

Participation & Engagement Report

Free 2 Talk CIC, Homestart DSN & University of Northampton (MA Youth & Community Leadership Team).

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Summary of Conclusions & Priorities

- Participation should be set in a backdrop of universal standards of living, expectations and aspirations for all children and young people.
- Trusted adults and peers are a fundamental element in enabling participation and co-production. Children and young people need to have established trust to feel able to speak out
- Predictability of a space will also determine trust and safety. Time and space to build trust has to be a priority.
- Skills and knowledge of the facilitator are fundamental they must be able to shift the power in favour of the children and young people; understand the contexts, strengths, needs, trajectories and transitions.
- Participation activities should be exciting, engaging, planned and designed to maximise engagement. Children and young people need to gain from an experience that they voluntarily engage in and be a balance between 'quick wins' for children and young people as well as the longer-term achievements.
- Participation of children and young people should be an empowering intervention enabling active citizens; there must be a mechanism for enabling, engaging and facilitating participation led by children and young people's agendas.

Acknowledgements

Central to this report are the contributions of the children and young people who gave their views, feelings and experiences to help us understand their worlds and how practitioners can improve their participation practice. As a team we have learnt so much about their lives and it has reaffirmed our commitment to making Northamptonshire a better place for all.

We would also like to thank the practitioners that have given their views on the best way forward for participation and co-production. Hearing their frustrations and their drive to support children and young people has been inspiring.

Thanks also to the Accessibility Pillar and the steering group who have resourced, instigated and steered this report for Northamptonshire.

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Introduction

The collaborative, collective voice of children and young people is fundamental to developing our children, young people, families and communities of the future in Northamptonshire. This project has researched with children, young people, parents and practitioners to develop a proposal to rebuild the collective voice with children and young people by understanding the current local, national and global best practice in engagement and participation, alongside our strengths and capacity in the county. This has included understanding the forums, spaces and places for children and young people to influence Northamptonshire's ICS and the ICS capacity to engage and respond to children and young people's voices.

This report concludes an action plan with strategic priorities for the engagement of children and young people across the Integrated Care System in Northamptonshire. To achieve this the project has completed a systematic review of best practice; self-audit surveys and workshops on engagement and participation; practice observations using standards identified in best practice research and through co-production of the research, workshops, observations and final report.

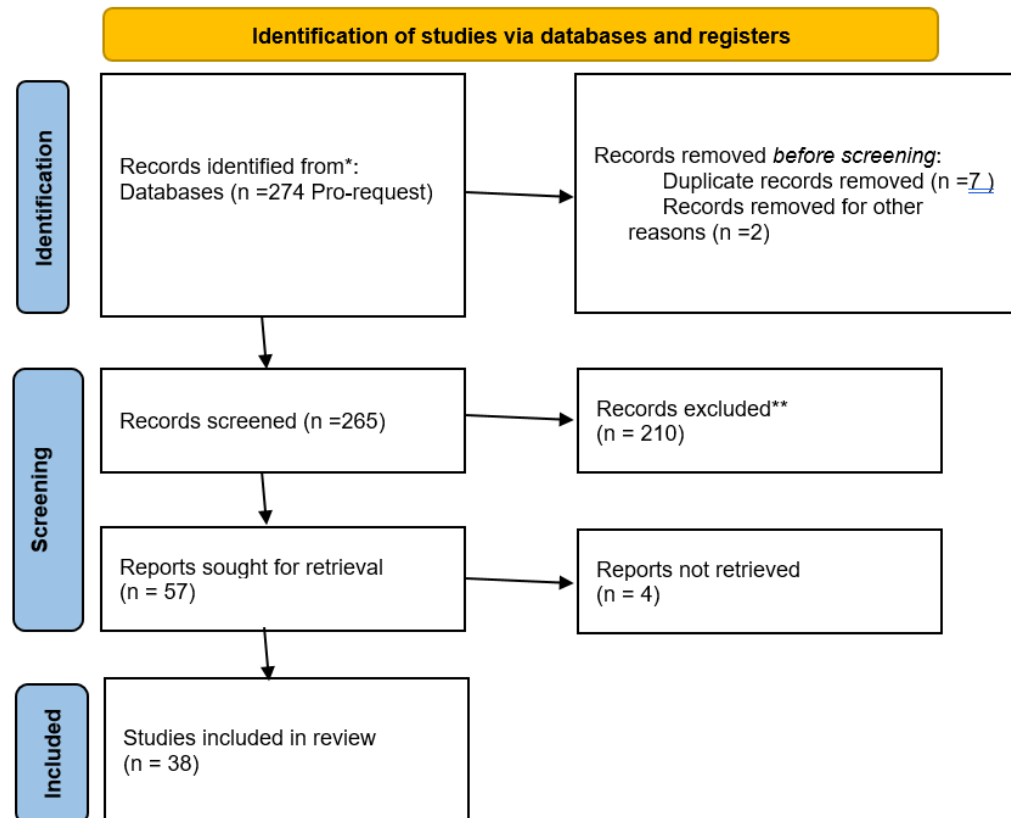
Methodology & Limitations

This section will provide a summary of the methodology for the project in the systematic review, surveys and workshops the section will conclude with a discussion on limitations.

