

Youth Work

in Cumbria Partnership

Young People's Participation Plan 2006-2009

(February 2006)

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Young People's Participation Plan

Content

1. YWiCP – Participation Plan (Summary)	Page 2 - 5
2. YWiCP – Background	Page 6
3. Cumbria – The Need	Page 9
4. YWiCP - The Need	Page 9
5. "SpeakUp" - Project Scope and Definition	Page 10
6. "SpeakUp" - Who Benefits?	Page 13
7. "SpeakUp" - Links to Other Strategies and Plans – Added Value	Page 15
8. "SpeakUp" - Risks Particular to the Project	Page 18
9. "SpeakUp" - Suggested Performance Indicators	Page 19
10. Key Contacts	Page 20
11. Glossary of Terms	Page 20

1. Young People's Participation Plan – Summary

There are so many opportunities for children and young people to take an active part in shaping where they live, the services they use and the running of local and national organisations. They have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect them. Their participation is essential to improve services and respond to their needs. That much is recognised. (Hear By Right - LGA/NYA)

'Hear by Right' is a tried and tested standards framework, developed by the National Youth Agency (NYA), for organisations across the statutory and voluntary sectors to assess and improve practice and policy on the active participation of children and young people. The Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership (YWiCP), as part of the Change for Children Partnership, have adopted 'Hear By Right' as their standards framework for the participation of young people in the shaping of their services.

The Children and Young people's Strategic partnership Board (Involving Children, Young People, their Families and Communities) have developed a strategy for the participation of children and young people aged 0-19 across Cumbria. This programme is called "SpeakUp" and the YWiCP are a key partner.

The NYA has also developed the 'Act By Right' toolkit designed to help young people achieve positive change within their communities. 'Act by Right' is a skills workbook, developed with young people and accredited by ASDAN. It takes children and young people through five stages of a journey to develop their knowledge and skills to take effective action and make change happen. It is rooted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is the international human rights framework that promotes the full participation of children and young people to help secure their rights to a fulfilling, safe and secure upbringing. (November 2004.)

"SpeakUp" also intend to use the 'Ready Steady Change' toolkit (DfES / CRAE)

What does this mean to the YWiCP?

YWiCP stakeholders at all levels must make a commitment to the participation of young people in their services. They must also provide evidence that young people:

- **have been listened to**
- **have been involved in the design, delivery, governance and evaluation of services, leading to and recognising positive change**

Our Strategic Plan, Contracts and Partnership Agreements (SLA's) all state that the participation of young people is a priority.

How can the YWiCP do this?

The YWiCP will make a commitment to the "SpeakUp" agenda. Over the next 3 years, YWiCP stakeholders, including young people, will be offered training by a "SpeakUp" Project Team to effectively and appropriately involve young people using the '*Hear By Right*' framework and the '*Act By Right*' / '*Ready Steady Change*' toolkits.

What can the YWiCP stakeholders do now?

- Train and involve young people in your recruitment processes
- Set up and support a youth committee to design, plan and evaluate your services
- Allocate a percentage of your funding for young people to decide how it is spent
- Involve young people in school / college councils
- Involve young people in your local Neighbourhood Forums
- Organise meetings with Elected Members and MP's
- Involve young people in 'mock' elections
- Set up and support a local action or interest group e.g. Environment, drama, education, music, sexual health, disability, sport, drugs & alcohol, politics, neighbourhood issues, equality & diversity, crime & personal safety, film & media, transport, food, health & fitness, art, LGBT, rural
- Work in partnership with other agencies e.g. health, sports, arts and police teams to develop joint issue based groups
- Develop a newsletter or website designed and written by young people or make a contribution to a community newsletter/website
- Provide opportunities for volunteering
- Organise peer research and consultation events for the benefit of your project and other agencies / partnerships
- Organise young people's training events, residential, conferences and celebrations
- Record and certificate young people's participation achievements
- Accredite young people's participation

What can "SpeakUp" do for the YWiCP?

- "SpeakUp" will support the training and co-ordination of all of the current participation expectations above, and the future plans listed below. "SpeakUp" can also audit the YWiCP using the Hear By Right standards framework in order to set a baseline for future activity.

What can young people expect in the future?

