



humanly

Engagement of Children and Young People  
with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities  
in Shropshire

3rd March 2018

Prepared for Shropshire Council

# Executive Summary

In June 2017 Humanly was commissioned to support Shropshire Council to develop an approach for meaningfully engaging children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Humanly carried out this work from July 2017 to February 2018, and this report outlines the key results and recommendations for Shropshire going forward.

The project was tackled using a three stage approach of research, co-creation and prototyping.

The research phase involved desk research into best practice as well as first hand research with a wide range of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Shropshire and key stakeholders including local authority, education, and community and voluntary sector stakeholders.

This unearthed key insights into the challenges and opportunities around engagement. Both the desk research and first hand research highlighted that children and young people find traditional models of participation difficult, especially if they have to conform to an adult model. However everywhere we visited we witnessed children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities having a say in the things that they do and having their voices heard.

Following this initial research, Shropshire's self-assessment of its current level of engagement of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities was reviewed and updated by Humanly. It was concluded that Shropshire is currently carrying out some activities to engage children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities at an individual, service and strategic level, however there is room for improvement at all three levels.

Extensive mapping of existing services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Shropshire was also conducted. Humanly was able to identify 30 groups, which have been added to an interactive Google map that can be easily maintained by the local authority.

Based on the results of the research phase, Humanly developed an overall framework for meaningfully engaging children and young people, consisting of 5 stages: Participating, Facilitating, Interpreting, Feeding Back and Decision Making. Co-creation activities were carried out with the local authority, partner organisations and children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to build on this framework.

As a result, three potential strategies were developed for the engagement of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Shropshire, based on the five key stages in the framework.

Option 1 is to use existing services for children and young people (that are not currently involved in engagement) to facilitate participation; Option 2 is to use existing engagement forums (for example Shropshire Young Health Champions) to explore a wider range of topics; and Option 3 is to enable peer-to-peer engagement (or to enable adults with learning disabilities to engage children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

After considering all 3 engagement models with the local authority, the decision was made to prototype Option 1. In order to prototype this option, it was decided that a topic would be set by the local authority and 5 services would be asked to engage the children and young people who access their service in order to explore this topic. In order to support these services to carry out engagement activities, Humanly created an 'engagement toolkit' of tried and tested activities.

The key insights that emerged from the prototyping phase were that some services appear reluctant to engage with more formal engagement of the children and young people who access their service; some services appear unwilling to try new activities or techniques for engaging children and young people; and that where services have been willing to trial new techniques, they have found them enjoyable and have learnt new things about the children using their service.

Based on these results, the following recommendations have been made for next steps:

- Further prototyping of engagement models, in particular testing Option 2 with either the Shropshire Young Health Champions or HealthWatch if either are open to this.
- Focus on promoting creative methods to facilitate children and young people's participation, avoiding 'boards' or other traditional / adult models.
- Appoint a named responsible person at the local authority, such as a Participation Officer, to coordinate engagement activities with partner organisations and feedback decisions made.
- Appointing a named responsible person or group, for example the 0-25 SEND board, to analyse the results of engagement activities and make strategic decisions that take these into consideration.
- Hold a launch event to communicate the engagement strategy and get buy in from partner organisations.
- Build relationships and create formal agreements with individual services to support children and young people to participate at a more strategic level.

# Contents

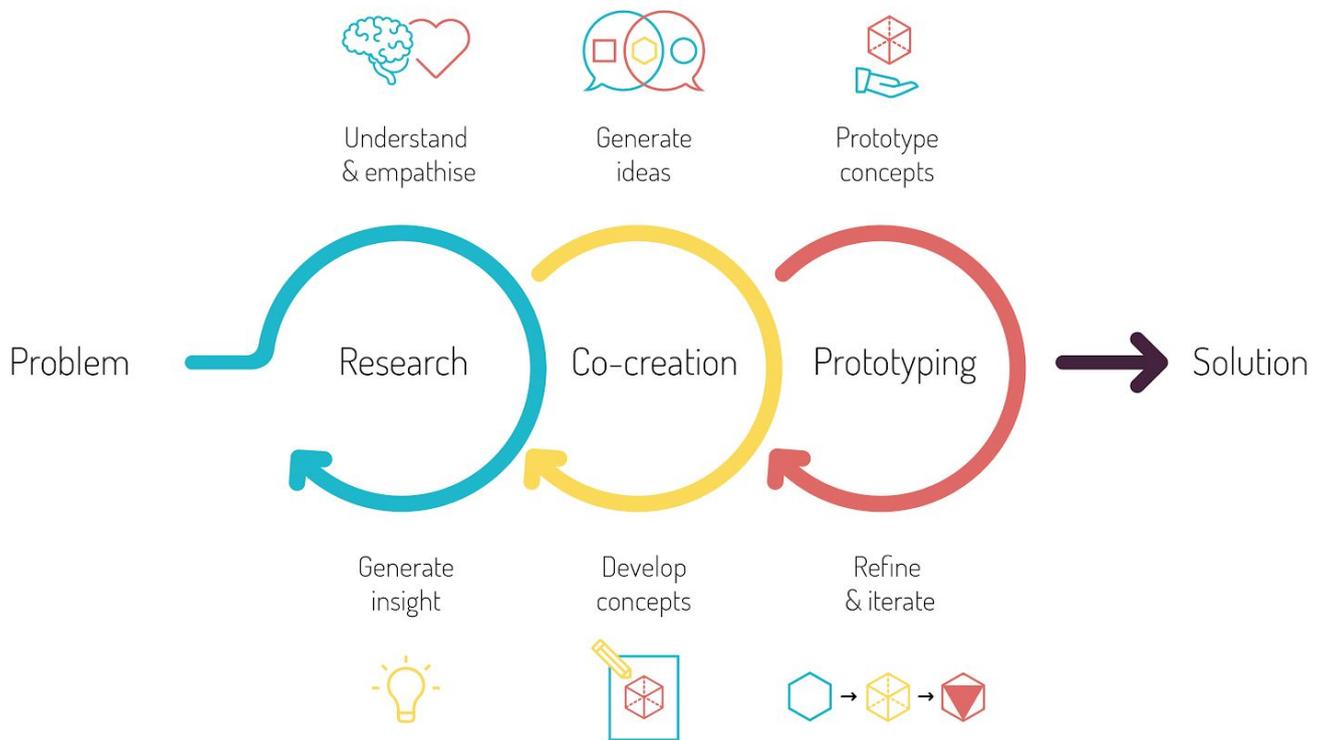
1. Introduction	3
Our approach	3
2. Research	5
Introduction to the Research phase	5
Desk research	6
Mapping existing services	10
First hand research	12
Revised self-assessment	17
3. Co-creation	21
Introduction to the Co-creation phase	21
Engagement framework	24
3 models for engaging CYP with SEND in Shropshire	35
4. Prototyping	43
Introduction to the Prototyping phase	43
Prototyping results and insights	44
5. Recommendations for next steps	45
Appendices	48

# 1. Introduction

In June 2017 Humanly was commissioned to support Shropshire Council to gain a greater understanding of its current level of engagement with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and to develop an approach that is meaningful and sustainable going forward. Humanly carried out this work from July 2017 to February 2018, and this report outlines the key results and recommendations for Shropshire going forward.

## Our approach

Humanly is an award-winning design studio specialising in human-centred design for social impact. We tackle projects using a three stage approach of research, co-creation and prototyping.



**Research:** We invest time in defining the problem we are trying to solve before immersing ourselves in the problem through creative research methods. This allows us to build deep empathy and generate pivotal insights that lead to opportunities to do things differently.



**Co-creation:** We facilitate co-creation in every project we work on, actively involving all stakeholders in a collaborative idea generation process. We empower users to create potential solutions to their own problems, and evaluate ideas democratically.



**Prototyping:** We bring ideas to life as early as possible through rapid prototyping. We believe in failing early and often to learn about what works and doesn't work in practice. This enables us to iterate and improve on potential solutions before costly implementation.

## 2. Research

### Introduction to the Research Phase

The research phase involved the following activities:

- **Desk research** into best practice for engaging children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- **Extensive mapping of existing services** for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, including short breaks, education, supported employment, social clubs and existing engagement groups.
- **First hand research** with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Shropshire. This research has been conducted in a range of ways, including observation at existing services, interviews, and creative workshops.
- **Revising Shropshire's self-assessment** of how children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are engaged at different levels currently.

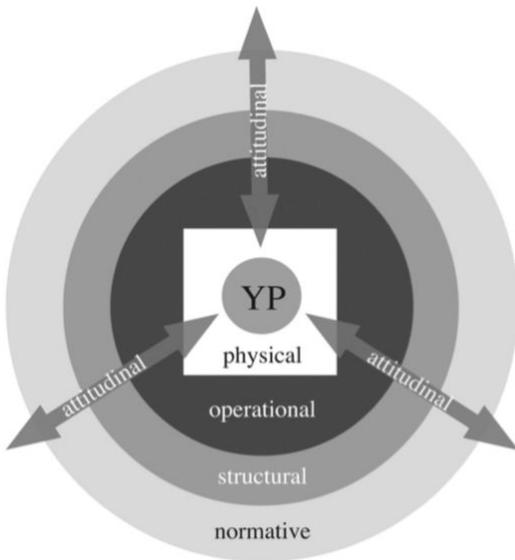
These activities, including key findings, are outlined in the following section.

# Desk research

Humanly has conducted desk research into existing models of participation and examples of best practice. The key findings of this research are included below.

## Models of participation

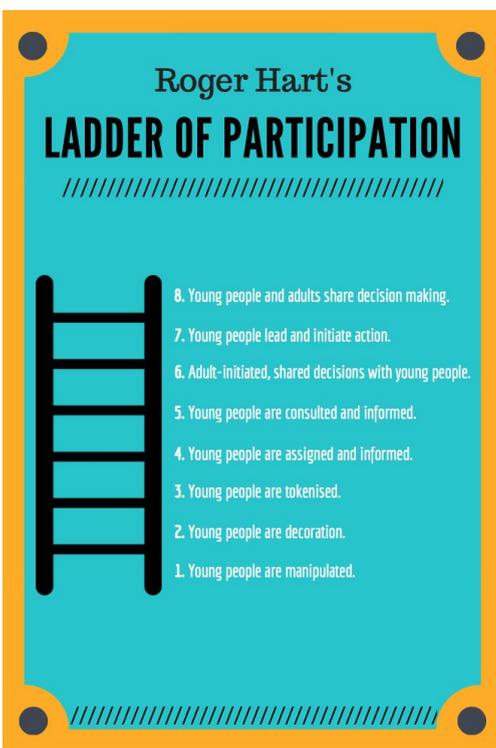
### Driskell & Neema’s Key Dimensions of Participation (2009)



This model explains the need for participation to be a continuous practice, not an occasional event. It involves five key components which must be present for meaningful participation: Physical, operational, structural, normative and attitudinal.

*“While the absence of one or several of these dimensions may not preclude participatory practice, meaningful youth participation beyond episodic experiences can only be developed and sustained through the presence of all five dimensions.”*

### Roger Hart’s Ladder of Children Participation (1992)

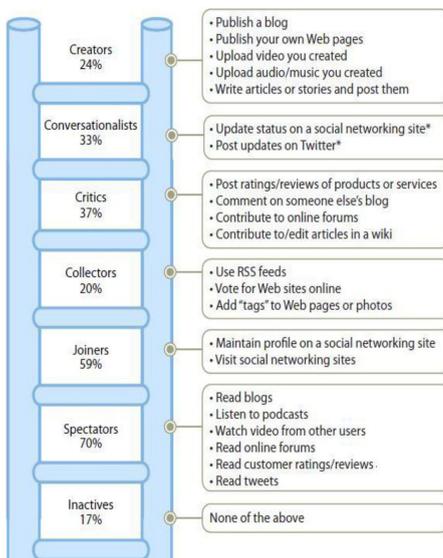


This model is based on Sherry Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969). Both models are based on the theory that participation cannot exist without a redistribution of power.

The lower rungs of the ladder are examples of people appearing to participate but having no power, therefore their involvement becomes manipulative, tokenistic or decorative.

For participation to be further up the ladder it must involve the participants being at least jointly involved in the decision making.