Systematic Review

ProQuest Central Database was accessed via ~~Nelson~~ at University of Northampton. The following search string was used:

Child* AND "young people" OR Adolescent* AND participation OR Coproduction
OR Co-production



Online Surveys

Initially, an online surveys for practitioners was built on the scoping review of co-production and participation practice. Questions focused on locating and identifying local practice by requesting lists of the activities happening, the children and young people engaged, their level of need, and reporting case studies of best practice. Where there were gaps in diverse communities these were picked up through interviews with practitioners or desk based research. The findings have been presented in the sections titled Participation in Northamptonshire; Case studies of good practice; Spaces of Influence; Children and young people’s National Voice; Participation focussed spaces; Potential spaces of influence.

An online survey was created to capture the views of children and young people across Northamptonshire. The aim of the survey was for the respondents to voice their views on the thematic findings from the review of literature. At the request of the young people within the project an initial draft survey was created for their reflection and amendment. The survey opened with an explanation of the changes related to the establishment of the integrated care system and the purpose of the survey. The questions within the survey were first formed in relation to themes from the literature review. The young people were able to identify any elements they wished to keep and amend. A prize draw was used to incentivise children and young people. The findings from this survey developed the strategic objectives and priorities; Consideration of protected characteristics and Proposals to embed Participation and Coproduction.

Workshops

The workshops were created to enable practitioners, children and young people to respond to the findings from the systematic literature review. This enabled their understanding of best practice, measured their own practice and developed suggestions for a way forward for Northamptonshire.

The workshops covered:

- Findings from the systematic review
- What are the enablers and barriers for participation work
- Reflection on practice using Hart's Ladder of Participation.

The findings have been presented in the sections titled Participation in Northamptonshire; Case studies of good practice; Spaces of Influence; Children and young people's National Voice; Participation focussed spaces; Potential spaces of influence. They also informed the strategic objectives and priorities; Consideration of protected characteristics and Proposals to embed Participation and Coproduction.

Who have we heard from?

The project has had direct contributions from 52 practitioners; 6 young leaders; 97 children and young people via a survey; 139 children and young people in workshops.

Limitations

Surveys would have benefitted from a pilot project to increase the accuracy in the responses and to meet the objectives of the project. This would have increased understanding of themes and patterns that were being analysed.

The accuracy of the findings may have been impacted as the following areas are under represented:

- Young people with a disability (physical and learning) 18-24 years
- Young people with a disability at level 4
- Secondary schools have not responded.
- Black and ethnic minority
- LGBTQ+
- Young Parents
- Religious groups

Subsequently, the researchers completed desk based research or interviews with practitioners in these areas to understand these diverse perspectives.

The children and young people's workshops were tailored to the group sizes, ages, staffing ratios, strengths and needs of the children and young people participating. There were therefore varying levels of depth in conversation within

the workshops. For practitioners' workshops the recorded presentation could have access to engage with the content of the systematic review earlier. The workshops could have been longer although the decision for the length of workshop was around enabling broader engagement due to the challenges people have with their availability.

The participation and co-production level across the project could have been deeper if the length of the project enabled the time and opportunity to partner young people in the process.

What is Best Practice in Participation? A Literature Review

Relationship / Reciprocity / Trusted Adults

Paying continual attention to relationship building and mutual acknowledgement of the value added by all the parties in the participation and co-production process, this is paramount for best practice (Wexler, et al, 2020). Having an identified person that is consistently the single contact enables trust to grow; for Kong, et al, (2019) this is evident when co-producing and co-ordinating care plans. High involvement of children and young people in the decision making process enables adults to have trust in young people's contributions (De Rosis, et al, 2020). This is evident from the young person's perspective in trusting adults also; confidence within each perspective develops a reciprocity after sharing decision making (Dewa,et al 2021; Arya & Henn, 2021; Liabo & Roberts, 2019). Good planning and effective communication in the relationship development and running of a project reinforces trust (Forsyth, et al 2019; Pavarini, et al 2019; Liabo & Roberts, 2019).

There is evidence to support that pre-existing trusted relationships can aid process (Arya, & Henn, 2021) and facilitators from a service user background may also enable trust (Povey et al, 2022).

Facilitation by adults should also enable the children and young people to identify the facilitator as being human (Arya, & Henn, 2021; Brady, & Franklin, 2019). Relationships require openness and vulnerability in the immediacy of human-to-human connection; The humanity and multidimensionality of all participants must be respected and attended to with care, compassion, creativity and humility. Need to build trust and develop relationship (Moll, et al, 2020).

Power Dynamics shifted in balance between Children, Young People & Facilitator

Effective participation ensures that all members have opportunity to contribute without 'dilution' of those contributions (Walker, 2021; Pavarini, et al 2019) and thus needs to come through facilitators being ready to hear and act on young people's views; asking for and listening to feedback (Dewa et al, 2021). Gewnlli et al (2021) evidenced the necessity for the ability of the facilitator to shift power; let go of control; but also the need for reflective practice in understanding power to enable this process. A conscious, planned approach to balancing the power in the decision making process is essential (Larsson, et al 2018; Ponsford, et al, 2021; Liabo & Roberts, 2019). A commitment to the centrality of negotiation and power sharing, and respect for alternative views (Wexler et al, 2020); shared access to information (Shepherd, et al, 2020) but importantly it also involves a commitment to ongoing dialogue about various ways of knowing, the interrogation of power and privilege, and making the time and space to listen, share and co-create (Moll, et al, 2020). Co-production in research evidences that a transfer of responsibility will improve research; researchers have to address power imbalances between the members (Sellars, et al 2021).

