

# Hear by Right Guidance – Self Assessment

## Understanding Professional Participatory Practice

*Hear by Right has been developed by the National Youth Agency to enable organisations working with young people to fulfil their obligation to support youth participation in line with Article 12 of as required by the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child.*

Within youth participation it is important to explore the experiences of the young person and the ongoing development of the practitioner. Youth participation treats young people with respect, valuing difference and promoting the acceptance of other. It is underpinned by the principles of social justice, equality and right and challenges anti-oppressive behaviours in line with the Equality Act 2010 I. It is this legal commitment to human rights that ultimately promotes the best interests of the child and for all young people to be at the centre of all decision making.

Young people are 'experts by experience' and uphold the best insight into what personal, social, political and economic issues affect them. Meaningful outcomes are often created by involving young people from the beginning to the finish of projects, ensuring they are taking an active role in shaping their experiences and ownership of outcomes.

Professional participatory practice refers to the principles and approaches that ensure meaningful and inclusive involvement of young people. This can be displayed through co-production, decision-making processes, youth leadership programmes and more. Professional participatory practices benefits both practitioner and young people. It supports the practitioner to utilise a more child rights-based approach when working with young people. It also equips them with the skills to curate better working relationships with young people, so that sustainable. meaningful outcomes are developed through the development of their youth work.

Youth engagement will look different in each organisation because it is based on the needs of young people, ethos, values and crucially, voluntary participation. It encompasses participating in governance, activism, youth work, community events, volunteering, panels, boards and ultimately, anything that interests young people.

Integrating good youth participation helps young people to develop their skills, confidence, competence and self-identity.

## The difference between Active and Flagship level using the 7 S model:

Organisations working at the Active level can illustrate that they are implementing good youth participation and practices. Through *Hear by Right* they will create the structures, opportunities, and an environment to enable young people to express their views and opinions. We would urge organisations who are relatively new to understanding youth participation to work through this level to build their competence progressively.

Those working at Flagship level can demonstrate excellence in youth voice, innovation and co-design. They will be able to show the longer-term impact of youth participation within the organisation and that young people have been consulted from the start to finish of policy development and projects. Organisations that have already established a good foundation for youth participation should further embed their youth participation processes at Flagship level.

|                         | ACTIVE   | FLAGSHIP  |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| <b>1. Shared values</b> | The values of the organisation show integrity and emphasise our commitment to youth participation.                         | Our shared values are developed in partnership with young people and reflect our continued commitment to hold young people central to all developments and decision making in the organisation. |
| <b>2. Strategies</b>    | We have a clear plan of how our organisation delivers youth participation in various ways.                                 | We review our youth participation plan to inform our strategy with young people and seek how we can develop and evidence our practice for positive outcomes.                                    |
| <b>3. Structures</b>    | Our organisation identifies, challenges and removes barriers to participation  | Our organisation is built upon anti oppressive practice and seeks to respond to barriers of participation in partnership with young people and wider communities.                               |
| <b>4. Systems</b>       | We have effective processes and procedures for how our organisation delivers youth participation using a range of methods. | High quality youth governance informs our operational delivery and strategic developments.  |

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|                                |  | This includes youth led need assessments, influencing social action for social change and co-producing sustainable outcomes.  |
| <b>5. Staff</b>                | <p>Job descriptions describe participation within staff's role and training is delivered appropriate to role and responsibility. The organisation support staff to identify training needs that will support the overall delivery of youth participation.</p> <p>Young people take on the role of supporting the recruitment of staff.</p> | <p>The organisation support staff to reflect and share practice to develop high participation delivery.</p> <p>Young people influence and inform staff appraisals including individual staff feedback and setting participation objectives.</p> <p>Young people also take on a significant role in recruitment of staff.</p>    |
| <b>6. Skills and knowledge</b> | <p>Staff ensure young people are actively involved in a range of participatory activities that will support the development of their skills and knowledge.</p>   | <p>Capacity building for young people to take on a range of youth voice and influencing roles within the organisation.</p> <p>Through specific training, coaching and fostering positive relationships with staff with young people to increase confidence, express self-identity and opinions on matters that affect them.</p> |
| <b>7. Style of leadership.</b> | <p>The roles and responsibilities within the organisation clearly advocate youth participation and intended outcomes.</p> <p>The senior leadership team understand the value of a youth informed organisation.</p>   | <p>We centre our participatory practice around the heart of young people and young people acquire the skills to get involved in contributing to leadership decision that affect them.</p> <p>Senior leaders value and seek young people to be involved in creating organisational and systemic change.</p>                      |

## Hear by Right and Youth Work Values

Below shows the potential outcomes of implementing the Hear by Right and Youth Work Values. These practice examples show you how you can align your work to support each value. This in turn will shape and create meaningful outcomes for your wider organisation.

| Hear by Right and Youth Work Values                                       | Outcomes  |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Youth voice and influence</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people’s lived experience and views shape organisational change for example around safeguarding and particular projects.</li> <li>• Young people are involved in governance and measuring impact.</li> <li>• Young people's views are respected, listened and actioned.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2. EEDIB (Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Belonging)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We actively seek to hear from underrepresented groups to ensure they are given equal opportunity to participate.</li> <li>• We understand the importance of cultural competence and actively embrace diversity.</li> <li>• We are able to tailor our delivery and support the needs of young people to meet their individual differences.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3. Impact</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation practices ongoing team meetings, consultation and supervisions to explore staff CPD around youth participation. The organisation encourages capacity building for both staff and young people.</li> <li>• There is continuous evaluation to assess the effectiveness and impact of youth participation initiatives.</li> </ul>      |