## Berno & Li's Ladder of Online Participation (2010)



A participation model based on online activity. Each rung suggests a greater degree of participation, however they are not sequential or discrete levels - there is overlap between rungs, and some people will be participating in different ways simultaneously.

This model has been included due to its inclusion of consumers of information as participants. This reflects the different ways in which people choose to participate, enabling a wider view of what counts as participation.

## Existing research

Much has been written about the difficulties arising from traditional models of participation when applied to the engagement of children.

Marc Jans from the **Norwegian Centre for Child Research** explores the way in which children are expected to engage in traditionally adult models in order to participate, and how that this in itself is problematic:

*"Models for participation and citizenship developed from a system perspective often neglect the specificity of children and are unilaterally designed for adults (Qvortrup, 2001). As long as system-controlled participation models do not relate meaningfully to the specificity of children, they can hardly involve children successfully."*

Jans recognises that many initiatives are well meaning, but that this does not translate to them being effective. He refers to child councils as an example:

*"Some well-meant initiatives, like child councils, often become training grounds for children, who, due to their lack of political rights, cannot fully participate."*

It is Jans' view that **play offers a meaningful way for children to participate**, and that the social importance of child's play must not be overlooked:

*"What is playing currently? How does it mean something for children? What does it mean for children? In this respect, the play of children presents itself as something valuable...."*

*While playing they are shaping their environment and social networks. Play allows them to be actors. Exactly because play is somehow without obligations, it is of such an importance to children. While they are playing, children experiment with their environment and are regularly called by that environment to account for their activities.*

*The play of children cannot merely be considered as socially unimportant child play.”*

- Children as Citizens: Towards a Contemporary Notion of Child Participation, Marc Jans, Norwegian Centre for Child Research (2004)

There are also arguments made for **more creative methods of participation** for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, including **observation**:

*“Formal structured mechanisms may not be accessible and therefore understanding that participation includes methods such as observation is often neglected. For some severely disabled children, adults observing, for example, their behaviour or body language in a number of settings can provide a wealth of information and can be used to inform the decision-making process.”*

- Morris, 1998a, 2003; Marchant *et al.*, 1999a; Marchant and Jones 2003

*“For example, for disabled children and young people with a cognitive impairment their participation may be at a level of choosing between two different options, as illustrated in the DVD produced by Area D where children were given simple choices such as what do they want for breakfast. This must be seen as a valid means of participation and afforded equal status and priority with other levels and methods of participation. For some children choosing between two options may be the only level at which they are able to participate, but for others this might be the starting point from which to build. In order to facilitate this, children and young people need to be given the opportunities to develop their skills, gain experience and be given information to support their participation.”*

- Participation Of Disabled Children And Young People In Decision-making Relating To Social Care, Anita Franklin and Patricia Sloper (2006)

# Examples of best practice

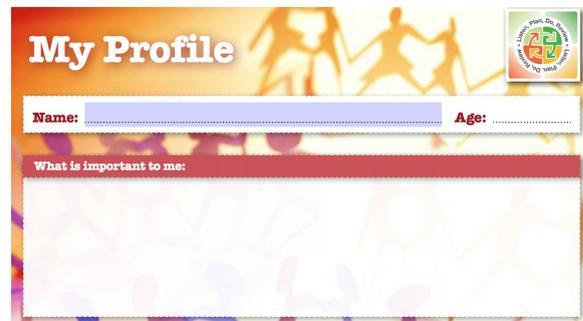
## Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway

Gloucestershire have a graduated pathway which is very clearly explained on their [website](#). They also have an [animation](#) which explains the pathway and process.



Images: Stills from Gloucestershire's animation about their graduated pathway

They also provide [a range of templates](#) for children and young people to create their own profile.



Images: Examples of 'My Profile' templates

OFSTED and CQC recognised Gloucestershire's approach to planning and reviewing as a strength, stating that:

*"Parents, children and young people are involved in the co-production of plans and their reviews. This work is especially strong in special schools. For example, pupils spoke of their satisfaction in co-hosting their review meetings."*

- Joint Ofsted and CQC inspection report 27 July 2016

Gloucestershire describe participation as:

*“Participation is the right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing an action that might affect your life; having a voice, having a choice.”*

At the time of writing Gloucestershire County Council’s website reports that there is a participation team which consists of:

- 1 Participation Manager
- 1 Participation Officer
- 15 Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People
- 1 Business Admin Apprentice

## Mapping existing services

During the project Humanly was able to identify **30 groups** that provide services to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from Shropshire.

The results of the mapping exercise have been compiled into a spreadsheet, a segment of which can be seen in the image below. The full spreadsheet can be found in Appendix 1 and online here. Anyone with this link can view and edit the spreadsheet, which should enable easy updates.

Group	Website	Key contact	email	Phone	focus	location
Smile	<a href="http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directary/Smile">http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directary/Smile</a> (this link doesn't currently contain any information)	Jo Cox	jo.m.cox@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 250948	6.30 until 8.30pm. Young People with Learning difficulties aged 10 to 18	<b>Tuesday</b> - Monkmoor Lodge Youth Centre, Upton Lane, Shrewsbury SY2 5RR. <b>Wednesday</b> - Ludlow Youth Centre, Lower Galeford, Ludlow SY8 1RT
Smile Plus	<a href="http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directary/Smile">http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directary/Smile</a> (this link doesn't currently contain any information)	Jo Cox	jo.m.cox@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 250948	Wednesday, 7 until 9pm. Young People aged 18+ with Learning difficulties	Monkmoor Lodge Youth Centre, Upton Lane, Shrewsbury SY2 5RR
Taking Part - Children and young people's advocacy, information and advice	<a href="https://www.takingpart.co.uk/chill-dren-and-young-people">https://www.takingpart.co.uk/chill-dren-and-young-people</a>	Julie Mellor	julie.mellor@takingpart.co.uk	01743 363399		Taking Part, Louise House, Shrewsbury, SY3 9JN
Taking Part - Moving and Grooving	<a href="https://www.takingpart.co.uk/chill-dren-and-young-people">https://www.takingpart.co.uk/chill-dren-and-young-people</a>	Julie Mellor	julie.mellor@takingpart.co.uk	01743 363399	Taking Part has a project called Moving and Grooving, as part of the 'All In' Short Breaks activities. 7 different forest school/bushcraft sites, walled kitchen and Sensory gardens, commercial standard kitchen, Log cabin, Zip wire(wheelchair friendly), rope bridge, moving platform and low ropes all in the woods. 1km of woodland walk, wheelchair accessible, fossils, river frontage (even an island in the river Severn), stream, crayfish ponds, fruit pressing room. There can access to the sheep flock at lambing or shearing etc or working with the Pedigree Herefords.	Taking Part, Louise House, Shrewsbury, SY3 9JN
Tickwood care farm	<a href="http://tickwoodcarefarm.org">http://tickwoodcarefarm.org</a>	Edward and Anna Dugdale	shine@tickwood.co.uk	01952 882394	Friday	Tickwood Care Farm Much Wenlock Shropshire TF13 6NZ
The big time club	<a href="http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/fig/event/page?id=_6Vzd7Te968&amp;familychannels=322">http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/fig/event/page?id=_6Vzd7Te968&amp;familychannels=322</a>	Jo Cox	jo.m.cox@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 250948	7 until 9pm. Young people with Disabilities aged 10 to 25 Wednesday 6pm till 8pm - Term Time Only. Youth	Grange Youth Centre, Mount Pleasant Rd, Shrewsbury SY1 3SW

Image: Spreadsheet of existing activities and groups in Shropshire

An interactive Google map has also been created, which includes all of the services, schools and activities that have been identified. This can be easily maintained by the local authority as it is editable by anyone with [this link](#). A screenshot of the map is included below.



*Image: Interactive Google map of existing activities and groups in Shropshire*

The map can also be embedded into any website by copying and pasting the following HTML into the source code of the webpage:

```
<iframe src="https://www.google.com/maps/d/embed?mid=1f5e3d2TQ81PrZCnJHdD9k4VSnDk" width="640" height="480"></iframe>
```

# First hand research

## Where we've been and who we met

Research visits were carried out in Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Stoke Saint Milborough. The following services were visited:

- Hope House
- Lower Bush Farm
- Autism West Midlands
- Shropshire Health Champions
- Severndale School
- Shropshire SEND Community Games and Local Offer Event

This enabled us to observe and engage:

- CYP with a wide range of needs
- CYP who attend mainstream schools and CYP who attend special schools
- Mixed groups where CYP with special educational needs and disabilities attend activities with CYP without special educational needs or disabilities
- Parents and carers of CYP with special educational needs and disabilities
- Frontline staff working directly with CYP with special educational needs and disabilities

## Interviews

In addition a number of interviews were carried out with key stakeholders, including:

- Adelle Wilkinson - Community Engagement Officer, Shropshire HealthWatch
- Hannah Prior - Creative Director and Theatre Maker, Ignition Create
- Stewart Smith - Development Support Worker, Adult Services, Shropshire Council
- Neil Willcox - Locality Commissioning Manager, Shropshire Council
- Paul Crawte - Head of Young People's Strategy, KIDS
- Sarah Thomas - Participation Co-ordinator & Trustee, PACC
- Siobhan Williams - Assistant Principal, Post 16, Severndale Academy

## Key insights

### Challenges

As identified by the local authority, there are particular challenges in Shropshire due to its **large geographical area** and **sparse population**. During our research we identified several challenges related to this:

- There are areas of Shropshire that have very **limited connectivity**, for example no mobile reception, and it has been reported to us that there are areas with very limited internet access. This is a challenge going forward as it limits the potential for online engagement.
- **Public transport** is limited for people who live in more rural areas. It has been reported that many bus routes are subsidised by the local authority, and that there may be even fewer public transport options in the future.
- There is a **large disparity** between what is available to children and young people in **Shrewsbury** compared with **other areas** of Shropshire. As illustrated in the interactive map, the majority of groups were found to be in Shrewsbury. The more rural areas such as south Shropshire either have far fewer activities available, or activities are more difficult to find.

The children and young people we met highlighted **social challenges** they face:

- When discussing the activities available, it was reported that there is a **lack of opportunities for people to meet up around shared interests**, for example gaming.
- There were a significant number of young people who **attended schools out of county** and as a result felt that it was **difficult to see their friends** outside of school.

As found in our desk research, children and young people we met reported that **traditional models of participation can be difficult**.

- We heard that review meetings at school can be ‘boring’ resulting in children and young people only being involved for a very short period of time:

*Participant: “I’m called in to reviews for 10 minutes because that is all I can handle.”*

*Interviewer: “What would make it easier for you?”*

*Participant: “If I could have an extended playtime beforehand that might help.”*

- Councils (and similarly boards) can be exclusive as they tend to require specific behaviours or conduct:

*“I was on the school council but had to leave because I didn’t get on with someone.”*

## Assets

Everywhere we visited we witnessed, or were shown examples of, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities **having a say in the things that they do** and having their voices heard. This is **not always recognised as engagement or participation** by the children and young people taking part, or by the adults facilitating it. Examples of this are included below.

### Example 1: Feedback forms at Autism West Midlands

The image shows a feedback form titled "REFLECTIONS WEDNESDAY 9TH AUGUST". At the top right is a small cartoon drawing of a yellow character. Below the title is a star rating section with five stars; the first two are circled. The instructions say "Circle the number of stars to show how much you have enjoyed today (1 = not enjoyed, 3 = okay, 5 = really enjoyed)". Below the stars are four sections with handwritten responses:

- What did you like doing today?** I like doing to the gym, a video drawing a cartoon
- What didn't you like doing today?** Nothing
- What have you learnt today?** that to be is very funny

Feedback forms are used at the end of each day at Autism West Midlands to explore what people enjoyed and didn't enjoy to inform future plans.

These were completed by all children and young people present, with a range of support as appropriate for each person.