For Brady & Franklin (2019) attempts to address power imbalance was undermined by the need to maintain medical and personal care and safety with children with disabilities. Consequently back up plans should be created for such eventualities. Agdal, et al (2019) concluded that approaches such as Asset Based Community Development are built on shifting power to communities and young people and increases participation as assessed on Hart's ladder (1992). For Forsyth et al (2019) there is an evident reductive bias in adult facilitators; that participation to be effective an unconscious bias needs to be reflected upon to prevent 'dilution' (Pavarini, et al 2019).

Transparency in the decision making

Walker, et al (2021) concluded that facilitators need to be transparent on why some contributions could not be acted on and when they were acted on. This could be shared through group reflections at the end of sessions, involvement in final reports allowing for comments on conclusions and disseminating reports collaboratively. Such transparency builds trust (Dewa et al, 2021) but also enables a power balancing (Ponsford, et al, 2021).

Transparency can be aided by consistent and regular meetings; Karlheinz & Bjerknes (2020) evidenced a close interaction and transparency enabled the pace of change and development in the project to be positive.

Trusted Spaces

To actively participate young people need to feel safe and confident in familiar spaces (Sellars, et al 2021; (Shahmanesh, 2021; Jaufar, 2021). Transparency, safe and comfortable spaces, maintaining confidentiality and respect create a conducive environment for participation (Dowthwaite, et al 2019; Pavarini, et al 2019; Drake et al, 2019).

Place attachment is achieved through co-production and vice versa (Segers, et al 2021). However, places and spaces will communicate expectation and social constructs, so a school base reinforces a social hierarchy for some children and young people this can communicate a space of safety and for others this does not (Paul, & Palfinger, 2020); this comes from created collective norms (Karlheinz & Bjercknes, 2020).

Children and young people need prioritised and ring-fenced time to create safety in spaces (Dewa et al, 2021)

For children and young people surveillance of online spaces were a concern, this can reduce trust (Arya, & Henn, 2021). The host space can limit involvement; therefore consideration should be given as to whether a wider stakeholder involvement is needed (Forsyth, et al 2019);

Children and young people's motivation to participate

Children and young people are motivated to engage when the issue or concern they have is linked to an experience they care about and they have experience of within their childhood, for example, Jaufar (2021) researched youth activism in environmentalism and identified that an early exposure to natural environments was central to developing environmental activism. Similarly, Karlheinz & Bjercknes (2020) established that altruism and a passion for the task motivated active participation. Alongside this they stated that activities must be enjoyable, that young people needed to experience reciprocity, and have an interest in learning. In addition to the above Pavarini et al (2019) also evidenced future career planning as a motivation to participate. These motivations are echoed in research in co-production in residential care (Schmid, 2020).

Conversely, within early years, children continually open the opportunities for their adults to co-produce their learning with them. A study in New Zealand and Australia, identified that children were actively seeking to be co-producers in their curriculum. It was their teachers that needed to be observant and respond to the opportunities for co-production that children demanded (Church & Bateman, 2019).

Clear expectations, roles and ground rules

Successful participation and co-production should have plans for involvement, timelines, roles, offered opportunities to present their contributions to others (Walker et al 2021; Ponsford et al, 2021; Sisay et al, 2020; Liabo & Roberts, 2019). The service users should be representative of the population, knowing who is not heard and when the representative is no longer representative (Moll et al, 2020). In addition an understanding of what is negotiable, the parameters of decision making, enables the transparency of the power in decision making (Ponsford et al, 2021; Moll et al, 2020; Brady & Franklin, 2019; Forsyth et al, 2019). Facilitators should match members to clear roles, meeting at times and places accessible to children and young people (Dewa et al, 2021). Everyone involved in a project should continuously discuss their responsibilities through evaluation and reflective practice (Femke et al, 2020).

Shepherd et al, (2020) also argued for clear and consistent processes to enable effective participation. In a multiagency service context, a "road map for actors to exchange services through shared institutional logic and rules for engagement and coordination" is beneficial (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015).

Children and young people should expect facilitators to have safeguarding procedures, operate with a principle of voluntary engagement and support for triggers (Pavarini et al 2019). Furthermore Brady & Franklin (2019) evidenced the importance of recognising the project was a child first space.

Upskilling to enable contributions

It was evident that children and young people may need a level of upskilling to effectively engage in participation activities for example, to be a co-researcher training in research methods and the topic of study may be needed (Sellars et al, 2021). A study of peer mentoring also provided progression towards achieving a qualification in Youth Leadership (Shinwell, 2021), although Moll et al (2020) also evidenced the benefit of mentoring for peer mentors.

Children and young people as co-producers may benefit from being trained to deliver the messages in the interventions they created, this gives a wider reach and can be more accessible for others to engage in (De Rosis et al, 2020). Young People that trained in asset based community development simultaneously developed participatory skills due to the nature of the approach (Agdal et al, 2019).

Pavarini et al (2019) support the notion of training children and young people, however that there should be consideration for that over training can result in professionalising of young people.

Empowerment through opportunity

Kong et al (2019) argue for empowering self care that can be achieved when patients are partners in multidisciplinary care planning. Similarly, the opportunity to support others, peers in similar situations, is empowering (Gwenlli et al, 2021). Confidence is gained through the support of the facilitators; with children and young people stating it is the autonomy and responsibility that enables this (De Rosis et al, 2020; Melo, 2019) and recognising the contributions they do make (Pavarini et al 2019). Participation raises aspirations and self esteem (Campbell et al, 2019).

A secondary effect of participation has been in the reframing the notions of expertise (Paul & Palfinger, 2020), this in itself is empowering as young people realised their own positionality. Children and young people learn and grow through participation alongside facilitators (Gracia-Holgado, et al 2020).