"SpeakUp" is based on the principal that 'issue based' involvement has the potential to interest all children and young people. Children and young people become self-motivated to act when an issue may have personal resonance, unlike more traditional democratic systems that rely on a few people representing the views of others. As part of "SpeakUp" young people would:

- Register with "SpeakUp" - including their personal interest areas

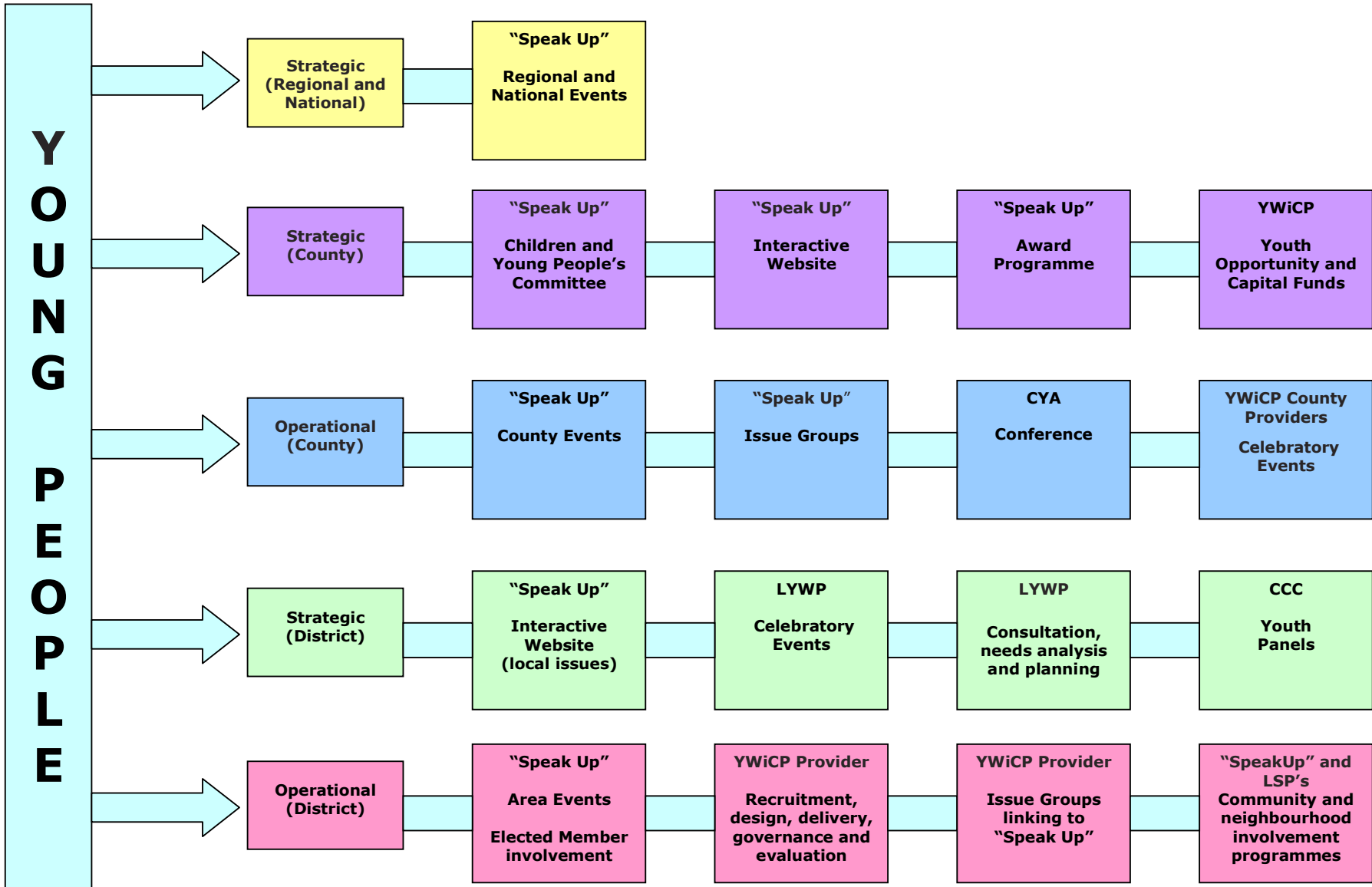
- Get a "SpeakUp Pack" explaining who does what in Cumbria, how they can influence decision making and get involved in wider "SpeakUp" participation opportunities
- Receive authorised access to all "SpeakUp Forums" on the website
- Be able to join a "SpeakUp Interest Group"
- Be supported to set up a "SpeakUp Interest Group" of their own
- Be able to access training to help them get their voices heard
- Be able to communicate with each other on issues of their choice via a dedicated interactive website.
- The "SpeakUp" groups would be supported to provide a platform for voicing and sharing opinions on specific issues - and bringing children and young people together for 'fun' activities
- Children and young people would lead "SpeakUp" Interest Groups, with support from relevant agencies - in turn receiving support from the "SpeakUp" project team.
- Group members could attend one of the 6 area "SpeakUps" which would meet periodically to bring children and young people together with local decision makers. This would:
 - Provide a local representative group of children and young people with a wide range of interests and experiences;
 - Help children and young people get an idea of what others are doing locally and find out about new opportunities available to them;
 - Allow children and young people to invite relevant decision makers to respond to specific issues of concern to them;
 - Allow decision makers to invite relevant young people from "SpeakUp" interest groups for consultation on issues they are working on;
 - Be a place to meet new people;
 - Spread the 'participation workload' between more children and young people;
 - Be run in a format agreed by children and young people, not adults;
 - "SpeakUp" members could attend County "SpeakUp" events to get involved in the 'big decisions' for Cumbria's services.