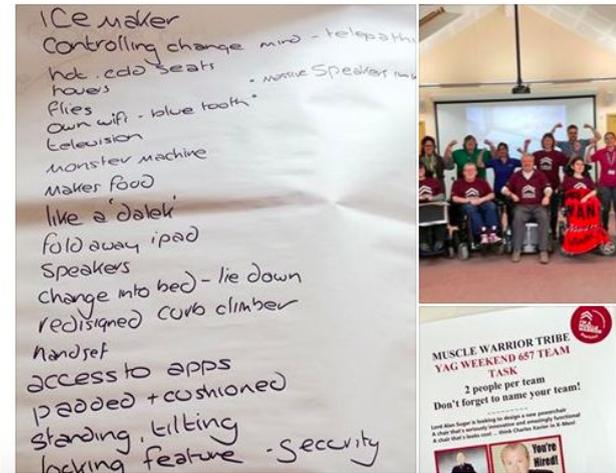
### Example 2: Young Adults Group (YAG) run by Hope House

A group set up specifically for young adults who use Hope House where they plan activities, discuss topics and have visiting guests. The example shown overleaf is a social media post about a weekend when Michael McGrath visited and ran a workshop on designing dream wheelchairs.

Feedback from participants is used to inform the evolution of the group's activities. For example they initially had mixed gender weekends, however the young women decided they would prefer to have a separate weekend just for them, and this is how the weekends are now run.

**Michael McGrath** added 3 new photos.  
20 March · 🌐

"Imagination is truly a powerful thing" evidenced by these priceless responses from several participants who attended a very special YAG (Young Adult Group) weekend at Hope House Children's Hospice (nr Oswestry) where I was invited to deliver some sessions around aspirations, hopes & dreams. Key highlights included setting a task to plan & pitch ideas (Apprentice style!) for a modern 21st century innovative tech-savvy fully-functional electric wheelchair with a whopping (sadly fictitious!) £100k budget ~ some serious fun was had by all despite the absence of Lord Sugar 😊



Images: Michael McGrath workshop on designing dream wheelchairs with YAG, Hope House

### Example 3: Lower Bush Farm

The children and young people attending Lower Bush Farm are involved in decisions about what they do each day. Learning and play are led by CYP and they are enabled to express themselves by being provided with opportunities to make as much noise as they like and scream.

*"Freedom farm, that's what we call it"*

- A young person at Lower Bush Farm

During our visit young people were also invited to sit around a campfire and toast marshmallows whilst we all talked about life in Shropshire. It enabled all the young people to participate as much or as little as they wanted and to leave the conversation and come back as and when they were ready.



Images: Lower Bush Farm

#### Example 4: Young Health Champions

An inclusive group, with a mix of children and young people with and without special educational needs and disabilities who undertake health campaigns in Shropshire.

The group had discussions about what topics they thought were important to focus on. This was combined with topics that they are commissioned to work on, for example they had been commissioned to do some work on asthma by HealthWatch. The group also did fun health cooking.

**Health Champions** @ShropshireYHC · Aug 23  
Whatever your #GCSE results today, be proud of all achievements and don't underestimate what you can go on to be.

**Health Champions** @ShropshireYHC · Aug 23  
Our friend @Leo\_GoldenChild who helped us #Diabeatit with great advice #staypositive

**Leo 'Golden Child'** @Leo\_GoldenChild  
THROWBACK taking it RightBack🔥🔥 The song that gave me LIFE #StayPositive - Thanku to everyone who has shared this moment with me 🎵❤️

**Health Champions** @ShropshireYHC · Aug 23  
All part of the research we're leading with support from @HWSHropshire #asthma #Shropshire

**Karen Higgins** @karenellaB  
My view in the office today. @ShropshireYHC with their youth worker reviewing asthma care for children and young people in #Shropshire

# Revised self-assessment

Following this initial research, Shropshire's **self-assessment of its current level of engagement** of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities was reviewed and updated by Humanly.

As part of the self-assessment Shropshire Council identified that it needs to engage with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities at an individual, service and strategic level. These three levels of engagement are illustrated below:



At present, Shropshire is carrying out some activities at each level however there is room for improvement at all three levels. This is summarised in the table overleaf.

How Shropshire needs to engage CYP with SEND	What is already being done	What needs more work
<p>1. At an <b>individual</b> level</p> <p>- Engaging with individual CYP with SEND as part of assessment and planning processes. (e.g. review of EHCP)</p>	<p>CYP are part of EHC assessment and planning from the start.</p> <p>Implementing a person centred approach for assessment and planning. In November 2016, we held a meeting to raise awareness of the importance of person centred approaches. This was attended by education, care and health staff.</p> <p>We are trying to establish the extent to which person centred approaches are already being used.</p> <p>We evaluate the section in the EHCP that identifies the children and young person's voice. We do this as a small panel, evaluating the quality and content. We use this to identify training needs.</p> <p>We evaluate feedback provided by IASS, identifying any areas that service users feel are not well. We use this to identify training needs.</p> <p>There is a training programme in place to develop PCA within education settings 0 to 25.</p> <p>There are plans to develop PCA training across the wider workforce including health and social care practitioners and VCS.</p> <p>PACC are providing person centred training for parents.</p>	<p>Support/training for children and young people to better understand Person Centred Assessment (PCA) and ensure that are able to contribute fully.</p> <p>PCA training for care and health staff and VCS workers, including creative methods of engaging CYP with SEND.</p>
<p>2. At a <b>service</b> level</p> <p>- Engaging with CYP with SEND who use specific services as part of reviewing and developing those services</p>	<p>CYP are able to review local provision through consultations run via service providers at points of recommissioning or decommissioning by the local authority. (NB. This approach creates a risk of services reviewing themselves.)</p>	<p>In order to evaluate CYP's experiences of specific services, a range of methods should be employed to enable meaningful engagement, including direct observation of service users at the service and creative methods of engagement.</p>

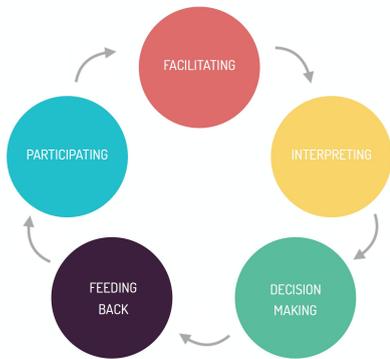
	<p>In specialist social care, we ask providers to consult with CYP on our behalf; staff have relevant communication skills and CYP are familiar with the people seeking their opinion.</p> <p>There are groups that can be accessed to gain feedback about specific services e.g. SIS.</p> <p>There is a strong culture of services listening to CYP and providing opportunities for them to feedback on the service provided. However, the insight generated through these engagement activities appears to be utilised only within the service, not shared with the local authority.</p>	<p>Reviews of services should not rely solely on services self assessing but include engagement of CYP by an independent facilitator or facilitators.</p> <p>Services should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to enable continuous improvement, rather than only being done at times when a decision needs to be made regarding recommissioning or decommissioning.</p> <p>The data generated by services carrying out regular engagement activities with their users could be utilised by the local authority if closer relationships are built with the services and this information is shared regularly through ongoing dialogue.</p> <p>All users of a service should have the chance to feed into any reviews being carried out, not only members of groups that exist to provide feedback.</p>
<p>3. At a <b>strategic</b> level</p> <p>- Engaging with all CYP with SEND in Shropshire as part of strategic reviews and planning</p> <p>(e.g. review / self-evaluation and planning of Short Breaks offer; Local Offer)</p>	<p>Some direct engagement with CYP with SEND is carried out in order to feed into decision-making at a county level, for example getting feedback on the Local Offer at events that CYP with SEND and their families attend. However, these engagement activities are traditional and could be more creative.</p> <p>There are some groups that are already established, e.g. Young Health Champions, but that are not currently utilised to support the SEND agenda</p> <p>Parent Carers play a role as advocates for CYP. PACC provides opportunities for parent carers of young people with complex needs to contribute to strategic decision making on behalf of their sons and daughters.</p>	<p>There should be a clear participation pathway that provides all CYP with SEND in Shropshire with opportunities to influence strategic decision-making at a county level. This should not be limited to users of services, representatives, and members of user involvement groups.</p> <p>Vulnerable and harder to reach groups such as LAC, transient communities, communities where English is an additional language and migrant groups should also be enabled to participate in engagement activities.</p> <p>Where the local authority is carrying out direct engagement with CYP with SEND, creative methods should be employed to enable meaningful and enjoyable engagement.</p>

	<p>PACC has recently been successful in securing a discretionary grant from the DFE to develop a Shropshire Parent Carer SEND Participation Network. This will provide an opportunity for all self-help / service user-led SEND groups in the local area to contribute to strategic decision making via a coordinated network that links into a participation pathway.</p>	<p>The Young Health Champions group could be utilised to feed into SEND commissioning decisions.</p> <p>Service providers could be supported to carry out engagement activities with the CYP who attended the service to feed into SEND commissioning decisions.</p>
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# 3. Co-Creation

## Introduction to the Co-Creation Phase

All key stakeholders were involved in co-creating an engagement strategy for CYP with SEND in Shropshire. The co-creation activities carried out are summarised below.



Based on the results of the research phase, Humanly developed an overall framework for meaningfully engaging children and young people, consisting of 5 stages. This is outlined in detail on page 24.

This framework was taken to Shropshire Council for discussion and feedback. Humanly facilitated a creative workshop with key stakeholders from the local authority and partner organisations to explore who might play a role at each of the 5 stages and what that role might be.



*Image: Workshop with stakeholders in Shropshire to explore engagement models*

As a result, three potential strategies were developed for engagement of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Shropshire. These strategies are outlined in this section.

**Co-creation with children and young people** was undertaken using a different approach.

Rather than asking children and young people how they would like to be engaged, which was deemed to be an unsuitable approach, we **tested a number of creative methods** for engaging children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities at the Shropshire SEND Community Games and Local Offer Event. PACC were extremely supportive in inviting Humanly to this event, and by encouraging children and young people to come and visit our stand at the event.

Humanly offered a large range of activities that children and young people could take part in to share their views and ideas. These included:

- An ideas board where children and young people could stick their ideas for what they would like more of in Shropshire. They could also add stickers to existing ideas to show that they liked them.
- iPads that children and young people could use to film themselves, or each other, sharing their views or ideas.
- ‘Mini mes’, which are blank silhouettes of people that can be decorated to create an image of what people like doing, or what they would like to do in the future.
- Symbol cards, so that people who do not communicate verbally could make choices and express their views.
- Emoji cushions which could be used as props when discussing good or bad things.
- Craft materials that could be used in a number of ways.



*Image: Engagement tools used for co-creation activities with CYP with SEND*

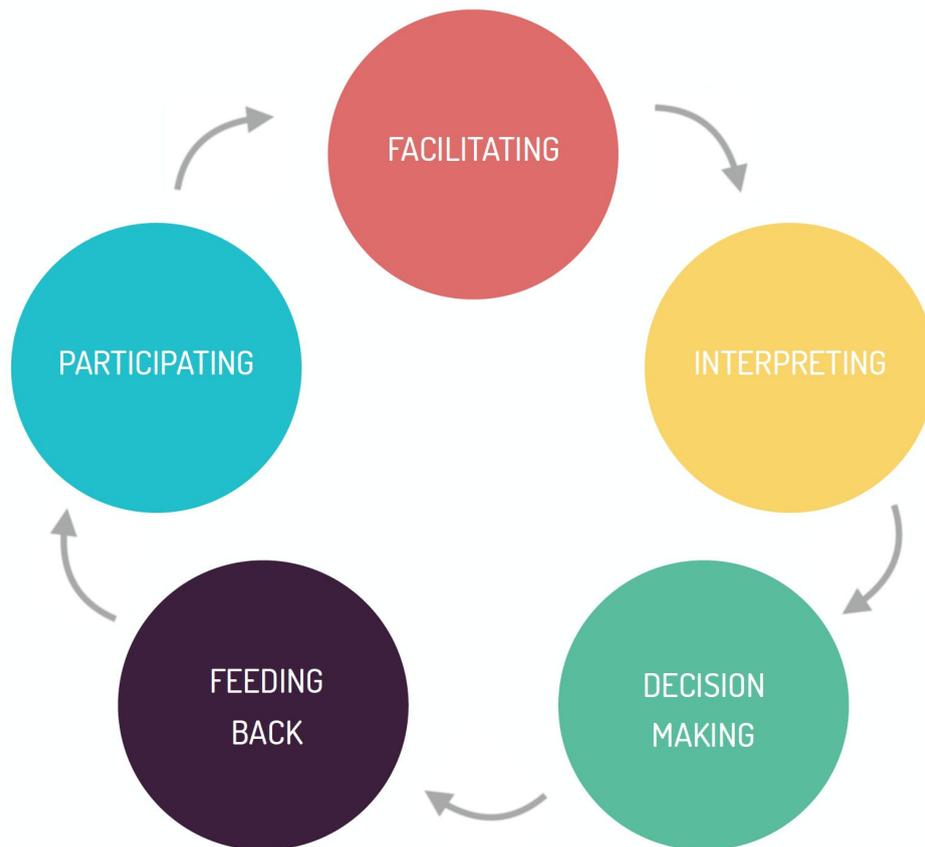
This led to a number of insights about what might work best for meaningfully engaging CYP with SEND:

- The creative activities were successful and encouraged children and young people to join in.
- The ideas board was a big success. The inclusion of stickers meant that people could contribute even if they didn't want to write or make anything, just by sticking a sparkly sticker on.
- The iPad was not used by anyone; the children and young people we met were not interested in being filmed.