There should however, also be some consideration to over-exposure, in that, empowering journeys can create anger or upset from raising conscience of injustices, labelling and discrimination; there should be a process and channel for this to be supported (Brady & Franklin, 2019).

Flexibility & adaptability of opportunity to engage with consistent welcome

'Take time to listen attentively to the ideas of young people' (Femke et al, 2020), this can be challenging when often funders may not realise the time required to build trust, relationships and deliver holistic support.

A range of ways to engage children and young people is important, one size does not fit all (Pavarini et al 2019; Ponsford et al, 2021; Brown et al, 2020). Flexibility is key, being able to adapt delivery for different groups but also within a session demands creativity and reflection in action (Forsyth et al, 2019). Doing and making enable depth of understanding (Moll et al, 2020), these should be engaging and entertaining activities (Pavarini et al 2019). Practitioners have an over reliance on verbal communication; observations can communicate children's views as young as 1 years old (Casanova et al, 2020).

Higher level of participation when children can be active and express themselves; methods could for example include drawing, painting, writing, theatre, photography, filming, workshops, storytelling using software and digital tools and mapmaking (Larsson et al, 2018). Specific examples of creative approaches include storytelling to enable relatability (Povey et al, 2022); ability to create artefacts to path the future 'social stories' in innovative healthcare (Bird et al, 2021); the jury method to create debate on digital rights (Dowthwaite et al, 2019). Co-design of a digital mental health tool included videos, minigames, and self-monitoring of well-being and goals. Young people

preferred activities that incorporate strengths-based mental health information and skill development (Povey et al, 2022). The Asset Based Community Development approach involves open mapping of assets to then set collaborative goals; 'collectives for action' rather than problem solving approaches (Agdal et al, 2019).

Being able to follow the child or young person's agenda is fundamental to achieve higher levels of participation. The flexibility in projects needs to allow for this to ensure partnership with children and young people and to maintain the principles for participation. Frequently, the determinants of health will be the agenda for children and young people (Roberts & Liabo, 2019).

Facilitators offering holistic support outside of their participation role

Activists need support from the adverse effects of their visibility (Anon, 2020); there should be adequate holistic support wider than the participation activity (Brady & Franklin, 2019).

Understanding the context & setting determines the impact of involvement

There must be reflection by the organisation or funder to enable time and space for true collaboration not driven by seeking efficiencies. Institutional critical reflection is required to achieve this (Moll et al, 2020). When goals are set by experts or practitioners this limits the potential; agreeing goals with children and young people builds participatory competence, relationships, and the communities themselves (Agdal et al, 2019).

The context and setting itself will impact involvement; for example, advisory boards being a static approach not fully involving children and young people outside of their trusted spaces and roles (Forsyth et al, 2019). Furthermore the example of young researchers having shared meaning and experience can humanise the process and respond to important points (Dewa et al, 2021). The deep understanding of the context by facilitators enable understanding of perspectives (Gwenlli et al, 2021). Co-production is effective when key stakeholders are engaged to ensure developed interventions meet the needs of children and young people's needs (Holmes et al, 2021). Organisational culture needs to be ready to embrace participation and co-production (Canas et al, 2019).

Nevertheless, the advantage of young people understanding the context is very important however as trusted adults the burden of knowledge must also be considered (Ponsford et al, 2021).

Practitioners with specialist knowledge of target children and young people needs

Need a dedicated facilitator, skilled, able and proactive in support (Sellars et al, 2021; Walker et al 2021); they should be able to lead by stepping back (Agdal et al, 2019); there must be commitment and value of co-production (Dewa et al, 2021). Facilitators should be self-aware, reflective and reflexive. They need to be open to be transformed by the process (Moll et al, 2020; Dowthwaite et al, 2019)

They need also need generic skills such as project management and coordination skills and experience (Karlheinz & Bjerknes, 2020). However facilitators also require a specialist understanding of the strengths and needs of the children and young people they are working with; for example, practitioners with specialist knowledge in Austistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) required to coproduce with children and young people with ASD (Kong et al, 2019).

Practical enablers

Participation is enabled by the following practical enablers:

