ for the CYP and they may want to consider the mix. It may be easier to have this discussion following the decision about the approach e.g. if they want them to run an activity then in makes sense that front line staff to attend

- Inform the organisations if there is a specific task to prepare in advance in plenty of time
- It is good practice to tell candidates that children and young people will be part of the process, even if they are not given a task to prepare for in advance.
- If there is to be a separate children and young people’s panel adult support workers should be present in the interview. They should discuss this with children and young people who may want the support. They should sit behind the children and young people to indicate that they are observers and not participants. However, this does not include staff who may be supporting individual CYP with additional needs.
- Staff should give out and collect score sheets, after each of the applicants. This makes it easier for everyone involved.
- Scoring should be reviewed. It’s worth checking the scores for the first applicants after the panel have interviewed and scored the second as they will have something to compare too.
- Staff should facilitate the scoring process; keep a record of the groups comments and combined scores on a flip chart so that they are easy to refer back to
- The weighting given to the CYP panel needs to be explored before hand and explained to the children and young people. Imagine how the young people would feel if the provider they least liked was selected - would they feel valued and listened too? It’s not always possible to avoid adult and children and young people having different opinions so think about what you may do if this does happen. For example it’s worth exploring if the children and young people can ‘veto’ providers or if they should identify those they would be happy to get the commission and also those they would not. Clear reasons should always be provided and explored with the children and young people’s panel.
5.4 Review

Children and young people’s participation is key to this part of the commissioning process. The review stage is often the final stage of the commissioning cycle and tells commissioners whether what they have put in place works; have the outcomes they set out to achieve been met, have the interventions had a positive effect on children and young people’s lives? Performance monitoring is a key tool for this stage and should include quality and outcome measures in addition to quantity.

The most effective way to measure quality and outcomes is by asking children and young people who have used the services. Mechanisms to enable this include:

- Service user feedback questionnaires/focus groups/comments, suggestions boards.
- Young people reported distance travelled tools, e.g. outcomes star
- Mystery shopping schemes
- Young inspectors/verifier schemes

In involving children and young people at this stage of the cycle it is important to consider impartiality; if you ask the commissioned provider to carry out the review then you need to explore how they will make sure this it is non-biased. They may require support in order to do this. Children and young people should be given the opportunity to feedback in a confidential way, they may also feedback differently to staff they know as opposed to those they do not. All of these points should be explored and worked through before the review takes place. It is also important to think about what you plan to do with this information once you receive it particularly if the information is negative- this may require both the commissioners and provider to explore how they will improve things including redirecting budgets or staffing.

Case Study
You’re Welcome – Department Of Health Quality Standard for 11-19 year olds
Lesley Elmes, Sandra Fox, Louisa Balderson and Anna Bailey

The You’re Welcome criteria has been developed as a result of evidence based work with young people identifying and addressing the barriers that prevent them from accessing health services. Adolescence is a crucial time to adopt positive health behaviours, access to health services that are young people friendly are therefore of paramount importance to young people.

The involvement and participation of young people within the YW process is twofold, firstly, the setting who are applying for the award need to evidence how they have actively involved young people in the process. Secondly, young people known as young verifiers are integral to the verification process and they carry out an assessment for within each setting based on criteria that has been developed by young people.

So far, there are 13 settings within Lancashire who have gained the National YW standard. Sharon Hilton, school nurse at Central Lancashire High School, was honoured with the You’re Welcome Quality Mark after establishing a service to help young people have a say on their health and it was the school pupils who helped her attain the award. Sharon said she was ‘delighted to receive the award and grateful for the help I received from the young people at this school. They provide real focus to ensure the service really is designed by young people for young people....Some volunteered to train as young verifiers and gave their time to help reach the required standards while others assessed the service against the criteria for the award’.

Emily, a year 11 pupil at the school said ‘If we didn’t have a school nurse then where would young people get help and advice? It feels really good when Sharon speaks directly to me explaining things in a way that I can understand’. Zoe Giffney, Business Manager at Lancaster Central High School said: “We are a partnership committed to championing the school nurse and are thrilled at the outcome of the award. The process is an excellent example of a student-led evaluation which we hope other schools will follow.”
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