These findings have fed into the suggested strategies.

# Engagement Framework

The following five-stage framework for meaningfully engaging children and young people has been created based on the results of the research phase:



Each stage has an associated role. It is vital that all five roles are considered and planned for, in order to ensure that engagement of children and young people is meaningful and influential.

These roles are outlined in more detail in the following pages, along with the results of the co-creation workshop with stakeholders and inspiration examples from around the world.

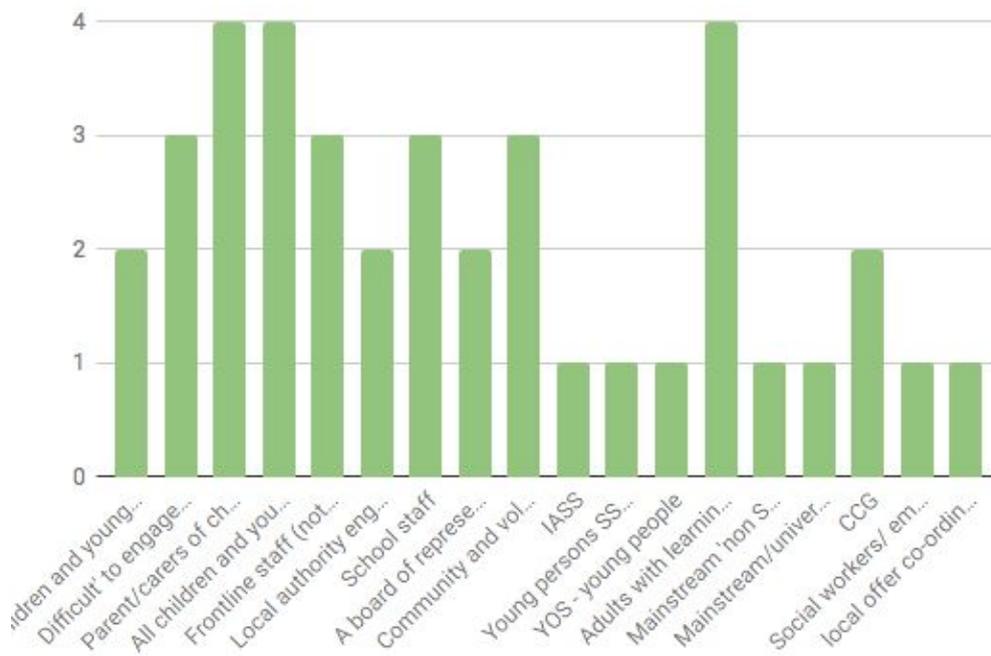
## Role 1: Participating

In this role participants in the engagement process express the views of children and young people. These participants may be children and young people themselves, or they may be others who are representing their views on their behalf, for example parents and carers. It is our recommendation that children and young people should always have the opportunity to represent their own views, however the extent to which all children and young people in Shropshire are actively involved in this process depends on the engagement approach taken.

### Findings from co-creation workshop with stakeholders

Three groups were identified as having **a key participating role to play** by all of the teams in the co-creation workshop. These were:

- All children and young people with SEND
- Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND
- Adults with learning disabilities



## Inspiration Examples

### World Vision: Peer-to-peer research led by Syrian refugee children



A group of 40 children and young people, 20 in Lebanon and 20 in Jordan, conducted child-led research on issues affecting their lives as Syrian refugees in their host countries . The data generated by children and young people represent their social experiences, opinions, perceptions and beliefs. Traditional research methods were used for example interviews and questionnaires, but it was **led and conducted by children**.

### MOMO and MOMO express: Digital tools to support participation

**MOMO<sup>+</sup> Express**  
MIND OF MY OWN

Accessible MOMO app for young people with a learning disability and younger children.

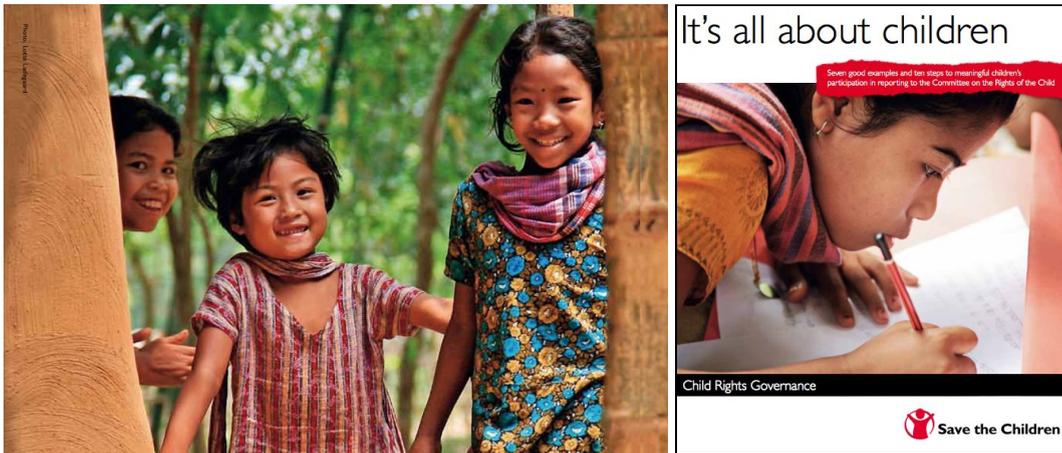
All children should have their voices heard. This is especially the case for those with a learning disability. MOMO Express solves this problem. It's a co-designed, innovative and user-friendly app that helps them express their views, wishes and feelings in a fun way that's easy for workers to understand and evidence.

**MOMO Express:**

- uses expressive pictures, minimal text and affirming sounds
- has accessibility features that can be tailored to the needs of the child
- can be used for any education, health or social care planning or review process, including EHC plans
- is designed to be used with a worker

MOMO Express is a digital tool that was designed with and for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to support them to share their views. It is designed to be a 'co-use' tool, so recognises that children may need support to record their views but still puts them at the centre.

## Save the Children: Engaging with illiterate children in Bangladesh



In [this example](#) the children and young people used **creative methods** to express themselves, including **illustrations** on flip charts to explore narratives, **collages** of text and illustrations, and **sad or smiley faces** to show whether things had improved or got worse. Creative methods were used in this example to involve children who cannot read or write, however creative methods can be used to include everyone, including children and young people with pre-intentional communication.

### Role 2: Facilitating

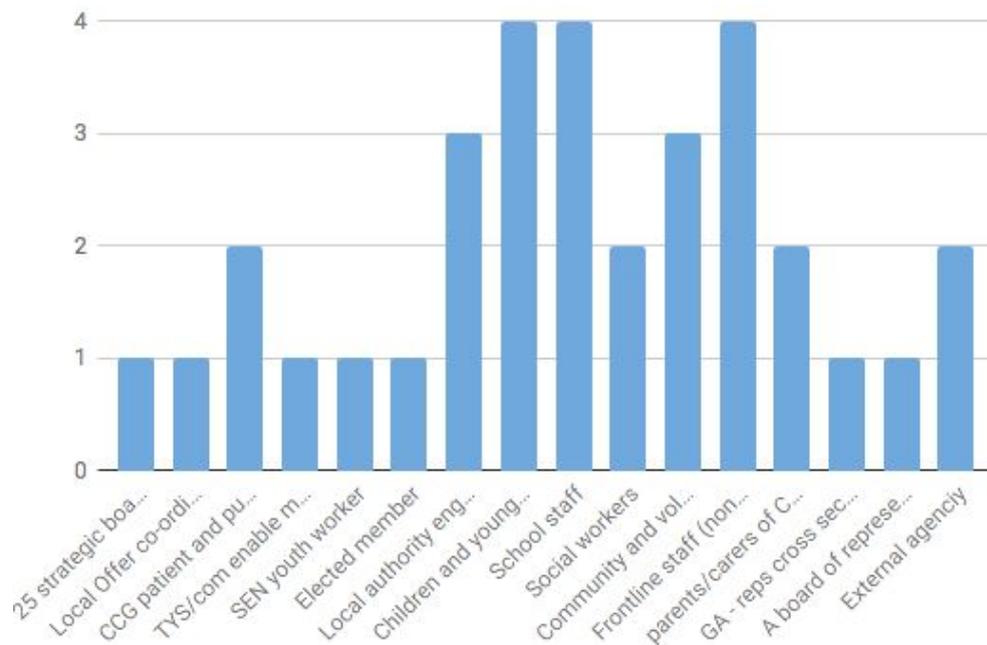
In this role facilitators gather the views of children and young people by directly engaging with participants. These are the people who provide the opportunity for participants to give their views and capture the data.

It is worth noting that facilitators will need to employ creative methods in order to enable children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to share their views. Direct questions are often not appropriate for a range of reasons; for example they can be seen as a test in which there is a right or wrong answer, and people may answer in a way which they feel will please the person asking the questions (Redley and Weinberg, 2007). The need to answer questions can also exclude those with communication barriers.

### Findings from co-creation workshop with stakeholders

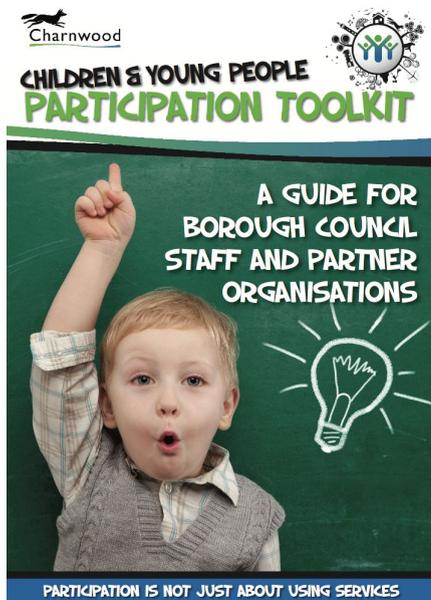
Three groups were identified as having **a key facilitating role to play** by all of the teams in the co-creation workshop. These were:

- Children and young people with SEND
- School staff
- Frontline staff (not schools)



## Inspiration Examples

### Charnwood: Toolkit for facilitating CYP engagement activities



#### Participation is NOT:

- a 'token-gesture' towards involving children
- 'ticking the box' to impress Ofsted or to help secure funding
- always formal
- always about groups of children and young people
- an 'added extra' to work with children and young people
- the same as consultation (this is just one method)
- always about children and young people having to engage in adult structures in order to be heard and taken seriously

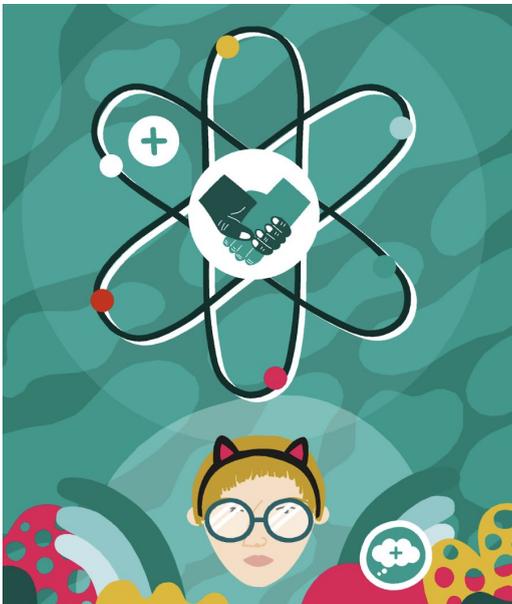


Charnwood has produced a toolkit with clear guidance on participation and suggested activities. This was used by Charnwood Youth Councillors who hosted a Halloween Party to consult young people with disabilities about access to leisure facilities. Afterwards, a feedback session with Fusion Lifestyle highlighted key issues like the importance of disabled changing facilities.