"SpeakUp" would provide a high profile platform for communication between children, young people and adults via a dedicated website, regular newsletters, meetings and events. This would, in effect, be a '**Cumbria Children and Young People's Parliament**' delivered in a more attractive 'wrapper'.

Timescale

- **2006/2007** – YWiCP audited using Hear By Right standards framework
- **2006/2007** – Hear By Right training for YWiCP stakeholders
- **April 2008** – "SpeakUp" launched

Young People's Participation Diagram



2. Background

'Every Child Matters' places young people themselves at the heart of the services that serve them. The Joint Area Reviews (JAR) and Annual Performance Assessments (APA) of Local Authorities will examine the extent to which young people are listened to and their views taken seriously. The inspection framework is clear that young people must be actively involved in decision-making – individual decision-making as well as broader policy and service development.

Young people being placed at the heart of 'their service' reflects their entitlements as agreed by Government through its ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Article 12

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Article 13

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

In 2001 the Government published '*Learning to Listen – Core Principles for the Involvement of Children and Young People*'. This cross-party agreement and guidance introduced the requirement for every Government Department and their agencies to draw up an action plan for introducing and implementing strategies for involving children and young people in their work, in accordance with the core principles. As a consequence, local Governments need to evidence the work they are doing to involve 0-19's in all areas of activity, requiring prioritisation proportional to the relevance of the policy to children and young people themselves. The long-term vision of '*Learning to Listen*' is for capacity building and sharing best practice to expand participation across all departments.

'Every Child Matters' places a clear responsibility on Local Authorities to involve children, young people, their families and communities in the development of Children's Trust arrangements throughout all guidance documentation. The following examples provide an overview:

4.3 Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community

- Individual children and young people are consulted and listened to when key decisions affecting their future are made
- Children and young people are consulted and listened to when key decisions are made about local provision, particularly focusing on what they most enjoy
- Children and young people are encouraged to participate in the planning and management of services and activities
- Children and young people are encouraged to take part in and to initiate voluntary activities to support the community and environment
- Children and young people are helped to acquire the knowledge and understanding to become informed and responsible citizens

Inspection of Children's Services: key judgments and illustrative evidence: Ofsted, 2005

- '(Joint Area) Reviews will take account of the views of children and young people, and of their parents and carers, and seek to involve them in other ways.'
- 'Over time, plans will be implemented to involve young people in reviews, working alongside inspectors. They will have specific tasks identified, particularly in relation to gathering the views of children and young people and in reporting back to them. As these arrangements are implemented, local services will be fully briefed about the role which the young person will play in the team.'

Joint Area Reviews of Children's Services: Ofsted, 2005

'A set of effective local arrangements, operating at every level, will be a Children's Trust in action. These arrangements will involve:

- front-line staff providing integrated services;
- the shared processes they use to support their work;
- joint audits, plans and commissioning arrangements with pooled budgets which set their priorities and deliver the necessary resources; and
- the inter-agency governance arrangements which agree the overall vision and sustain the approach.'

The voice of children and their families should be heard at each of these levels and inform local design and delivery of the arrangements.'

'Local partners should ensure a culture of openness across their Children's Trust arrangements, so that listening and responding to children becomes an integral part of everyday practice. They should see to it that children and young people are involved in decision making about their lives, and in designing and developing services. A 'one size fits all' approach will not work; partners should develop innovative and creative methods for involving children and young people, drawing on national and local toolkits.'