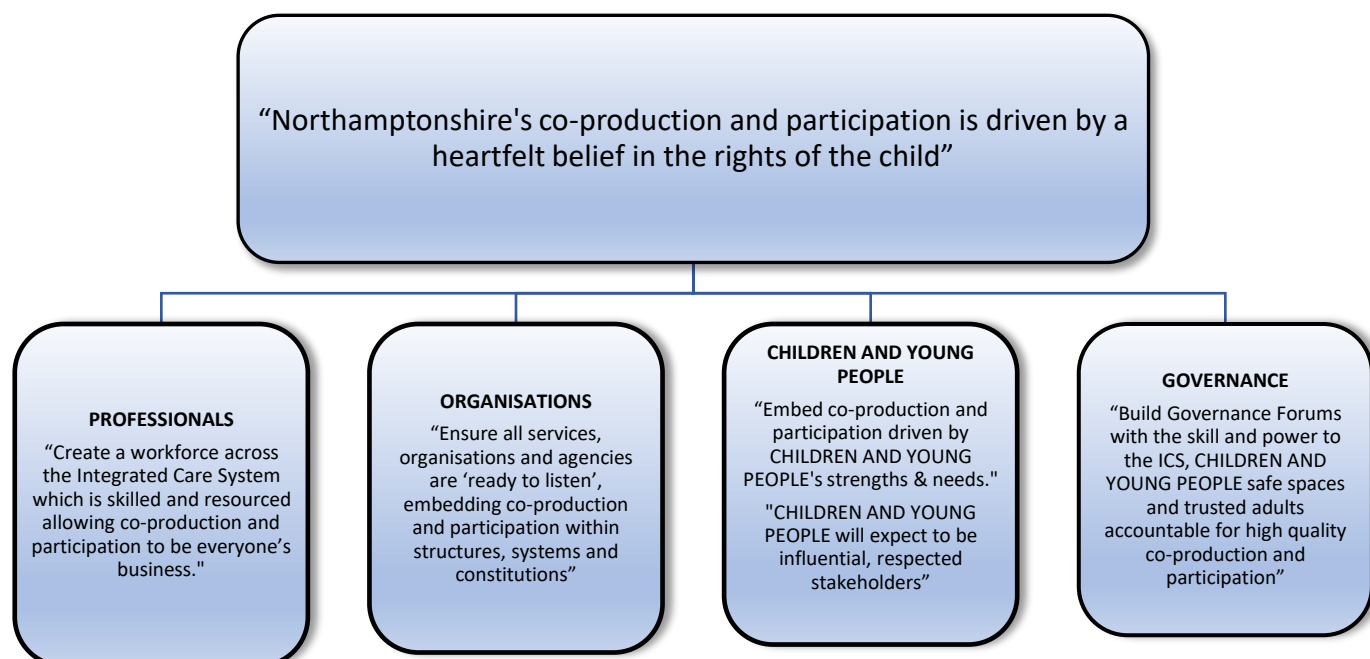
- A good amount of **time** for discussion enabled engagement (Paul & Palfinger, 2020; Femke et al, 2020; Brady & Franklin, 2019); lockdown gave time and motivation to connect online (Arya, 2021)
- There needs to be adequate **resources** (Femke et al, 2020); **materials should be co-designed** to more effective to involve children and young people (Dowthwaite et al, 2019).
- The use of **simple words**, gave accurate information at the right pace, and explained things promotes engagement (Davison, et al, 2021).
- **Communication in a timely way** (Davison, et al, 2021) through spaces like Whatsapp (Dewa et al, 2021).
- **Recruit more children and young people** for flexible engagement (Dewa et al, 2021).
- There needs to recognition and **value for contributions** (Moll et al, 2020) This could be achieved through incentives (Sellars et al, 2021: Walker et al 2021; Ponsford et al, 2021; Pavarini et al 2019).
- **Transport** (Walker et al 2021; Pavarini et al 2019)
- **Subsistence & breaks** (Dewa et al, 2021; Pavarini et al 2019).
- **Co-creation from start to finish** (Walker et al 2021)
- **Role models** and participation in actions and networks helped to create active citizenship (Dewa et al, 2021; Jaufar, 2021).

Practical barriers

The following are a list of the practical barriers to co-production and participation:

- **Budget** (Povey et al, 2022; Sellars et al, 2021; Walker et al 2021; Dewa et al, 2021; Gwenlli et al, 2021; Paul & Palfinger, 2020; Moll et al, 2020)
- **Timescales** (Povey et al, 2022; Sellars et al, 2021; Walker et al 2021; Dewa et al, 2021; Moll et al, 2020)
- **Children and young people's busy lives** can be a barrier (Forsyth et al, 2019)
- **Transport** (Gwenlli et al, 2021)
- Lack of **conducive spaces** (Jaufar, 2021); online platforms not being conducive (Paul & Palfinger, 2020)
- **Conflicting priorities** with practitioners (Dewa et al, 2021)
- **Reaching young people** (Sellars et al, 2021) and conflicting views from children and young people (Povey et al, 2022)
- **Knowing how** to involve young people (Sellars et al, 2021)
- **Inconsistent attendance** at workshops (Povey et al, 2022)
- Not relating to or being unable to **trust facilitators** (Davison, et al, 2021)
- **Cultural attitudes** impeded activism (Jaufar, 2021)
- Children and young people's **lack of confidence** (Gwenlli et al, 2021)
- Children and young people **perceiving participation as schoolwork** (Pavarini et al 2019), it needs to be starting where children and young people are at (Forsyth et al, 2019)
- Children and young people **being excluded from conversations about them** (Davison, et al, 2021)

Strategic objectives and priorities (recommendations)



Participation should be set in a backdrop of universal standards of living, expectations and aspirations for all children and young people.

Children and young people living in adverse circumstances may not be able to recognise their circumstances or raise concerns. Alongside this, rights based education; self-awareness and support for life goal setting ensures children and young people's voices are not limited by their socio-economic background and the ceilings of social stratification. This was evident from the ranging acceptance of being grateful for being free from direct persecution, acceptance and the normalisation of violence, feeling unsafe. It was evident from the apathy rooted in not being heard or able to speak out about issues which affect them.

Trusted adults are a fundamental element in enabling participation and co-production.

Children and young people need to have established trust to feel able to speak out. For children and young people with significantly complex needs, their experiences with adults had impacted their experience of having trusted relationships with adults. For many children and young people consistent spaces such as home and school provide this; however, for other children and young people, schools work closer with parents or other practitioners than with the child or young person and therefore it is difficult to trust when children and young people do not feel in control of their information, stories, worries and concerns. Consequently, practitioners will need the competencies to plan their participation work to build trust or build on established trust with others to effectively engage children and young people. For example, it was evident that the primary schools were places and spaces of unanimous longstanding trust, through generations, consequently the level of engagement was high through sensitive topics. However, when young people move to secondary education, their relationships with teaching staff can become more distant and anonymous. Peers and the public spaces can create or diminish trust. **Predictability of a space will also determine trust and safety.** Trusted healthy and transparent relationships with adults, family or peers can clearly create trust. Time and space to build trust has to be a priority.