## SALTO-Youth: Toolkit for facilitating CYP engagement activities



SALTO-Youth has created a backpack containing a wide range of games and informal activities to use with young people. It is targeted at facilitators, trainers, youth leaders and youth workers.



### Me: A Kid's Diary

An app that enables children to learn and record more about themselves and the people around them. It uses drawing, animation, recording, and photos.

It is not specifically designed for children with special educational needs and disabilities but is an inspiring method of recording what's important to children, alongside feelings and ambitions.

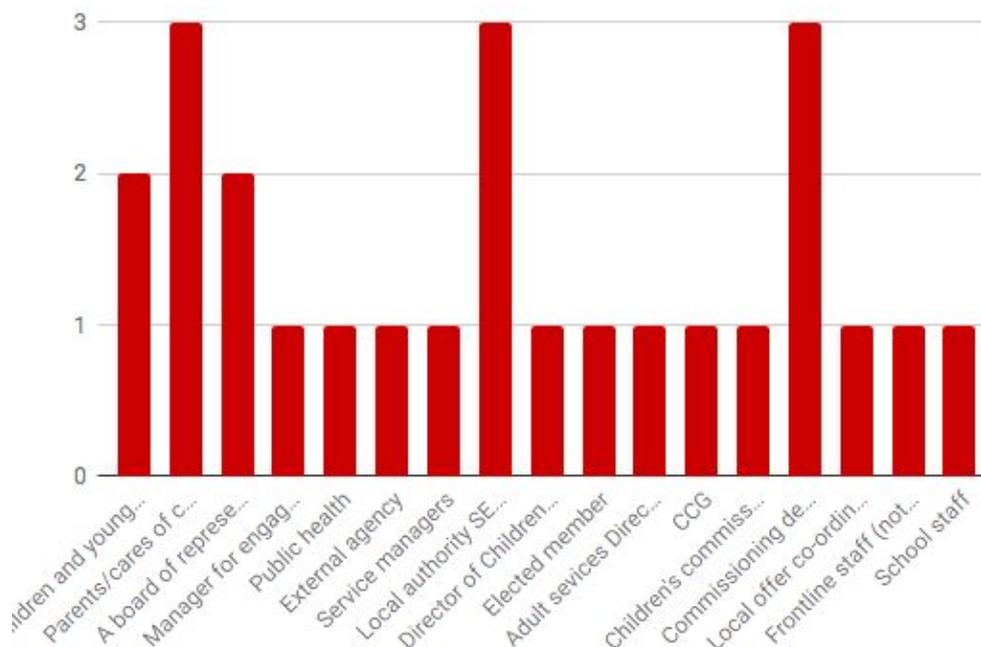
## Role 3: Interpreting

Following on from engagement activities, there is an important interpreting role in order to review the results and generate insights that can inform decision making. If engagement is to be meaningful then it will require a level of interpretation.

## Findings from co-creation workshop with stakeholders

Three groups were identified as having **a key interpreting role to play** by all of the teams in the co-creation workshop. These were:

- Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND
- Local authority SEND manager
- Commissioning development officer



## Inspiration Example

### Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People: 'Right Brilliant Things'

'Right Brilliant Things' looked at what children in Scotland think is brilliant in their lives. It did this using creative techniques and the results were in the form of posters, letters, collages, DVDs and many more. These were then interpreted and themes were identified. It is a great example of **clear, useful, data being gained from creative outputs**.

## APPENDIX 4 SUBCATEGORY DATA TABLES<sup>4</sup>

Table 3: Number of Activity themed Right Brilliant Things by subcategory

Theme 1: ACTIVITIES	All		Primary aged		Secondary Aged	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
SPORTS	267	36%	145	37%	100	37%
OTHER	160	22%	90	23%	46	17%
ARTS	146	20%	60	15%	68	25%
TECHNOLOGY	85	11%	56	14%	22	8%
YOUTH CLUBS AND ORGS.	52	7%	22	5%	28	11%
HOLIDAYS AND TRAVELLING	24	3%	19	5%	3	1%
ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL	8	1%	3	1%	3	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4: Number of Relationship themed Right Brilliant Things by subcategory

Theme 2: RELATIONSHIPS	All		Primary aged		Secondary Aged	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	281	59%	160	70%	77	46%
FRIENDSHIPS	182	38%	69	30%	80	48%
OTHER RELATIONSHIPS	8	2%	1	0%	6	4%
GIRLFRIENDS/BOYFRIENDS	6	1%	0	0%	3	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>

Image: Analysis of creative outputs from CYP in Scotland

### Role 4: Decision making

Once results have been interpreted, decisions have to be made as to what to do next. It is important to consider who will be involved in making decisions, and to have a clear decision making process in place for planning and acting on insights.

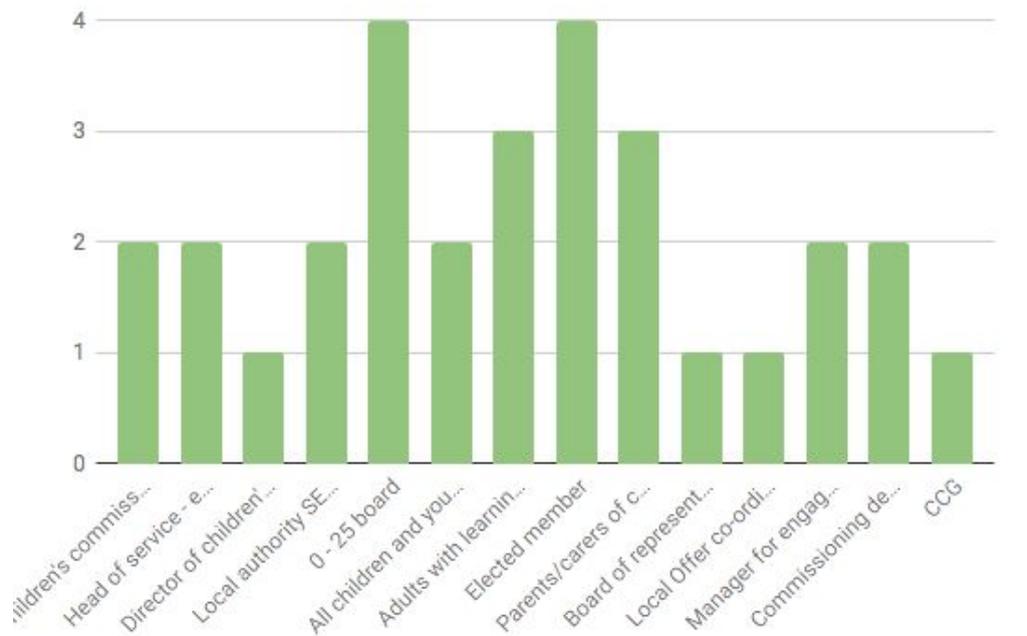
### Findings from co-creation workshop with stakeholders

Two groups were identified as having **a key decision making role to play** by all of the teams in the co-creation workshop. These were:

- 0 - 25 board
- Elected members

As shown overleaf, these groups were closely followed by:

- Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND
- Adults with learning disabilities



## Inspiration Examples

Humanly has been unable to find any inspirational examples of children and young people having genuine decision making powers. The difficulty in finding examples illustrates how challenging the involvement of children and young people in decision making can be. However the question remains as to how meaningful children and young people's participation is if they have no decision making power.

## Role 5: Feeding back

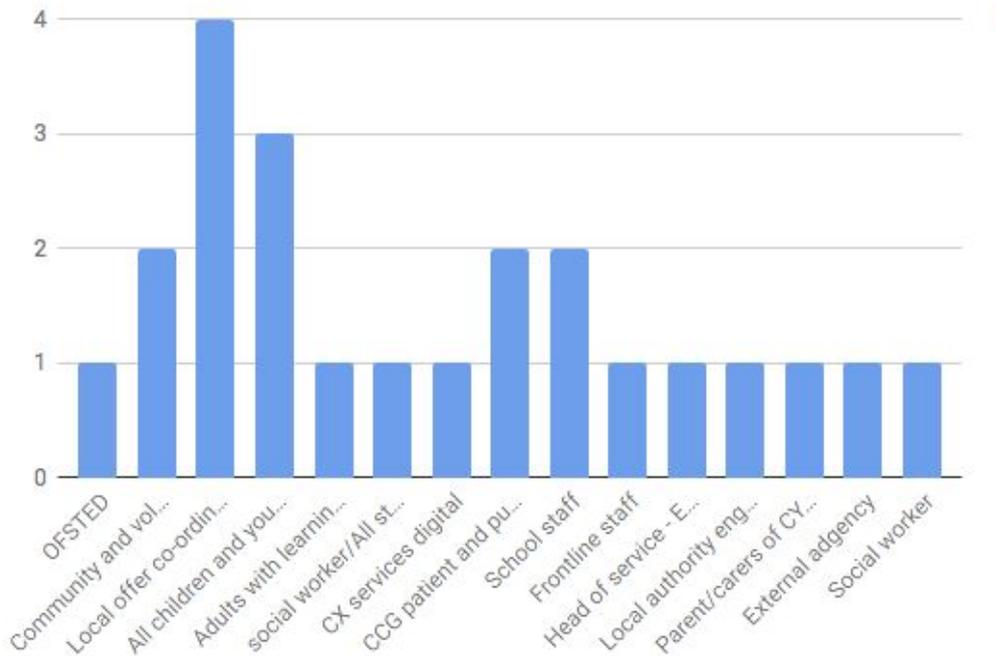
It is vital that children and young people who have given their views are provided with information about what has happened as a result, in a format in which they can access, as illustrated below:

*“Practice literature on the participation of children and young people refers to the need to provide feedback to those involved in decision-making. It is valued by the young people involved for a number of reasons including to find out the views of others, to know what is planned to change and when, and to understand the reason(s) if their ideas are not to be implemented.”*

- Lightfoot and Sloper 2002a

## Findings from co-creation workshop with stakeholders

There was only one group identified as having a **key feeding back role to play** by all of the teams in the co-creation workshop, as shown below. This was the Local Offer Co-ordinator.



## Inspiration Examples

### Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People: ‘Right Brilliant Things’

The ‘[Right Brilliant Things](#)’ report was followed by feedback about what the Commissioner had found out from the project. It also stated clearly what he would do as a result of it.

## THE RESULT OF THE VOTE



*“Help everyone to include each other, no matter how different we all are”*

**I will commit to the promotion of a better understanding, awareness and response to disabled children and young people**

*Images from the Right Brilliant Things feedback*

## Walk in Our Shoes: Listening to adults with a learning disability in Croydon

A project called '[Walk in Our Shoes](#)' was undertaken by The Public Office in partnership with Humanly for Croydon Council, exploring the potential for co-production with adults with learning disabilities. The final report was produced in two versions; a written report and an [accessible video version](#). The script for the video was produced in Plain English video and narrated by a local man with learning disabilities, and subtitles were included to make it accessible to as many people as possible.