Interagency Co-operation to Improve the Well-being of Children: DfES 2004

'Local needs assessments should always be both tested and contextualised through the involvement of children, young people, parents, carers, and the community. Methods of involvement include consultation; democratic representation; shadow governance arrangements; co-production of services; etc. Different methods will suit different needs. Particular emphasis should be placed on ensuring that the children and young people who are participating are representative of the local child and adolescent population.'

'The views of children and young people are critical in monitoring and reviewing services and the children's trust systems.'

Joint Planning and Commissioning 5 Year Vision: DfES / Department of Health, 2005.

3. The Need - Cumbria

There is a great deal of work taking place with young people across Cumbria to give them an active say in how policies and services, that work with and for them, are developed, provided, evaluated and improved. Young people can, and do, access opportunities to get involved in their communities and the democratic process's that affect them. The standard of participation work varies from 'cutting edge', attracting national recognition, to the 'tokenistic' that 'ticks boxes'. The impact of young people's participation is rarely measured, evaluated, recorded or shared.

Opportunities for young people to participate are not universally available across service provision or geographical location. There is no general advocacy service speaking up for young people's rights or providing individual support in Cumbria. There is no single county strategy for young people's participation, although a few agencies do have their own strategies in place. Very few young people and adults have received any training in this field. There is presently no easy way to map the participation of young people. All existing participation work lacks co-ordination and a multi-agency approach, resulting in duplication and wasted resource allocation.

Most formal participation activities are of interest to a minority of young people, who are expected to represent others and have a viewpoint on everything. Young people do have something to say but often choose not to engage in existing forums to express their views. There is often confusion on behalf of young people who are looking for a way to participate and decision makers who want to involve them.

4. The Need - Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership

The Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership Strategic Plan 2005-2008 objectives state that :

- *young people will participate in the design and delivery of YWiCP services and have the opportunity to influence other services that affect them*
- *we will develop a system to evidence young people's participation in service development*

We will achieve our objectives by implementing the following methods / activities:

- Assist in the development of a multi-agency framework for participation in Cumbria
- Common set of standards for young people – 'Hear by Right' standards framework
- Provider Agreements and contracts to include a commitment to implement the agreed standards for participation in Cumbria
- Accredited participation and involvement programmes for young people
- Self assessment of the service
- Planning and commissioning process

5. "SpeakUp" Project Scope and Definition

"SpeakUp" is an approved proposal to the Change for Children Partnership. It provides the means to take young people's participation forward in a way that reflects the aims of Every Child Matters.

"SpeakUp" will provide the infrastructure for children, young people and decision makers to come together and bring about positive change for the future. It will promote children and young people's views, needs and interests and champion their universal rights.

It will do this by providing:

- A high profile 'Children and Young People's Commissioner' role for Cumbria.
- A co-ordinating body for existing and emerging participation activity across all Children's Services.
- A branded well publicised 'hub' for children, young people, their families and communities to engage in open dialogue with each other and the services and people who make decisions affecting them.
- A signposting service for children and young people in need of advocacy or support to question or challenge individual decisions that are made and affect them.
- Innovative ways of engaging children and young people to comment on and inform the work priorities and decisions made to ensure the ongoing development of a Children's Trust way of working in Cumbria.
- A set of standards (Hear by Right), built into the commissioning process for Children's Services, to make sure that children and young people have the means to express their views and needs, have them listened to, taken seriously and acted on.
- Collation of the evidence of children and young people's participation and the change it has brought about, to aid dissemination of best practice and provide evidence for Joint Area Review inspections.
- An award programme run by children and young people, recognising good participation practice by agencies delivering services to children and young people.
- A library of creative resources and materials available to support the involvement of children and young people.
- Innovative means of communication for children and young people, in particular those who have additional communication needs and are particularly hard to reach.
- Encouragement, support and training from a specialist staff team, to people working with children and young people and with responsibility for children and young people, in the public, voluntary, community and private sectors.

"SpeakUp" will be founded on the belief that in order to generate tangible policy and service change and improvement depends on engaging children and young people through effective and genuine participation. From this, a key priority is to develop innovative ways of ensuring that children and young people are able to participate and contribute in a meaningful way to the work of "SpeakUp" itself.

"SpeakUp" will be committed to ensuring that all work will be evidenced based and informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"SpeakUp" will not be the main deliverer of participation activity in Cumbria. This will be the responsibility of all agencies delivering Children's Services and will be a fundamental requirement within the commissioning process.

