



**Trafford Council**  
**Participation and Engagement Strategy**  
**2022-2025**



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## Foreword

**'Listening to the voices of children and young people is important because young people deserve to influence decisions that affect them, and who better to make sure services are tailored to their needs than the people they're for? It's amazing that young people have been involved in developing this strategy, including giving direct feedback, and I'm certain this will help lead to more involvement from us in a huge range of areas. I hope that these changes will continue to be made, and we reach the point of co-producing services'.**

*Millie Argyropoulos*

*Trafford Member of Youth Parliament 2021*

## Who is the strategy for?

This strategy affects us all. We want to work together with our children and young people to help them to achieve the outcomes that they want for themselves. The strategy covers all children and young people aged 0-18 years, plus some young people with additional needs and care experienced young people up to the age of 25.

## Why we have a strategy



There is evidence that everyone benefits from involving children and young people in decision making.

It promotes the development of skills that will be helpful to children and young people in their futures, for example negotiating, presentation, writing. It develops their self-confidence and provides the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. It helps them to develop social networks and gives them the chance to feel valued and empowered. It allows them to develop better understanding of how organisations operate and make decisions. They gain control and power over their own lives leading to better informed choices about their futures and they obtain skills in challenging discrimination and exclusion.

Services become more responsive to the needs of children and young people and they can begin to challenge presumptions about their needs. They become more accessible and more efficient as they are providing a more effective service based on what children and young people actually need. They provide a more equitable service. They build better and more sustainable relationships with children, young people and their families. Evidence of real participation often leads to stronger cases for funding/commissioning for organisations.

There are also laws and policies which ensure children and young people are involved in decision making. We will be guided by Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the

Child 1989, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and the Care Act 2015.

We asked some of our children and young people why they thought they should be listened to:



**'We have first-hand knowledge of issues that directly affect us. We're the next generation and the future for the planet. Issues that impact the entire population should have the input of the entire population. Active and aware citizens are good for society. All people deserve to have their opinions heard, regardless of age, gender, race, or anything else'.** Trafford Youth Cabinet members

**'We are the future of the world and will be affected most by current decisions but have the least say how in they are made. Young people are already underestimated in the world and the only hope for a better future is the drive and aspirations of this generation'.**  
Young person with SEND

**'Listening to the voice of young people is really important because it's part of their life. Young people could not be confident speaking up to professionals that's why we should listen to young people and try and support them and speak up instead and make sure we delivered everything they wanted to say. All young people are different, young people have gone through so many and they've experienced it. They should be near not judged and not to be taken in another meaning'.**  
Children in Care Council member



**'Young people are the future. They will be brutally honest and let you know what you're doing wrong. They have more experience than most'.** Aftercare Forum member



## The Vision

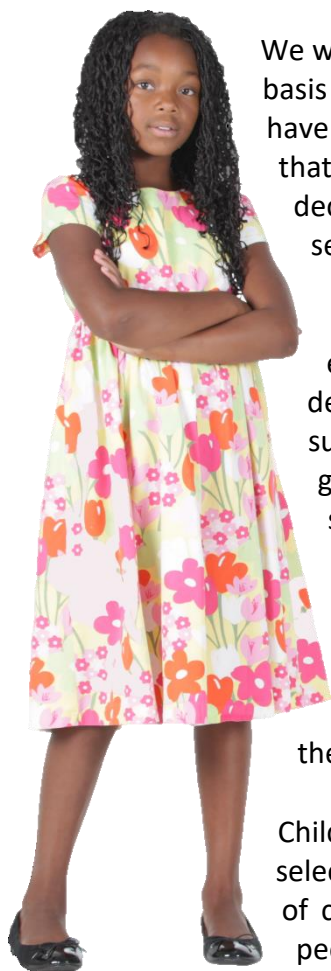
**In Trafford, all children and young people will have the opportunity to take part in decisions which affect their lives.**

**They will have the opportunity to have a say in decisions that matter to them.**

**They will also shape how services are decided upon, planned and delivered.**



## How we will achieve our vision



We will ensure children and young people can have a say on a day-to-day basis about the decisions that affect them. We will encourage them to have a say on a wider scale about services they receive or about issues that affect them. We will give them the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes or in the design, delivery or development of services.