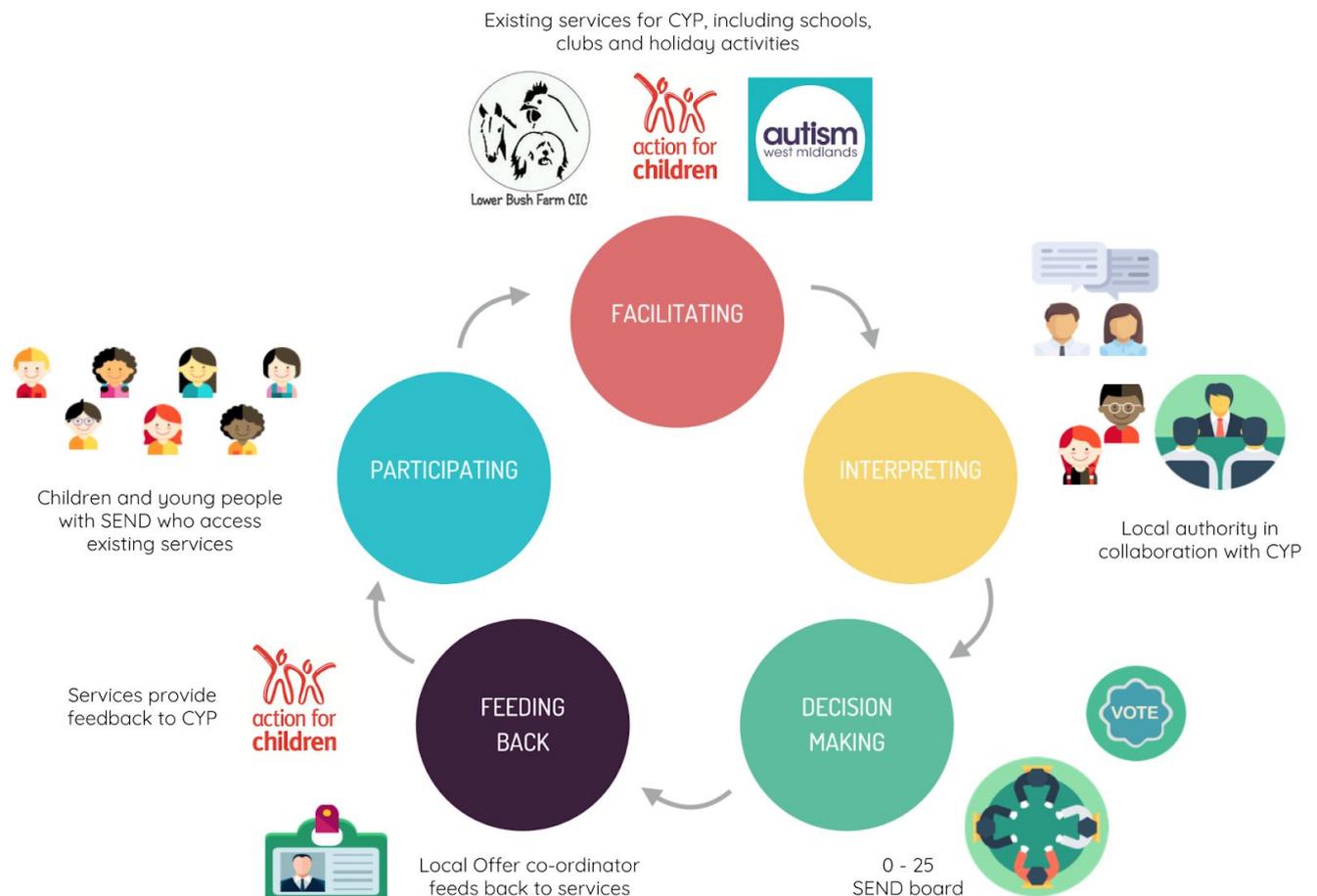
*Image: Still from the Walk in Our Shoes video*

### 3 potential models for engaging CYP with SEND in Shropshire

Based on the results of the research and co-creation activities, three potential models were developed for engaging children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Shropshire, based on the five key stages in the engagement framework. These strategies are not mutually exclusive, in that Shropshire Council could implement all three if desired.

#### Option 1: Use existing services for children and young people (that are not currently involved in engagement) to facilitate participation

Option 1 draws on the work that is already taking place in Shropshire. We discovered that there is a lot of work happening around gaining the views of children and young people with special educational needs in existing services. However this is not always being recognised as engagement or co-production, and the data generated is not being fed back to or captured by the local authority to enable these views to influence decision making. By partnering with these services, children and young people can be engaged where they are already spending time, and by people they feel comfortable with. This model is illustrated below and outlined in more detail on the following page:



## **Participating**

All children and young people who attend a service in Shropshire that is included in the Local Offer would have the opportunity to share their views.

## **Facilitating**

Existing services would facilitate participation on topics set by the local authority. This would be supported by a toolkit of possible engagement activities, however services could also use their own methods.

## **Interpreting**

The outputs gathered by services would be fed back to the local authority. The local authority would then interpret these in conjunction with children and young people. If quantitative data was required, this could be created from creative outputs by theming and categorising creative outputs, as demonstrated in the CYPCS report 'A Right Brilliant Thing'.

## **Decision making**

The 0 - 25 SEND board would have responsibility for making decisions, taking into consideration the views provided by children and young people. An elected member could be involved as well.

## **Feeding back**

The local authority would be responsible for feeding back outcomes to services, for example via the Local Offer co-ordinator. Services would in turn feedback to children and young people attending their service. Feedback should be provided in an accessible format, for example video, and made available on the Local Offer website.

## **Evidence and rationale for this strategy**

During the research visits, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities were observed expressing their views, or making choices, at every service visited. This was conducted in a range of ways to suit the children and young people attending. It appears therefore that this practice is embedded and would not be something new or unusual to the children and young people. The facilitators of these services are evidently practiced in gaining meaningful views from children and young people, and because they know the children and young people who use their services well, they are able to tailor the techniques they use. It was also evident that children and young people felt comfortable sharing their views with the facilitators of these services.

This approach would utilise the existing expertise of people running services and their relationships with the children and young people who attend. The local authority (i.e. a designated person or group) would be responsible for initiating engagement activities including the provision of topics, and collating and interpreting the data generated.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can find questions from professionals difficult:

*“Several authors have noted the tendency among people diagnosed with learning disabilities to orient towards questions **asked by professionals or in formal settings** specifically as tests – that is, as devices for measuring the adequacy of their own knowledge (see Atkinson 1988, Leudar and Fraser 1985, Rapley 2004).”*

- Marcus Redley and Darin Weinberg 2007

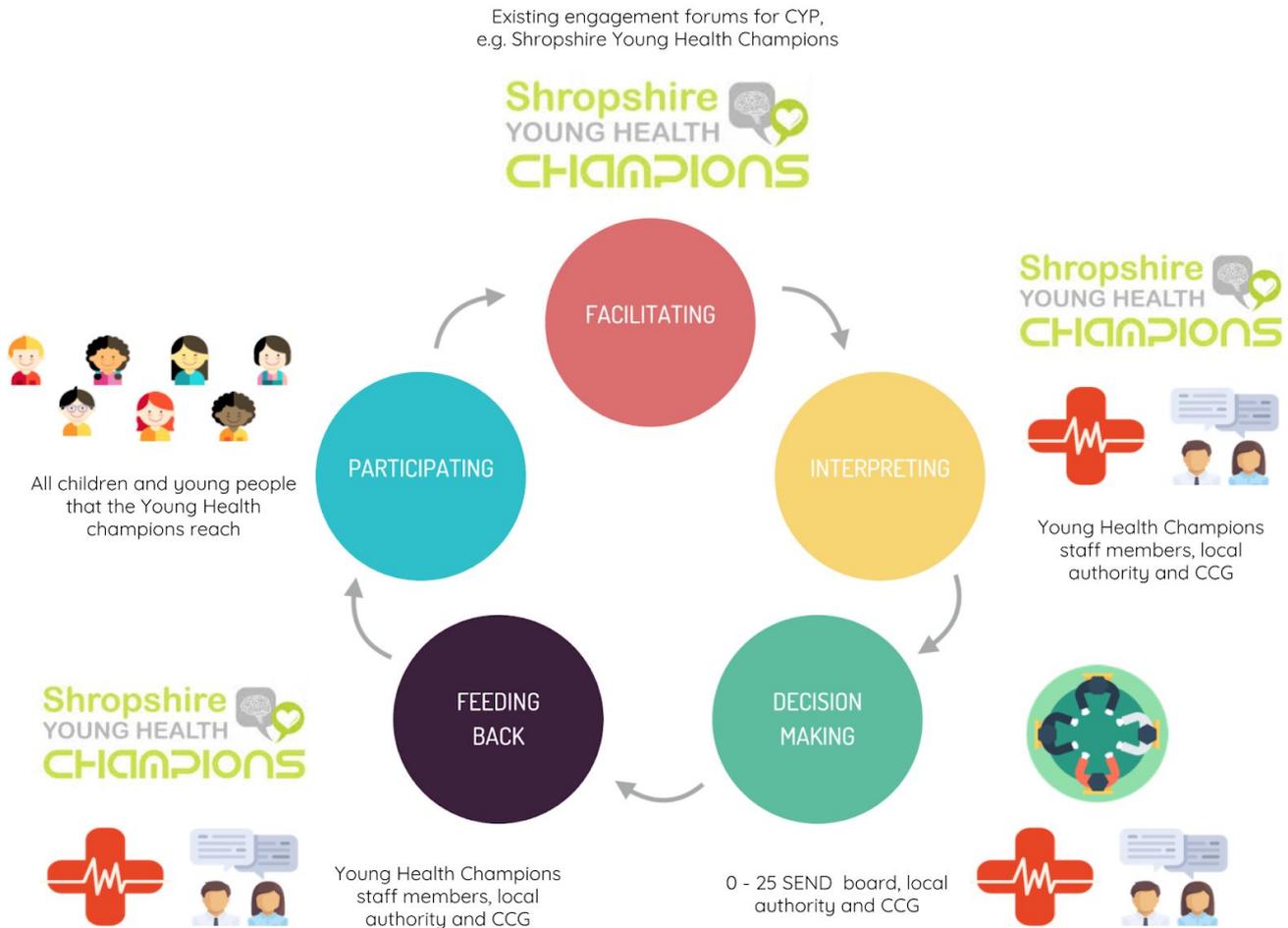
This strategy would minimise this by enabling familiar people to explore topics in familiar settings.

## Option 2: Use existing engagement forums to explore a wider range of topics

Option 2 again draws on work that is already happening in Shropshire, this time building on existing engagement forums. This could include HealthWatch or other forums, however for this example we have used Shropshire Young Health Champions. This is because Humanly has visited the Young Health Champions so has a greater understanding of how it runs.

Young Health Champions gets funding from the CCG, and used to receive Big Lottery funding. This enabled them to train 300 Young Health Champions across Shropshire. They now focus on a combination of young person led and service led ideas - for example discussions about what young people would like to focus on, and work commissioned by HealthWatch about asthma. The results of their work are then fed back to the CCG, or the commissioning body for the pieces of work.

By partnering with these engaging forums and asking them to expand the remit of what topics they explore, children and young people can again be engaged in a familiar setting by familiar people. This model is illustrated below and outlined in more detail on the following page:



## **Participating**

All children and young people who the Young Health Champions reach, which includes a large number of schools across the county, would have the opportunity to participate in this model. This would include children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and children who do not have special educational needs and disabilities, as the group is currently made of a mixture of children and young people with a range of needs and abilities who all work together.

## **Facilitating**

The Young Health Champions currently facilitate the participation of children and young people in health related topics. If their remit was widened, they could extend their engagement to include topics beyond health.

## **Interpreting**

The interpretation of results would be conducted by Young Health Champions staff members in collaboration with local authority and CCG staff members.

## **Decision making**

The 0 - 25 SEND board and the CCG would have responsibility for making decisions, taking into consideration the views provided by children and young people.

## **Feeding back**

Feedback would be provided via the Young Health Champions facilitators. Feedback should be provided in an accessible format, for example video, and made available on the Local Offer website.

## **Evidence and rationale for this strategy**

As part of the research for this project, Humanly visited a Young Health Champions drop in session on a Saturday. We were struck by the mix of children and young people, as the Young Health Champions group is not specifically for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, but is inclusive. When Humanly visited, approximately 70% of attendees had some additional needs.

At a later event Humanly met a parent of a young person who has special educational needs and is a Young Health Champion. In conversation it was raised just how much they as a family, including the young person, valued the opportunity to be involved in an inclusive, mixed group.

The range of Young Health Champions means that adoption of this model would enable a wide reach including children and young people with special educational needs attending area special schools and mainstream schools, as well as children without special educational needs.