"SpeakUp" will endeavour to secure the commitment of non-commissioned services for children and young people to engage in a Countywide framework for involving children and young people.

The primary focus of "SpeakUp" will be:

- **Coordination, information and best practice sharing, support and training to implement participation activity to the agreed standards**
- **Delivering specific events that bring children and young people together with decision makers**
- **Advocacy for Looked After Children (particularly at Reviews) and signposting to advocacy and support services for other children, young people and their families at times of need**
- **Managing an IT infrastructure for children and young people to voice their opinions**
- **Managing a database of children and young people who have expressed an interest in participating in specific issues**
- **Collation of the evidence of change as a result of children and young people's participation**

"SpeakUp" is based on the principle that 'issue based' involvement has the potential to interest all children and young people. Children and young people become self-motivated to act when an issue may have personal resonance, unlike more traditional democratic systems that rely on a few people representing the views of others. The following diagram shows the links needed between all the essential components for a healthy egalitarian model of participation.

Children and young people would:

- Register with "SpeakUp" - including their personal interest areas
- Get a "SpeakUp Pack" explaining who does what in Cumbria, how they can influence decision making and get involved in wider "SpeakUp" participation opportunities
- Receive authorised access to all "SpeakUp Forums" on the website
- Be able to join a "SpeakUp Interest Group"
- Be supported to set up a "SpeakUp Interest Group" of their own
- Be able to access training to help them get their voices heard
- Be able to communicate with each other on issues of their choice via a dedicated interactive website.

Ideas from young people - "SpeakUp" groups could include the following issue related themes, plus many more:

Environment	Drama	Education
Music	Sexual Health	Disability
Sport	Drugs & Alcohol	Individual Organisations
Politics	Play	Local Issues
Education	Crime & Personal Safety	Film & Media
Transport	Food	Health & Fitness
Art	LGBT Issues	Rural Issues

- The "SpeakUp" groups would be supported to provide a platform for voicing and sharing opinions on specific issues - and bringing children and young people together for 'fun' activities
- Children and young people would lead "SpeakUp" Interest Groups, with support from relevant agencies - in turn receiving support from the "SpeakUp" project team.
- Group members could attend one of the 6 area "SpeakUps" which would meet periodically to bring children and young people together with local decision makers. This would:
 - Provide a local representative group of children and young people with a wide range of interests and experiences;
 - Help children and young people get an idea of what others are doing locally and find out about new opportunities available to them;
 - Allow children and young people to invite relevant decision makers to respond to specific issues of concern to them;
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"SpeakUp" would provide a high profile platform for communication between children, young people and adults via a dedicated website, regular newsletters, meetings and events. This would, in effect, be a '**Cumbria Children and Young People's Parliament**' delivered in a more attractive 'wrapper'.

6. "SpeakUp" - Who benefits?

<p>Children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identifiable team that will universally champion their rights and advocate on their behalf. • An increase in opportunities to participate in service development at a local level on an ongoing basis. • New opportunities to volunteer and be active citizens in the community. • A high profile single point of access, or 'hub', to have a voice and influence on issues affecting children and young people. • Quality participation activities; monitored and evaluated within a standards framework. • Appropriate and relevant services developed and informed by the identified needs of children and young people. • A new and exciting infrastructure for children and young people to communicate with each other. • Access for all children and young people, via internet, text, video conferencing, local groups, projects and events etc. • Better information and training to support children and young people to participate. • Acquisition of new skills, raised aspirations and a sense of increased self worth for children and young people whose participation has made a difference. • Certificated and accredited outcomes as evidence of children and young people's individual positive contribution.
<p>All children and young people's services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single framework, with shared values and standards, for coordinated children and young people's participation in the county. • Joint planning and commissioning of responsive and appropriate services that are designed, delivered and evaluated on the basis of identified - rather than presumed - needs and interests of children and young people. • A network and database of children and young people who want to participate in activity relating to their interests. • Supports co-ordinated partnership working in line with the Every Child Matters agenda • A vehicle for delivering on the 'Making a Positive Contribution' outcome detailed in Every Child Matters. • Reduces the chance of duplication and allows for the sharing of good practice to be disseminated across organisational boundaries • Responsive to children and young people's diversity by promoting a range of methods for engagement that reflect individual interest, need, ability and location. • A managed single point of contact for engagement and consultation with a large network of children and young people. • Support, training and resources available from a specialist team. • Service credibility with children and young people, as a result of their views being valued and respected.
<p>Local Government and its Elected Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high profile single point of access, or 'hub', to hear the voice of children and young people. • A network and database of children and young people who want to participate in activity related to their identified interests. • A framework for children and young people to come together with decision-makers, facilitated by a specialist team and trained staff from participating organisations. • Interest based children and young people's forums where decision-makers can enter discussion on any issues they are working on. • Co-ordination and targeting of consultation activity. • An increase of children and young people engaged in democratic processes. • Facilitated involvement of children and young people in scrutiny of local authority services. • A Children and Young People's Commissioner who would ensure that senior officers and elected members are made aware of children and young people's views on the decisions they make. • Training for adults and young people to help them work together more effectively. • A trail of accountability, providing a library of evidence of children and young people's involvement in local authority decision-making.

Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Children and Young People’s team that will universally champion the rights of the child. • A high profile participation ‘hub’ where parents can engage in forums and discuss issues and services affecting their children. • Information about Children’s Services and how children, young people, their families and communities can participate in planning, evaluating and improving the quality of services. • Training where appropriate.
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective involvement of children and young people can help improve community cohesion, intergenerational relationships and encourage a sense of ownership. • Children and young people learning social and civic skills. • An increased likelihood of future involvement of children and young people in their communities, arising from their positive experience of being involved. • An environment that is improved for all because account has been taken of the needs of children and young people. • More young people better prepared with the skills and attitudes to engage in learning, employment and to participate in the community.

7. "SpeakUp" - Links to Other Strategies and Plans – Added Value

Cumbria Children and Young People's Strategic Board - *Children and Young People's Plan*

Local Authorities are expected to be able to demonstrate the extent to which children and young people are listened to and their views taken seriously in individual decision-making as well as broader policy and service development. Inspection will be looking for evidence of a wide range of creative methods employed to involve children and young people reflecting their age, ability, interests and needs. This will require considerable cooperation and collaboration across service provision as diverse as, for example, PCT's; Housing Providers; Pre-School; FE Colleges and Voluntary Sector Youth Clubs. A "SpeakUp" team would provide the essential coordination to make this possible.

Cumbria County Council - *Corporate Strategy 2005-07*

A children and young people's "SpeakUp" team would address the following key performance indicators:

- Theme A Improving council services
KPa: Work closely with key partners to help us achieve our aims
KPb: Learn from the experiences of people and communities who use our services
KPC: Work to meet the needs of different groups and communities
- Theme D Improving the life chances and well-being of children and young people
Top Priority: Put children and young people at the centre of our services

Cumbria County Council- *Local Public Service Agreement 2003-06*

Although only in place until 31st March 2006 a Participation Unit would continue to ensure ongoing work to address similar Local Area Agreement targets in the future:

LPSA 8 Performance Indicator 5 - Involve local people, including young people, in decision-making

Cumbria County Council - *Home Office Civic Renewal Unit – Civic Pioneers 2006*

Civic Pioneers use civic renewal as an overarching theme of their Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA). This will be the CCC Member involvement participation and democracy programme, led by Community Unit, and will include young people as part of the community. There are three particular characteristics a Civic Pioneer should exhibit:

- Commitment to develop the skills to engage in or facilitate participation: this is consistently applied to councillors, staff, community groups and individual citizens so that all those who should be involved in shaping the policies for a local authority area are able to take part in a constructive and deliberative way.
- Commitment to support the development of community organisations: this is applied to community groups to help them engage local people in devising inclusive solutions to problems they face, provide a voice in discussions with the local authority and other public bodies, and enhance their long term sustainability.
- Commitment to involve citizens in the deliberation and implementation of council policies: this is developed as an integral part of the authority's democratic leadership, enabling citizens to recognise that the problems and achievements in the public realm are as much theirs as public sector bodies.

Cumbria County Council - Annual Review and Performance Plan 2005 to 2008

A Participation Unit could co-ordinate children and young people's involvement to meet the following aims and performance indicators across all local authority service delivery outlined in the plan:

- 'We remain committed to gaining regular feedback on the real quality of life issues that are most important in our rural and urban communities. By listening and learning from these real life experiences we will be better placed to deliver a step change in the performance of our services.'
- 'We have a key community leadership role to play in Cumbria and with our partners we intend not only to listen to the needs and aspirations of our communities and citizens, but also to convert these varied and competing views into priorities for delivering better services.'
- BV157: The number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as a percentage of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery - 100% (e-Government)
- % of residents satisfied with services provided by the Council.
(2005/06 - 54%, 2006/07 - 57%, 2007/08 - 60%)
- 'We aim to provide for the well-being of children and young people in Cumbria, increasing their opportunities to live happy, healthy and productive lives. We will work in partnership with children and young people, their parents and carers in doing this. We also need to work with schools, other public sector bodies, community and voluntary organisations to achieve this.'