Skills and knowledge of the facilitator are fundamental on a number of levels. In managing the power dynamic, the facilitator must be able to **shift the power in favour of the children and young people.** They should be able to do this in a one to one or group environment. Facilitators also need to **understand the contexts** of children and young people to be able to fully comprehend their wishes, feelings and opinions. The closer the facilitator is to the context the less translation of understanding is required. Facilitators can achieve this through peer facilitators or embedding themselves in a context. In both one to one and group settings, **facilitators should have an understanding of strengths, needs, trajectories and transitions** when advocating or enabling participation and co-production. This understanding provides a specialist understanding of the wishes, feelings and opinions setting additional holistic context to their contribution.

Participation activities should be exciting, engaging, planned and designed to maximise engagement. Children and young people's motivation to participate need to be intrinsic to the planning in partnership with children and young people from the outset. The findings in this project illustrate the points from the systematic review; children and young people, as with all people, **need to gain from an experience that they voluntarily engage in.**

As a rights based exercise, co-production and participation, cannot be anything but voluntary and therefore the gain for children and young people must be a core feature in the planning. One size does not fit all, so establishing motivating factors, alongside the gain and benefit for engagement must be considered in advance with the children and young people. This may require partnership communication; it should also demand **a balance between 'quick wins' for children and young people as well as the longer term achievements.** Quick wins can be fun, entertainment or being with their friends; voucher incentives may also be beneficial although the long term ethos / principles of empowerment underpinning participation may be lost behind monetary incentives that could become exploitative or promoting consumerism.

Participation of children and young people should be an empowering intervention enabling active citizens. Children and young people raise concerns on an issue by issue basis not necessarily aligned to services. In contrast, the managerialism of services within the children's and young people's system drives services to utilise feedback to enable accuracy in services and meet the needs of the service user effectively. Though both the children's and practitioners' agendas are valid, power lies with practitioners which may be why their agenda dominates. It is therefore apparent **there needs to be a mechanism for enabling, engaging and facilitating participation led by children and young people's agendas** and responded to by participation workers and practitioners across the integrated care system. This should be acknowledged when defining and acting on standards for participation. This will subsequently facilitate the child and young person's initiated actions and participation; achieving higher levels of participation according to Hart (1992). This will actively support the need for voluntary engagement and motivation to engage on issues that are a priority for children and young people.

Consideration of protected characteristics

There should be focused participation spaces representative of each protected characteristic with skilled and knowledgeable practitioners; practitioners should have an understanding of strengths, needs, trajectories and transitions. Each focused participation space should be situated in local area partnerships across the county.

There should be a priority on maintaining longevity and stable staff teams in order that children and young people can build trusted relationships that are maintained with longevity with them.

Age

Children under 8 years old highlighted the role of their trusted people and how they influence their participation and their wellbeing. Their trusted people being parents, leaders but largely their friends. They engage best when they feel safe, comfortable and heard in much the same way that adults do.

Participation activities should prioritise feeling safe; appropriate responses to children seeking the approval, reassurance and interaction of adults without diluting their wishes and feelings. Enabling participation projects so that children feel they are part of a team, they can create friendships including early years that need exposure to parallel playing and copying their peers. These spaces should be positive interactions with the 'leader' make a difference to the wellbeing and motivation for involvement. Participation activities should be environments of success and praise where children feel important when they are listened to.

Young people deserve spaces that they are not discriminated in; where they are respected as a person feel safe and welcome in. Youth culture, habits and peer expectation should be explored with young people to understand their context and aspiration so they can accurately share their wishes and feelings with positive aspiration.

Race

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups need to experience participation activity which is considerate of the discrimination and oppression they have experienced. It may require trauma informed practice due to possible hate crime victim's experiences. Practitioners should have safeguarding procedures, voluntary engagement, support for triggers. Practitioners should explore cultural awareness with children and young people to understand their contexts, their subsequent meaning and the implications this has for the trajectories. First and second generation children and young people will have a range of social experiences which interplay with their social capital and consequently their life chances; this will change definitions and meaning behind their contributions; practitioners need to immerse themselves in understanding these.

For young asylum seekers and refugees particular attention to be paid to their rights and standards of living whereby their life experiences may impact on their aspirations. Mental health and trauma informed practice should be a priority for enabling equity of access but also holistic support.

Disability

Practitioners should have a holistic understanding of disability and the contexts these children and young people experience. Adaptable delivery should recognise eventualities to enable confidence and safety in engagement.

Depending on the complexity of communication, practitioners should have a range of methods and approaches; they should be skilled in observation as well alternative language such signing and Makaton.

Each child or young person should be given the opportunity to share their information on a need to know basis; they disability should not assume that all their needs are shared with participation facilitators. This will underpin the ethos for voluntary engagement.

There should be safeguarding procedures and holistic support for triggers as required.

Gender reassignment

Practitioners should have a heightened awareness as to individual children and young people's circumstances with regards to their orientation and other people's understanding of their orientation. They should agree from the outset the parameters of this and what the child or young person experiences as interactions that embrace their position. They need to be trauma informed in their practice due to the hate crime victims experiences they may have had and have transparent safeguarding procedures and support for triggers.