SMART planning and monitoring will be used to measure the effectiveness of participation of children and young people in the design and development of services. This will include formal forums such as the Youth Council and Children in Care Council as well as other groups. Members of School Councils and voluntary groups (who support the most vulnerable of our children and young people) will be actively encouraged to participate in Trafford's Youth Voice groups.

Children and young people will be supported and educated in their roles and responsibilities in being effective and representative of the community they represent.

Children and young people will be involved in the recruitment and selection processes of relevant staff and train and develop staff in areas of corporate interest in relation to the needs of children and young people.

The children and young people will develop ways of engaging other children and young people to have their voice heard in arenas where their knowledge and experience can influence decision makers.

## Our Standards and Principles of Participation and Co-production.

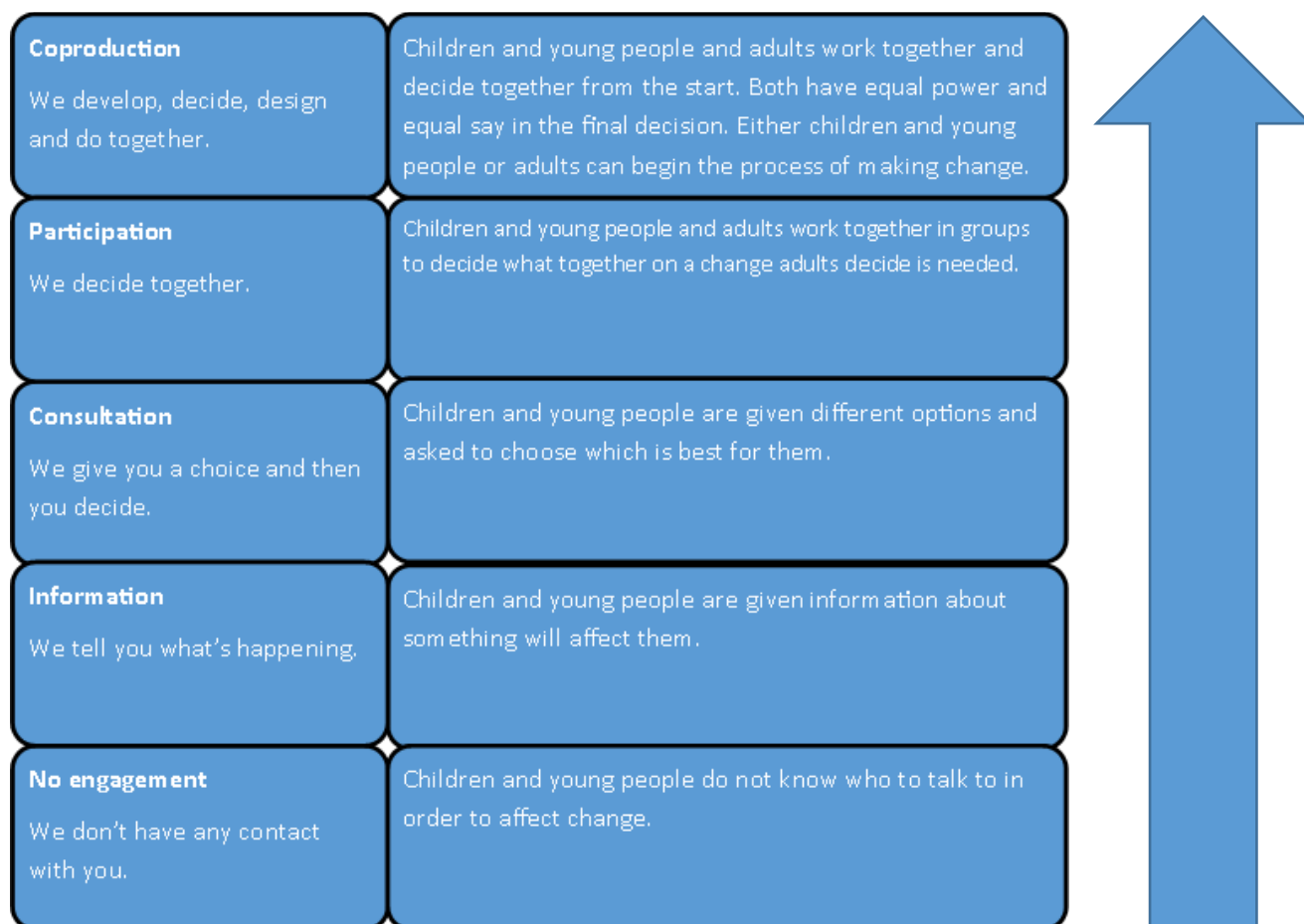
Young people have been the prime designers of the Participation and Engagement Strategy. Trafford Council's Cabinet, Boards and Scrutiny Panels will work directly with the Trafford's Youth Voice Groups.

Participation and engagement should be embedded in strategic planning, delivery, commissioning, communication, business improvement activities, and recruitment. Policies and standards for participation and engagement should be provided, evaluated and continuously improved.

Services should make sure that children and young people are aware of opportunities to have their say, and they should be encouraged and enabled them to use them.

### Our expectations

We want children and young people to be involved as much as possible in changes that affect their lives. Our goal is always to coproduce with children and young people. However, we realise that this isn't always possible. We will encourage organisations and services to aim for coproduction or to be as high as possible on our 'ladder' of participation and engagement.



# OUR PLEDGES TO YOU:

WE WILL PROVIDE DIFFERENT  
WAYS FOR YOU TO GET INVOLVED.



WE WILL MAKE IT AS EASY AS  
POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO WORK WITH  
US.



BEING INVOLVED  
WILL BE YOUR CHOICE.



WE WILL SEND YOU FEEDBACK  
ON THE CHANGES YOU ASKED FOR.



WE WILL TRY AND CHANGE THINGS  
AND IF WE CAN'T WE WILL EXPLAIN  
WHY.



YOU ARE THE EXPERT ON YOUR OWN  
LIFE.



WE WILL REWARD YOU FOR YOUR HELP. WE WILL  
HELP YOU LEARN NEW SKILLS WHICH WILL HELP YOU  
IN THE FUTURE.



WE WILL HOLD A CONFERENCE TWICE A YEAR TO  
HEAR YOUR VIEWS.



## How children and young people have been involved in producing the strategy



Twenty-five children and young people representing thirteen groups and organisations attended conferences at Gorse Hill Studios in June and August 2021. The events were run by members of Trafford Youth Cabinet and included representatives from Trafford Children In Care Council and young people with SEND. They spent time thinking about what they want from us and how can could improve how we listen to their voices. They created the vision and helped us develop our principles and standards. They also challenged us to act on the vision and helped us think about how we could best do this. They also helped us to create our pledges to them.

### Trafford's Youth Voice groups



the United Kingdom Youth Parliament.

Trafford Youth Cabinet is the representative voice of Trafford's children and young people. They are a group of volunteers aged 11-18 who represent Trafford at local, regional and national levels. They consult with other children and young people in Trafford through their schools, 'Let's Talk Youth' conferences and 'Make Your Mark' annual surveys. Trafford's Members of Youth Parliament also attend the Youth Cabinet and represent Trafford's children and young people in



Trafford Children in Care Council are representatives of Trafford's cared for children and young people. They are a group of volunteers who get the views of other children and young people in care through an annual survey and from talking to other children and young people in care when they get the opportunity.