Cumbria County Council - Local Democracy Commission Report

Remit: 'To make recommendations to Cumbria County Council on the most effective means of the County Council engaging with and responding to the needs of local communities'

From early findings of the Commission: 'Cumbria often acts in a way that is fragmented, and is thus less than fully effective in co-ordinated decision making and in consequent implementation/action.'

The Change for Children Partnership Workstream 1 - Involving children, young people, families and communities has communicated its direction and developments to the Commission and awaits publication of its report to Cabinet.

DfES / Department of Health - National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services Core Standards

Standard 3: Child, Young Person and Family-centred Services

'Children, young people and families receive high quality services which are co-ordinated around their individual and family needs and take account of their views.'

A Marker of Good Practice:

'The views of children, young people and their parents inform the needs based commissioning strategies, developed by Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and Children's Trusts.'

Listening and Responding To Children, Young People and Parents

- Ensuring that the views of individual service users and the local population are sought and responded to is an increasingly important requirement of National and Local Government policy. The central theme of *The NHS Plan*, as reiterated in *The NHS Improvement Plan*, is to design and deliver services around the needs of the person using them, with an emphasis on developing partnerships between patients and professionals. This means seeing services through the eyes of the child and family, and planning and delivering services according to their needs. Children have a right to be involved in decisions about their care (*UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, Article 12*). The need to secure sustained national improvements in NHS patient experience by 2008 is a target in *National Standards, Local Action* which specifies the need to ensure that individuals are fully involved in decisions about their health care.
- Particular efforts should be made to ensure that children and young people who are often excluded from participation activities are supported in giving their views e.g. Disabled children or Looked After children. *The Healthy Care Programme* (NCB 2002) promotes participation by children, young people and their carers in decisions about service development for Looked After children.
- Parents' views are important in determining local service provision and should be considered in planning and service development. The views and opinions of very young children should also be sought in appropriate ways.
- Children, young people and their parents participate in planning, evaluating and improving the quality of services. User participation follows the principles set out in *Learning to Listen: Core Principles for the Involvement of Children and Young People*. Findings from user participation consultation, in all settings, are reviewed at Board level, reflected in improvements in services and are available to children, young people and their families.

The Russell Commission - A National Framework for Youth Action and Engagement

Published on 16 March 2005, the Report details the Commission's recommendations for delivering a step change in youth volunteering in the UK – a step change in diversity, quality and quantity. In its report, the Russell Commission responds to the clearly expressed desire of young people to find meaningful ways of contributing to their communities. Recommendation 9 states 'There is untapped potential for young volunteers to give additional help within the public sector, for example in hospitals, schools, parks and sports, leisure and arts centres, to gain valuable experience and deliver tangible community benefit. There are particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens of local democracy'.

The Home Office - Together We Can

Together We Can is being led by the Home Office and sets out the government's commitment to empower citizens and their communities to work with public bodies in order to set out and achieve common objectives. 'Ensure children and young people have their say' is one of the eight key public policy areas within the document.

The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum lies at the heart of policies to raise standards of young people's learning and attainment. Education in citizenship provides coherence in the way young people are helped to develop a full understanding of their responsibilities as citizens in a modern democracy. The new Ofsted Inspection Framework requires schools to provide greater evidence of methods and outcomes for pupil involvement in a whole school context.

8. "SpeakUp" - Risks Particular to the Project

- *Securing partnership buy-in*

The success of "SpeakUp" is dependant on those who work directly with children and young people playing an active role in the promotion and delivery of the stated aims and objectives. There needs to be 'buy-in' at a senior level, via the Children and Young People's Board, to ensure implementation of change.

Within the Local Authority and its relevant partners there are examples of established and successful mechanisms for involving children and young people. There is no intention to change things that work but perception within organisations may be different. Staff may feel that their positions are threatened and their ways of working will change drastically. The purpose of "SpeakUp" is to strengthen, increase and disseminate good practice – through the provision of additional support and co-ordination in a multi-agency environment. This will need to be communicated clearly.