Pregnancy or maternity

Young parents or parents to be, should be accommodated to engage, mindful of their caring responsibilities. The context of changing identity and inner conflict with becoming marginalised from peers and common youth culture should be accommodated.

Young people deserve spaces that they are not discriminated in; where they are respected as a person, feel safe and welcome in. Youth culture, habits and peer expectation should be explored with young people to understand their context and aspiration so they can accurately share their wishes and feelings with positive aspiration.

Religion / Belief

Children and young people should be enabled and celebrated to exercise their religions and beliefs. They need to experience participation activity which is considerate of the discrimination and oppression they have experienced. It may require trauma informed practice due to possible hate crime victims' experiences. Practitioners should have safeguarding procedures, voluntary engagement, support for triggers. Practitioners should explore cultural, spiritual, conventions and ritual awareness with children and young people to understand their contexts, their subsequent meaning and the implications this has for the trajectories. Children and young people will have a range of social experiences which interplay with their social capital and consequently their life chances; this will change definitions and meaning behind their contributions; practitioners need to immerse themselves in understanding these.

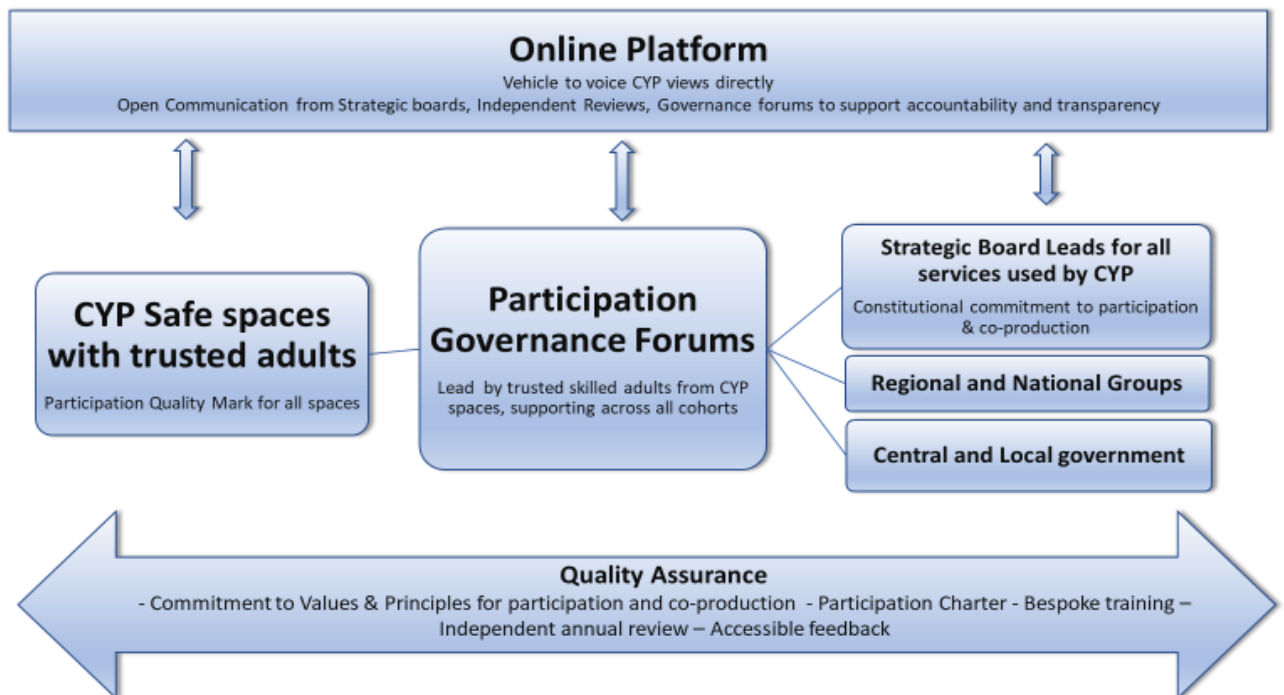
Sex

Practitioners need awareness of the re-emerging objectification of femininity; they should be aware of the trajectories and discrimination and oppression faced by females. Young people deserve spaces that they are not discriminated in; where they are respected as a person feel safe and welcome in. Youth culture, habits and peer expectation should be explored with young people to understand their context and aspiration so they can accurately share their wishes and feelings with positive aspiration.

Sexual orientation

Practitioners should have a heightened awareness as to individual children and young people's circumstances with regards to their orientation and other people's understanding of their orientation. They should agree from the outset the parameters of this and what the child or young person experiences as interactions that embrace their position. They need to be trauma informed in their practice due to the hate crime victims experiences they may have had and have transparent having safeguarding procedures and support for triggers.

Proposals to embed participation and co-production.



CYP Safe Spaces & Trusted Adults

- CYP safe spaces in which they engage in trusted adults will enable quality participation and co-production.
- Adults in these spaces will be trained and skilled in participation, co-production and Northamptonshire's strategy.
- All spaces, adults and practice will be guided by the values, principles and charter for participation and co-production.
- These spaces will be assessed and awarded by the appropriate Charter Mark.

Participation Governance Forums

- Forums will represent all CYP cohorts and protected characteristics.
- The forums will be lead and attended by the trusted adults working within CYP safe spaces.
- Terms of reference for the group will be guided by the values, principles and charter for participation and co-production.
- Forums will have capacity and capability to hold Strategic Leadership Boards to account for their actions and will be accountable to the CYP they serve.

Strategic Board Leads for CYP

- Constitutional commitment to participation & co-production and the devolution of power to CYP and the Governance Forums supporting them.
- Commitment to the values, principles and charter for participation and co-production.
- Commitment to training and upskilling in co-production, participation and Northamptonshire's strategy.
- Commitment to supporting the independent review.
- Commitment to open and transparent communication through the online platform

Quality Assurance

- Values, principles and commitment embedded in constitutions, policies and culture across CYP trusted spaces, governance forums and CYP services.
- Bespoke mandatory co-production and participation training designed by the University of Northampton meeting the needs of the strategy in Northamptonshire (practitioner & leadership training).
- Quality Mark training and support to ensure the highest level of award across CYP spaces.
- Independent annual review.
- Transparent and publicly accessible feedback.

Online Platform

- Publicly accessible online platform
- Forum for direct communication of the views of CYP and trusted adults
- Forum for direct communication and feedback from Governance Forums, Strategic Board Leads of Services, and Independent Review. Providing updates, plans for change and evaluation.

Milestone	Steps to achievement	Notes
All professionals working with children and young people trained in co-production, participation, and engagement.	University of Northampton design accredited mandatory CPD training for all professionals on Co-production, participation & engagement.	Practitioners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand values of co-production and participation, essentially the requirement for voluntary engagement underpinning empowerment. • Build trusted relationships and trusted spaces. • Shift power in favour of children and young people. • Understanding children and young people human
	Logistics of training delivery established	
	Training bookings made available	
	Commence rolling programme	

		<p>rights, universal standards of living, expectations and aspirations for all children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand self-awareness and support for life goal setting which is not limited by their socio-economic background of the ceilings of social stratification. • Comprehend children and young people context to fully appreciate their feelings, wishes, and opinions, strengths, needs, trajectories and transitions. • Manage peers and public who can diminish trust. • Build trust through adults, family and peers. • Identify individual motivators within children and young people. • Able to work with children and young people in both groups and individuals.
All professionals leading / managing children and young people services / organisations / agencies trained in Charter mark for co-production & participation.	Charter Mark training identified / designed.	Example appropriate quality marks established are Hear by Right and UNICEF's Rights Respecting School.
	Logistics of training delivery established	
	Training bookings made available	
	Commence rolling programme	
All professionals working with children and young people have appropriate protected time for co-production, participation, and engagement.	Strategic commitment established	
	All practitioner roles reviewed	
	Amendment to duties as required	
	Additional recruitment as required	
Children and young people services / organisations / agencies	Review of constitutions Identify any amendments required.	Commitment reflects values of co-production and participation

have constitutional commitment to co-production and participation.	Ratify amendments	
Children and young people services / organisations / agencies have policies, processes, and culture to enable co-production and participation.	Charter Mark assessments carried out.	
	Development plans created for change in policy, process, culture	
	Continual review of progress	
All children and young people can access trusted spaces and build relationships with trusted adults	Long term commitment to resourcing all trusted spaces including online spaces	Trusted adults are appropriately skilled to support the characteristics of the groups. Online spaces such as 'Mind of My Own' to be reviewed by children and young people and co-produced for local children and young people to access across the ICS.
	Wide communication of trusted spaces available	
	Identification of gaps in trusted spaces including protected characteristic focused participation groups	
	Plan for development of trusted spaces to close the gaps	
	Charter mark assessments and development across all spaces	
Trusted spaces linked to the local area partnerships	Facilitate the engagement of trusted spaces and trusted adults within local area partnership (LAP)	
	Embed process of identifying and engaging further trusted spaces	
	LAP promote trusted spaces	
Create structure / process for children and young people incentives within trusted spaces and with trusted adults	Plan and agree consistent county process for incentives	Gain and benefit must be considered with children and young people in advance. System must meet individual motivation for engagement. Practitioners need to balance 'quick wins' and long-term achievement
	Trusted adults informed and able to build incentives within co-production and participation with children and young people	
Youth led agenda	Systems and process identified to for geographically based partnership teams or projects funded based on	Consider the use of online platforms in developing collective agendas directly from children and young people

	children and young people's priorities.	
Established participation governance forums representing all cohorts of children and young people and protected characteristics in equal measure	Forums set up from existing trusted adults	Forums to be led by trusted adults from safe spaces.
	Identify gaps within forums	
	Develop plans for building trusted spaces, adults and forums in gaps identified	
Transparency and accountability through effective system of communication between forums, trusted spaces and ICS Service Leads	Plan information flow, establish methods and timings of communication	
	Identify requirements for online platform	
	Identify resource to support communication	
Trust and Accountability ensured through Independent Annual Review	Commission Independent Annual Review, findings to be published	
Quality assurance gained through Quality Mark established across co-production and participation structure	Identified quality mark based upon the values, principles, charter for participation	Examples, Hear by Rights (National Youth Agency) Rights and Respect quality mark in schools
	Training on assessment, tools and resources for development to highest levels	
	Continual review across all areas (trusted spaces, children and young people services and organisations)	
Participation and co-production agenda within local area partnerships	LAP adopt constitution and process for co-production and participation	
	LAP made aware of existing trusted spaces / adults	
	LAP engage and facilitate trusted spaces / adults into LAP	

Appendices

Underpinning Reports

1. Survey for Practitioners - discussion and analysis, recommendations.
2. Workshop for Practitioners - discussion and analysis, recommendations
3. Workshop from young people - discussion and analysis, recommendations.
20th May 1st June
4. Survey for Children's - discussion and analysis, recommendations.
5. CYP Engagement Report 0-7 Years

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