Youthwatch Trafford is Healthwatch Trafford's team of young volunteers (age 14-18). They help Healthwatch Trafford to communicate with other young people in Trafford and to find out about their experiences of health and care. They



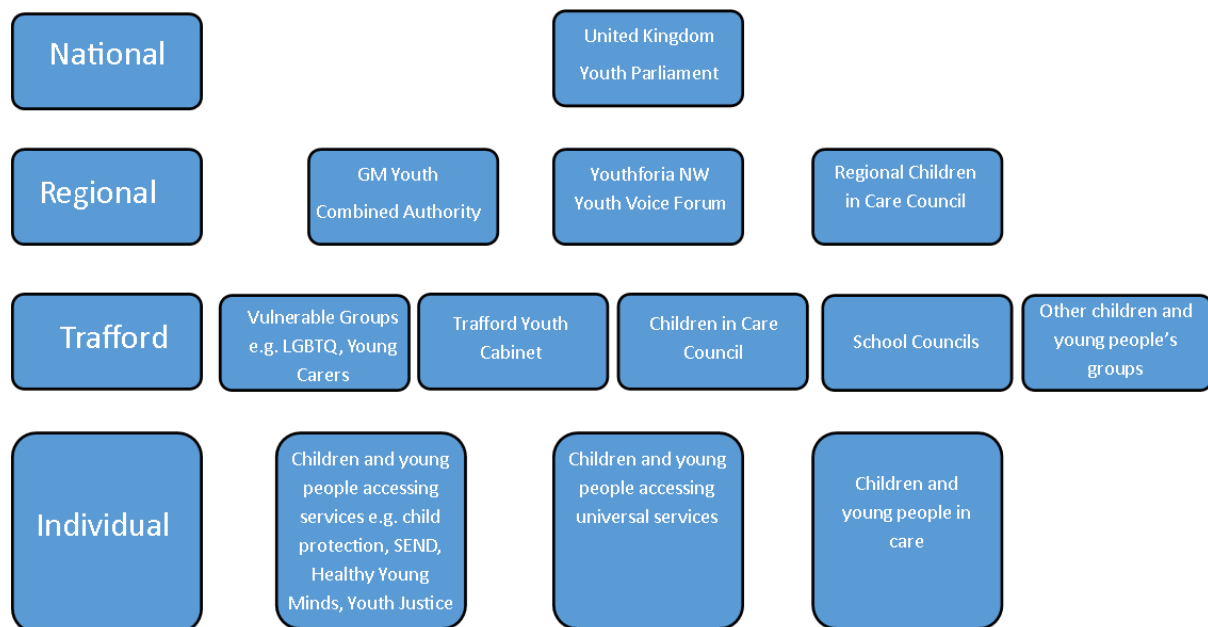
give their own perspective to help Healthwatch Trafford plan their work and to assess how good local health and care organisations are at providing services to young people in our borough.



Trafford Aftercare Forum meets weekly at Gorse Hill Studios to discuss issues for care leavers and to provide support to its members. They regularly meet with social care managers and the Corporate Parenting board. The group is voluntary.

## Structure

Children and young people will be able to have a say in their individual lives, and at local, regional and national levels if they choose to.



## Children and Young People's priorities



In the 2022 national 'Make your Mark' survey the environment, education and learning and health and wellbeing were the top topics voted for by Trafford's young people.

At our conference in July 2021 access to mental health support, the environment and transport were the top three issues identified.

In our annual 2020 survey of our children and young people in care keeping the same social worker, support for contact with family and access to laptops were high priorities.

## Equalities and selection in participation

We will establish a transparent and fair process for selection, ensuring that everyone



understands why they are involved and that those selected are able to represent the views of a wider group of children and young people.

The selection process will target those children and young people with an interest, direct experience or expertise in issues relating to the subject of the participation.

The children and young people selected will relate to the wider constituency or group.