Other partner organisations, particularly schools, colleges, training providers, voluntary and community sector agencies, NHS Trusts, childcare, culture, sport and play organisations, have a key role to play. The benefits for the organisation, and children and young people themselves, need to be communicated to engage them in a countywide participation framework.

There is a need to co-ordinate and increase children and young people's participation at a service and strategic level - this will be the focus of "SpeakUp" through the provision of support, training, resources and the management of a countywide platform for participation.

- *Partnership working arrangements*

Organisations would be expected to support the delivery of 'issue based' participation activities and groups in partnership with others. This will focus the participation input of organisations around their areas of knowledge and expertise. For example a Family Planning Nurse may linkup with a Youth Worker to support a 'SpeakUp on Sexual Health' group of young people who want to influence the way they are able to access services. Equally, a Youth Worker may linkup with a Teacher and a Sports Development Officer to support a 'SpeakUp on Sport' group of young people who want to see more sporting activities available to them locally.

This will involve new ways of working for some - working across agency boundaries and with people they may not usually partner up with. It should be encouraged as an effective use of resources and deployment of skills and knowledge in line with the Every Child Matters agenda. A dedicated central Participation Team could identify appropriate partners and support such initiatives.

- *Promotion*

Agencies delivering front line services for children and young people will need to promote new mechanisms for participation. They will have a key role to play in encouraging children and young people to sign up to "SpeakUp" and take part in issue based discussions, events and groups. Schools are amongst the best placed to take on this role, so their support will be crucial. A specific allocation of curriculum time would be one way to do this and would compliment the citizenship agenda.

- *Funding*

The "SpeakUp" team will need to be adequately resourced to make a difference. Cumbria County Council has much to gain from a co-ordinated approach to children and young people's participation. Budgets across all departments, not just Children's Services, are allocated to work on the children and young people's involvement agenda. The many one off and independent events, consultations, training

programmes and research etc. happening across Cumbria at present is an inefficient use of resources. "SpeakUp" is not just about Children's Services – because children and young people are affected by a much bigger picture – so it intends to meet their needs through co-ordinating participation for 0-19's across all sectors. Consequently there is a case for core funding from a whole range of public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations and departments.

It is hoped this project will attract external funding in the form of grants and special 'pilot' status funding associated with several Government initiatives. Early discussions with several Government Departments, The Office of the Children's Commissioner for England and other leading national bodies have generated a great deal of interest in the approach. However, additional funding would be subject to a commitment to core funding coming from Cumbria, with the local authority being the obvious route.

External funding would be easier to attract if "SpeakUp" was to have some independence from the local authority and was consider 'non-statutory'. This opens up a range of grant funding programmes for participation presently only available to the voluntary and community sector.

Several key partners have committed to look at their funding streams and have already suggested they can offer a resource through the allocation of staff time. This may or may not be appropriate – very much depending on the skills and experience of the individuals concerned. Consequently decisions to accept such offers need to be considered carefully as they may offer a lot less than a smaller financial commitment.

9. "SpeakUp" - Suggested Performance Indicators (Tbc during Yr.1 2007-2008)

- Number of children and young people voting in school council elections
- Number of schools holding 'mock general elections'
- Number of young people registered with "SpeakUp" (as a percentage of the under 19 population)
- Number of young people meeting Elected Members face to face at organised events
- Number of young people undertaking participation training programmes
- Number of Elected Members / Senior Officers undertaking participation training
- Number of accredited / certificated outcomes for children and young people
- Number of organisations trained and delivering 'Hear by Right'
- Number of organisations receiving 'Investors in Children and Young People Kitemark Award'

Most importantly – **evidence of change** as a result of children and young people's participation gathered in 'Hear by Right' audits.



your voice in children and young people's services

Source - Change for Children Partnership Workstream 1, "SpeakUp" - The Business Case for a Children and Young People's Participation Unit Draft V2 (December 2005)

10. Key Contacts

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11. Glossary of Terms

APA	Annual Performance Assessment
CRAE	Children's Rights Alliance for England
CYA	Cumbria Youth Alliance
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
FE	Further Education
JAR	Joint Area Review
KP	Key Priority
LGA	Local Government Association
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender
LPSA	Local Public Service Agreement
LYWP	Local Youth Work Partnership
MP	Member of Parliament
NCB	National Children's Bureau
NHS	National Health Service
NYA	National Youth Agency
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PCT	Primary Care Trust
SLA	Service Level Agreement
UN	United Nations
YWiCP	Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership