

Engaging with Children, Young People and their Families in Commissioning

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) has drawn upon a range of publications and its own experience to develop the following matrix to describe some of the wide range of activities and approaches to engagement which can be used by commissioners at each of the four key stages of the commissioning cycle:

- Needs and market analysis
- Service design and planning
- Implementation and market management
- Monitoring and review

Approaches are categorised into 4 main types of engagement as follow:

- Communication: activities involved in providing information.
- Consultation: activities involved in securing ideas, suggestions and feedback.
- Negotiation: activities involved in securing agreement to commissioning decisions.
- Participation: activities involved in working together to make commissioning decisions.

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The matrix is a starting point when considering the most appropriate tool to be used in a particular commissioning circumstance. As the CYPU suggest: 'Being clear at the start about the objectives of any particular consultation or participation activity is essential. Information should be clear about how service users' views will be used and when decisions will be made. Honesty on all sides is needed about what is and is not likely to be influenced, and about how much decision-making can be shared with people.' (Children and Young People's Unit: 'Learning to Listen' 2001). In selecting and designing the activities to use in a particular circumstance, the following questions need to be considered:

- Is the activity appropriate given the particular life experience of those involved?
- Will the activity secure sufficient depth of analysis?
- Will the activity be sufficiently representative of the population concerned?
- Will the activity be cost-effective?
- Will the activity be a positive, useful or worthwhile experience for those involved?
- Is the activity likely to result in an impact on agencies existing assumptions and behaviours?
- Is the activity morally, legally and ethically acceptable to all those involved?

Commissioning Stage	Communication - providing information	Consultation - getting feedback	Negotiation - seeking agreement	Participation - working together
Needs and market analysis	<p>Presentations, reports or summaries of findings from research, population needs analysis or national guidance made available in appropriate formats for CYP and families: graphs, posters websites, videos.</p> <p>Work with theatre groups to illustrate the issues facing CYP and families, the impact of current arrangements and future needs.</p>	<p>Questionnaires to CYP and families asking for comments on needs or services.</p> <p>Workshops or 'sounding boards' with selected groups of CYP and families to explore the extent to which services meet their needs.</p> <p>Advocacy support to facilitate feedback from individuals.</p> <p>Reviews of complaints or suggestions schemes.</p> <p>Reviews of national and international research on the views of CYP and families, potential service users and carers about their needs.</p>	<p>CYP on reference groups to agree analyses.</p> <p>Care pathways reviews of cases with service users to explore their experience of services, and to agree what kind of improvements are needed in the future.</p> <p>Discussions with existing pupil or youth/citizens' forums to explore their views about service needs.</p>	<p>Working groups including CYP and families to design research projects.</p> <p>Advisory groups with CYP and families to undertake joint analysis of research.</p> <p>CYP and families undertaking projects to gather information through interviews or direct observation etc, to feed in to a final analysis.</p>
Service design and planning	<p>Commissioning plans and strategies made available in appropriate formats in reports and presentations etc CYP and families.</p> <p>Opportunities to observe council meetings or partnership board meetings where plans are discussed.</p>	<p>CYP and families focus groups to comment on proposals for service development and change.</p> <p>Questionnaires to obtain feedback from CYP and families on service design proposals.</p> <p>Interactive web-sites to prompt comment on proposals for service development and change.</p>	<p>Children & young people panels to test and agree service design proposals.</p> <p>CYP as members of project steering groups to agree proposals and plans.</p> <p>Reviews of the contents of suggestion boxes prior to design and planning exercises.</p> <p>Black and minority ethnic community representatives taking engagement into their communities through local</p>	<p>Service design teams to analyse potential service developments and make recommendations for change, including CYP and families.</p> <p>CYP as members of partnership boards or decision-making bodies.</p> <p>CYP and commissioners jointly running consultation exercises with the public or other service user groups.</p> <p>Scenario analysis workshops</p>

Commissioning Stage	Communication - providing information	Consultation - getting feedback	Negotiation - seeking agreement	Participation - working together
			groups rather than waiting for people to come and join in.	where proposed arrangements are tested, and changes agreed with workshop members.
Implementation and market management	<p>Demonstration sites and visits to existing and potential providers.</p> <p>Open book contracting – service contract information made available to patients/service users and the public.</p>	<p>CYP and families feedback on the effectiveness of services in meeting the aims of individual contracts.</p> <p>CYP and families offer input into the desired outcomes to be specified for a service in an outcome-based contract.</p>	<p>A children's or advocate advisory panel to feed into decision-making about the awarding of contracts.</p> <p>CYP undertaking regular focus group meetings with other service users on behalf of commissioners.</p>	<p>CYP working together with contractors as part of a decision-making panel about the awarding of contracts or service level agreements.</p> <p>Giving responsibility for budgets to patient/service user groups or forums to purchase services e.g. 'Community Chest'.</p>
Monitoring and review	<p>Reviews of commissioned services, gaps and emerging needs made available to patients/service users and carers in appropriately formatted reports or presentations for information.</p>	<p>Service user panels to feedback views on the effectiveness of services as part of ongoing monitoring and review of service quality.</p> <p>Regular questionnaires and focus group meetings to review views about the effectiveness of services.</p> <p>Regular monitoring of complaints, compliments and suggestions from CYP and families.</p>	<p>Monitoring and review teams including CYP and families, meeting regularly to draw together information about progress of commissioning strategy.</p> <p>Inspections or monitoring by CYP who report directly back to a partnership board regarding findings and service design.</p>	<p>'Mystery shopper' exercises using CYP and families.</p> <p>CYP and families as regular members of review panels responsible for interpreting evaluations and feedback.</p> <p>CYP and families design performance indicators and performance monitoring arrangements.</p>

References

Department for Education and Skills (2003) Building a Culture of Participation Research Report www.peopleandparticipation.net

Integrated Care Network (2006) Strengthening Service User and Carer Involvement: a guide for partnerships.
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Listen then Commission (2003) Department of Health and The Who Cares Trust
www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/RS00002/

J Percy-Smith (2005) What Works in Strategic Partnerships for Children? Barnados www.barnardos.org.uk/resources

Ruth Sinclair (2004) Participation in Practice: Making it Meaningful, Effective and Sustainable, Children and Society Volume 18, pp 106-118.
John Wiley & Sons (Publisher)

C Shephard and P Treseder (2002) Participation – Spice It Up, Save the Children

SCIE Guide 11: Involving children and young people in developing social care
<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide11/index.asp>

The Every Child Matters website has a section on the participation of children and young people, including good practice and FAQs at
www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/participation/participation/