The selection criteria and process will ensure that as wide and as diverse a group as possible are represented. Listening to children and young people and valuing diversity means communicating in many ways to ensure we hear everyone.

## Communications



We will communicate with children and young people through the methods they tell us they want. This means using social media but also working with schools.

We will also have information available at locations children and young people access regularly.

Relevant information will be made available to children and young people. It will be at the right time, in the right format, no jargon, culturally appropriate and accessible.

We will hold regular conferences where children and young people will be invited to give their views and receive feedback on previous requests from them.

Trafford Council will publicise the work of youth voice groups.

## The current context

We currently have several active youth voice groups. They have continued to run throughout the pandemic and are now mostly meeting again in person. Trafford have employed two young people who are visiting SEND provision to meet children and young people with SEND where they are to ask their opinions on the services they are receiving. Our young people are taking an active role in recruitment and selection at Trafford Council. Young people from the

Aftercare Forum have moved from volunteering to paid and unpaid roles in Trafford. Young people have been involved in coproducing the Youth Justice and Youth Engagement Service business plans.

We would like to see more children and young people involved so we will be focusing on recruiting new members to all our groups. We must also improve communications to our children and young people.

We also need to improve our involvement of children and young people with SEND. This will involve working closely with all our schools and implementing the Trafford Inclusion Charter.

Our aim is for each group to be diverse and representative of Trafford’s children and young people population. Also, for each child and young person in Trafford to be aware of the opportunities for them to have a say either as members of a group or by giving their views to a group for them to action. We would like to see children and young people involved in all parts of our commissioning activities

## Monitoring and evaluation

We will produce an annual report which will be child and young person friendly and will include a ‘You Said We Did’ section. This will be widely available to children and young people through a variety of communications methods.

Senior managers and Councillors will regularly visit our Youth Voice groups to ensure they feel listened to and to give them feedback. We will also ensure children and young people have access to Trafford’s senior leaders and Council leaders.

We will encourage organisations throughout Trafford to improve their youth voice work and help with this if requested. We will encourage them to monitor their work and ensure it is involving children and young people as much as possible. We will provide templates to help with this:

<p><b>Title and summary</b> Brief details of the project, service redesign or review.</p>	
<p><b>What outcome did you want to achieve?</b></p>	
<p><b>Who was involved and what did they do?</b> Details of who, what, why, where, when and how?</p>	
<p><b>Why is this co-production?</b></p>	

Did it meet the 4 coproduction principles and what evidence is there of this: Equality, Diversity, Accessibility and Reciprocity?			
<b>Key areas of learning</b> What went particularly well, what would you change?			
<b>Outcome</b> Score this opportunity against the ladder of participation	5	<b>Coproduction</b> We develop, decide, design and do together	Children and young people and adults work together and decide together from the start. Both have equal power and equal say in the final decision. Either children and young people or adults can begin the process of making change.
	4	<b>Participation</b> We decide together	Children and young people and adults work together in groups to decide what together on a change adult decide is needed.
	3	<b>Consultation</b> We give you a choice and then you decide	Children and young people are given different options and asked to choose which is best for them.
	2	<b>Information</b> We tell you what's happening	Children and young people are given information about something will affect them.
	1	<b>No engagement</b> We don't have any contact with you	Children and young people do not know who to talk to in order to affect change
<b>Name and Role</b>			
<b>Date</b>			

## Workforce development

Our participation guide will be made available online. It will help services and organisations to plan and deliver their participation and engagement work with children and young people. Multi agency voice of child training is offered through the Safeguarding Board training offer.

## Governance/Named lead(s)/Champions

Governance will be through a participation and engagement steering group which will meet quarterly. Membership will be from Trafford Council and the Voluntary and Community sector. The group will liaise closely with our Youth Voice groups to get their feedback on how things are going for them.

A social care Voice of the Child Champions group will meet monthly with representatives from each team. The group will disseminate messages from children and young people to their teams and share good practice and any challenges around voice of the child.