The experience of the staff members facilitating the Young Health Champions, which includes gathering and interpreting views, would make them, or their equivalents in a similar model, well placed to facilitate and interpret this work.

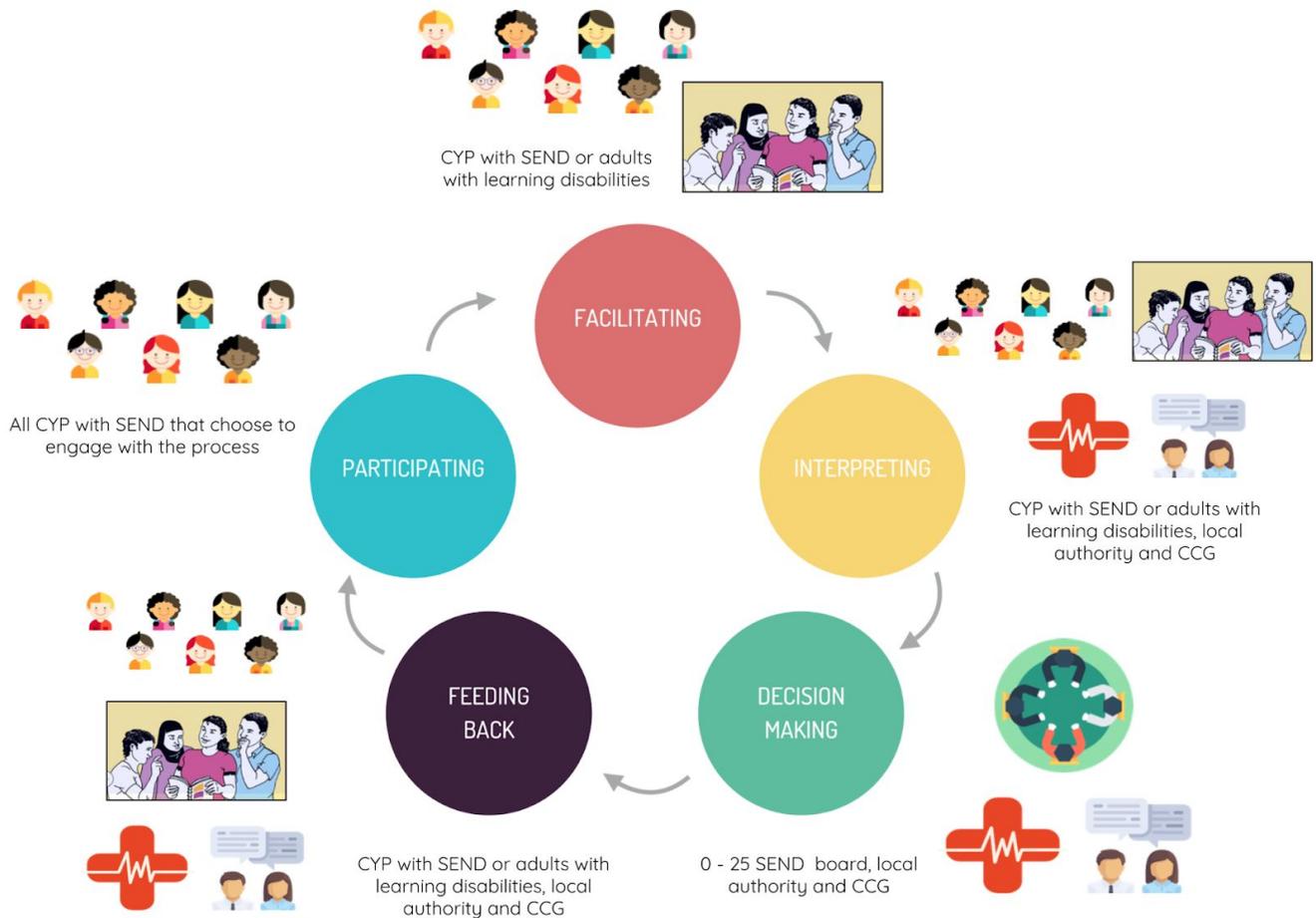


*Image: Young Health Champions Twitter feed*

This would reduce the role of the local authority in interpretation. Young Health Champions staff members could also oversee the feedback process, and are well placed to communicate outcomes as they have a strong social media presence.

## Option 3: Peer-to-peer engagement or adults with learning disabilities engaging CYP with SEND

Option 3 would be new model for Shropshire. It would empower children and young people with special education needs and disabilities, or adults with learning disabilities, to become 'researchers'. It would involve these researchers being provided with the necessary tools to capture views in real time, in the locations that they usually go to.



### Participating

This would depend on how widely this model was adopted or rolled out. If there was a large network of peer researchers, or adults with learning disabilities acting as researchers, it could cover services across the county.

### Facilitating

Facilitation would be carried out by children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, or adults with learning disabilities. An example of a similar model is the [Speak Out Council](#) in

Cambridgeshire, where adults with learning disabilities and/or autism gather the views of both adults and young people across the county. The Speak Out Council model is reliant on a number of 'boards', this however would not be necessary.

## Interpreting

The interpretation of results would be conducted jointly by peer researchers, or adults with learning disabilities acting as researchers, and local authority/CCG staff.

## Decision making

The 0 - 25 SEND board would have responsibility for making decisions, taking into consideration the views provided by children and young people. The CCG could be involved as well.

## Feeding back

Feedback would be provided via the peer researchers, or adults with learning disabilities acting as researchers. Feedback should be provided in an accessible format, for example video, and made available on the Local Offer website.

## Evidence and rationale for this strategy

Humanly prototyped three data gathering techniques at the Shropshire SEND Community Games and Local Offer Event. These were an ideas board; using art to talk about what children and young people would like more of in Shropshire or what they want to do in the future; and using video and photography to record views. The ideas board and art both worked well, however there was a very low uptake on the use of film and photographs, with only one person agreeing to be photographed with her work, and no-one agreeing to be filmed. On the other hand, during a visit to an event run by Autism West Midlands, there was a young man who was very keen on photography and asked to use our camera. We allowed him to use our camera to photograph the session, which led to us learning what he felt was important, based on what he chose to record, and the other members of the group were very comfortable to be photographed by a peer. This is a phenomenon we have witnessed in a number of situations beyond Shropshire; that children and young people are more comfortable with peer-to-peer recording.

The content generated could also be very easily collected by having devices for 'researchers' (peers or adults with learning disabilities) which all back up to the same place. This would allow the local authority to collate views very easily, provided researchers are gathering them. This model would however require co-ordination, and if an adult model was to be adopted then the basis on which adults were involved would need to be explored. In the Cambridge model the Speak Out Council leaders are employees.

# 4. Prototyping

## Introduction to the Prototyping Phase

After considering all 3 engagement models with the local authority, the decision was made to prototype

**Option 1: Use existing services for children and young people (that are not currently involved in engagement) to facilitate participation.**

In order to prototype this option, it was decided that a topic would be set by the local authority and 5 services would be asked to engage the children and young people who access their service in order to explore this topic. The topic was set as **‘What I do at the weekend and where I like to go’**.

In order to support these services to carry out engagement activities, Humanly created a toolkit of tried and tested activities, some of which were used with children and young people in Shropshire, and some of which were tested in other places. This engagement toolkit is included in Appendix 2.

The outcomes from the engagement activities were then to be sent to a named person at the local authority for interpretation.

The request to take part in the prototype, along with the engagement toolkit, were sent to the following services (selected by the local authority):

- Lower Bush Farm
- Severndale School
- Action for Children
- Hope House
- Shrewsbury College

The prototype was designed to answer the following questions:

- Will existing services respond to the request to engage the children and young people that access their service on behalf of the local authority; carry out an engagement activity and share the results?
- Do services find the engagement toolkit helpful for designing engagement activities to explore a given topic?
- Are the results shared by services useful for the local authority?

## Prototyping results and insights

Out of the 5 services approached, the only service that completed the prototyping activity was Action for Children. They chose to do the 'Mini Me' activity (included within the engagement toolkit) at their holiday club over Christmas. Humanly checked in with Action for Children prior to the date to check that they had everything they needed and to arrange a debrief call.

It was reported by Action for Children that the activity had gone well and the staff at the club had learnt new things about the children who chose to do the activity. For example, one child chose to make a 'mini me' of his Dad, explaining that his Dad was very important to him. Another young person made a forest themed 'mini me' because he loves the forest and animals. The people who chose to do the activity were mainly younger; older children chose different activities.

Action for Children also reported that they intended to repeat the activity with an after school club, which has a different cohort, to see how it worked with them. However, follow up emails have not elicited a response so we are unable to report on how the second round of testing went. Requests for pictures of the outcomes of both rounds of the activity did not receive a response, and the outcomes were also not sent to the local authority as requested in the prototype instructions.

Despite several emails and follow up phone calls from Humanly, the other 4 services did not engage with the prototyping activity, either not responding to the request at all or declining to take part. Shrewsbury College responded with concerns about whether the activities were suitable for their pupils.

## Adapting the approach

The prototyping approach was then adapted to test whether services would be more responsive if the request came from the local authority directly. The local authority contacted the services that had not responded, as well as Shrewsbury College. As a result, Shrewsbury College decided to hold a discussion with their students, and the other services said that they would do an activity and feedback directly to the local authority. A response was received from Shrewsbury College, however the other services did not send any outcomes.

## Key Insights

- Some services appear reluctant to engage with more formal engagement of the children and young people who access their service, even when the request comes directly from the local authority.

- Some services appear unwilling to try new activities or techniques for engaging children and young people.
- Where services have been willing to trial new techniques, they have found them enjoyable and have learnt new things about the children using their service.

## 5. Recommendations for next steps

### Further prototyping of engagement models

As the results of prototyping Option 1 were mixed, further prototyping could be carried out to establish the most effective way of engaging services. Options 2 and 3 could be also prototyped by the local authority as part of their ongoing engagement work.

We would recommend that Option 2 could be tested with either the Shropshire Young Health Champions or HealthWatch if either were open to this. HealthWatch has a Community Engagement Officer who visits services, and the Young Health Champions visit schools and have a wide range of members, including children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Option 3 would require recruitment and training of adults with learning disabilities. It would be a large undertaking, starting from scratch. We would suggest that at this may be something to consider in the future but it may not be an appropriate option currently.

### Making it Real Board

It was considered by the local authority whether children and young people could participate in the remodeled 'Making it Real' board. The 'Making it Real' board currently has one representative with a learning disability, who is able to express themselves very well verbally, and the board is currently considering involving PACC to represent children and young people. We would suggest that whilst the involvement of PACC is very positive, it does not replace the direct involvement of children and young people.

However, following interviews about this board we suggest it would not be the most appropriate method for engaging children and young people. As discussed in this report, boards can be problematic for a number of reasons, including the exclusion of people who have barriers to communication, and the requirement for children and young people to conform to an adult model of participation in a 'meeting' format.

As an alternative, we recommend ongoing promotion of creative methods to facilitate children and young people's participation. While the prototype of Option 1 revealed several barriers, it also showed that creative methods could enable services to learn more about the children and young people they work with. It was noted by Action for Children that not only was the creative activity itself helpful; it also facilitated conversations with young people that may not otherwise have happened.

## Roles

During prototyping, it became clear that there was no immediately identifiable person at the local authority that services should send the outcomes of engagement activities to. To make any ongoing engagement successful, a named responsible person at the local authority is required to build relationships with services; coordinate the logistics of sending out requests; and gather and collate responses. As discussed in the best practice section of this report, some local authorities have specific roles, such as a Participation Officer. We recognise that creation of new roles may not be possible, however the allocation of responsibility, and some protected time, is likely to be essential to the success of meaningful engagement of children and young people.

## Data analysis and decision making process

As well as a named responsible person for liaising with services to support their facilitation of engagement activities, the roles of interpreting and decision making need to be clearly defined. A named person or group of people should be responsible for analysing the outcomes of engagement activities received by the local authority. Ideally children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities should be involved in this process to triangulate the analysis conducted. However, it will be difficult to do this in a meaningful way (that does not involve children attending board style meetings) without a dedicated role in place. A clear and transparent decision making process should also be put in place, for example using the 0-25 SEND board.

## Communicating decisions

The local authority also needs to take responsibility for ensuring that decisions are communicated back to children and young people, making it clear how their participation has influenced the decisions made. We recommend that decisions and the impact of participation is fed back to services in the first instance, under the understanding that they are required to communicate this on to the children and young people they work with in an appropriate format.

## Agreements with services

To make Option 1 work, it requires commitment from services working with children and young people with special educational needs. An agreement with services to support children and young people to participate at a more strategic level would make the expectations of services clear. Humanly has put together a suggestion for what an agreement could look like; this is included in Appendix 3. Alternatively this requirement could be built into existing and new contracts with services.

## Launch event and relationship building

It is recommended that a launch event is held, open to all services that reach children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, in order to communicate the strategy and get buy in to involvement. This event should be widely promoted so that services are aware that it is happening and are able to attend. If it is not possible to reach the majority of services with one event, multiple events should be held, for example in different locations across the county.

This event, or events, should be followed up with one-to-one conversations with individual services to establish a relationship and get an agreement in place. These setup activities will also give services the opportunity to meet the named contact within the local authority, and could be used to celebrate existing good practice and share ideas.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 | Existing groups in Shropshire

Group	Website	Key contact	Email	Phone	Focus	Location
1Voice	<a href="http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/cd/view.page?record=hfFRWEckmmk">http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/cd/view.page?record=hfFRWEckmmk</a>	Unknown	1voicewestmidlands@1voice.info	07943 618 525	support and activities for people using communication aids	Unknown
Action for Children	<a href="https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk">https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk</a>	Katrina Edge	Katrina.Edge@actionforchildren.org.uk	01743 285765	Playscheme - school aged	Suite 2, Kingsland House 39 Abbey Foregate Shrewsbury SY2 6BL
Autism West Midlands summer programme	<a href="http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk">http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk</a>	Wendy Cowton	wcowton@autismwestmidlands.org.uk	01743 250962	Information and activities for people with autism	Autism West Midlands, Regent Court George Road, Birmingham B15 1NU. Summer group held in Shrewsbury
Cavalier centre (horse riding)	<a href="http://cavalierecentre.org">http://cavalierecentre.org</a>	Jane Barker	jane_barker@hotmail.com	01939 261147	Depending on competency and degree of disability, all aspects of riding can be covered, e.g. walking, trotting and cantering. Arena activities include pony-club type games, dressage, trotting poles and jumping.	Perry Cottage Yeaton Baschurch Shropshire SY4 2HY
Empathy	<a href="https://empathyforasds.org">https://empathyforasds.org</a>	Sam	sam@empathyforspecialchildren.org	07790584987	Improving the social provision for families living with High Functioning Autism. Meet fortnightly and have a summer programme	Varied across Shropshire, there are groups in the south, east and north
Enable	<a href="https://www.enable.org.uk">https://www.enable.org.uk</a>	Shrewsbury	enable@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 276900	Supported employment/travel training	Ptarmigan House Sitka Drive, Shrewsbury SY2 6LG
Escape	<a href="https://www.takingpart.co.uk/social">https://www.takingpart.co.uk/social</a>	Julie Mellor	julie.mellor@takingpart.co.uk		Social nights (adults?)	The Buttermarket, Howard St, Shrewsbury, SY1 1TE
Hope House	<a href="https://www.hopehouse.org.uk/home.html">https://www.hopehouse.org.uk/home.html</a>		care@hopehouse.org.uk		Children and young people's hospice	Hope House, Nant Lane, Morda, Oswestry, SY10 9BX
Kids SEN mediation	<a href="https://www.kids.org.uk/Event/sen-mediation-service-shropshire?Title=sen-mediation-service-shropshire">https://www.kids.org.uk/Event/sen-mediation-service-shropshire?Title=sen-mediation-service-shropshire</a>	Paul Crawte	Paul.Crawte@kids.org.uk	07711 7676 42	SEN Mediation is a statutory service to help parents or young people resolve disagreements about Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and plans. Working countrywide on engagement of children and young people with SEND	Shropshire wide
Lower Bush Farm	<a href="https://www.lowerbush.co.uk/school-holidays">https://www.lowerbush.co.uk/school-holidays</a>	Oli and Rowanna	lowerbush@gmail.com	7817666267	Forest school for CYP with SEND and their siblings	Lower Bush Farm Stoke Saint Milborough Ludlow Shropshire SY8 2ES
Marches Family Network	<a href="http://www.marchesfamilynetwork.co.uk">http://www.marchesfamilynetwork.co.uk</a>		play@marchesfamilynetwork.org.uk	01568 614908	Marches Family Network is unique in providing high quality, inclusive short breaks (respite) and other services for families of children and young people who have a wide range of additional needs across Herefordshire and South Shropshire.	Herefordshire and shropshire. Marches Family Network, 11 Corn Square, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8YP
Me and You project	<a href="http://albrightontrust.org.uk/meandyou/">http://albrightontrust.org.uk/meandyou/</a>	Stephen Jimson	stephen@albrightontrust.org.uk	01902 372 441	project aimed at young people between the ages of 15 to 25 with a physical disability, special need, learning difficulty, behavioural disorder or debilitating illness. The "Me & You" programme is an opportunity for these young people to discover new interests and learn new skills by engaging in positive outdoor activities in a 'green-blue' environment	The Albrighton Trust, Blue House Lane, Albrighton, Nr Wolverhampton WV7 3FL
PACC	<a href="http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-council-shropshire-pacc">http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-council-shropshire-pacc</a>	Sarah Thomas	s.e.t@btinternet.com		Parents and Carers council	Shrewsbury
Shrewsbury Mencap	<a href="http://www.shrewsbury Mencap.org.uk/what-we-offer/the-monday-disco/">http://www.shrewsbury Mencap.org.uk/what-we-offer/the-monday-disco/</a>		info@shrewsbury Mencap.org.uk	01743 358698	evening social activities for teenagers and adults with a learning disability thus helping them to discover new opportunities and make new friends. We are affiliated to National Mencap giving access to information and advice nationwide. We also run a day centre on a Wednesday	Mencap Centre, Albert Road, Sentinel Gardens, Shrewsbury, SY1 4HY
Shrewsbury Town in the Community	<a href="https://www.shrewsburytowninthecommunity.com">https://www.shrewsburytowninthecommunity.com</a>		community@shrewsburytown.co.uk	01743 289177 ext 239	Shrewsbury Town In The Community provides a changing variety of sessions each Friday during term time at the Powerleague Stadium in Shrewsbury. A number of holiday club sessions are also offered during school holidays providing a longer session and the opportunity for the children and young people to try a bigger range of activities. Sessions are split into two groups to ensure that they are age appropriate.	STFC Powerleague, Greenhouse Meadow Stadium, Oteley Road, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ST
Shropshire Autonomy	<a href="http://www.shropshireautonomy.co.uk">http://www.shropshireautonomy.co.uk</a>				Young people and adults with HFA or Asperger's. Social outings and pub get togethers	
Shropshire Council Care Crew	<a href="https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/looked-after-children/care-crew-council/">https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/looked-after-children/care-crew-council/</a>	Jo Rocke	jo.rocke@shropshire.gov.uk	(01939) 290026	The Care Crew Council is a small group of young people currently being supported by social services. The aim of the group is to help make sure services and support for looked-after children actually work for those children	Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury
Shropshire deaf children's society	<a href="http://www.sdcs.org.uk/events">http://www.sdcs.org.uk/events</a>	Ian Barrett	Chair@sdcs4shropshire.com	44 7999 000 028	Families, friends and carers - there are meetings for secondary aged children/young people, website is difficult to navigate!	
Shropshire youth association	<a href="http://www.sya.org.uk">http://www.sya.org.uk</a>	Richard Parkes, Di or Kerry	richard@sya.org.uk, di@sya.org.uk, Kerry@sya.org.uk	01743 254687	Oversee lots of groups - run a youth group for people with SEND. Our trips and visits are designed for young people who are looking to access provision independent of parents and carers to develop social skills, build confidence and raise self-esteem in a fun, friendly environment.	Upton Ln, Shrewsbury ,SY2 5RR

Smile	<a href="http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directory/Smile">http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directory/Smile</a> (this link doesn't currently contain any information)	Jo Cox	jo.m.cox@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 250948	6.30 until 8.30pm. Young People with Learning difficulties aged 10 to 18	<b>Tuesday</b> - Monkmoor Lodge Youth Centre, Upton Lane, Shrewsbury SY2 5RR <b>Wednesday</b> - Ludlow Youth Centre, Lower Galeford, Ludlow SY8 1RT
Smile Plus	<a href="http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directory/Smile">http://www.sja.org.uk/Club-Directory/Smile</a> (this link doesn't currently contain any information)	Jo Cox	jo.m.cox@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 250948	Wednesday, 7 until 9pm. Young People aged 18+ with Learning difficulties	Monkmoor Lodge Youth Centre, Upton Lane, Shrewsbury SY2 5RR
Taking Part - Children and young people's advocacy, information and advice	<a href="https://www.takingpart.co.uk/children-and-young-people">https://www.takingpart.co.uk/children-and-young-people</a>	Julie Mellor	julie.mellor@takingpart.co.uk	01743 363399		Taking Part, Louise House, Shrewsbury, SY3 9JN
Taking Part - Moving and Grooving	<a href="https://www.takingpart.co.uk/children-and-young-people">https://www.takingpart.co.uk/children-and-young-people</a>	Julie Mellor	julie.mellor@takingpart.co.uk	01743 363399	Taking Part has a project called Moving and Grooving, as part of the 'All In' Short Breaks activities.	Taking Part, Louise House, Shrewsbury, SY3 9JN
The big time club	<a href="http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/?id/event.page?id=6Vzd7Te968&amp;familychannel=322">http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/?id/event.page?id=6Vzd7Te968&amp;familychannel=322</a>	Jo Cox	jo.m.cox@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 250948	Friday 7 until 9pm. Young people with Disabilities aged 10 to 25	Grange Youth Centre, Mount Pleasant Rd, Shrewsbury SY1 3SW
The Who Group	<a href="http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/?id/event.page?id=xDlU-WQMs&amp;familychannel=322">http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/?id/event.page?id=xDlU-WQMs&amp;familychannel=322</a>	Jo Cox	jo.m.cox@shropshire.gov.uk	01743 250948	Wednesdays 6pm till 8pm - Term Time Only. Youth group for young people aged 11-18 years with a varied range of additional learning needs who are wishing to access services independent of parents and carers. Offering a social opportunity for those attending and a potential short break for those caring for these young people.	Bridgnorth Youth Centre, Innage Lane, Bridgnorth WV16 4HS
Tickwood care farm	<a href="http://tickwoodcarefarm.org">http://tickwoodcarefarm.org</a>	Edward and Anna Dugdale	shine@tickwood.co.uk	01952 882394	7 different forest school/bushcraft sites, walled kitchen and Sensory gardens, commercial standard kitchen, Log cabin, Zip wire(wheelchair friendly), rope bridge, moving platform and low ropes all in the woods, 1km of woodland walk, wheelchair accessible, fossils, river frontage (even an island in the river Severn), stream, crayfish ponds, fruit pressing room. There can access to the sheep flock at lambing or shearing etc or working with the Pedigree Herefords.	Tickwood Care Farm Much Wenlock Shropshire TF13 6NZ
Whizz kids	<a href="http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/get-our-help/young-people/ambassador-clubs">http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/get-our-help/young-people/ambassador-clubs</a>	Suzie Oktemgil	s.oktemgil@whizz-kidz.org.uk	07788 435 149	The Whizz-Kidz Ambassador Club in Shrewsbury is for young wheelchair/power chair users aged eight to 25, they meet on a Saturday, once a month	Usually Shrewsbury
Wylwoods	<a href="http://wylwoods.co.uk/attending/">http://wylwoods.co.uk/attending/</a>	Steph Brett	steph.brett@wylwoods.co.uk	01952 884224, 07816 113539	It aims to achieve this by offering unique opportunities in arts and craft, horticulture, cooking, rural skills and other activities to those for whom mainstream education does not provide suitable stimulus	Dean Corner Farmhouse Willey, Broseley, Shropshire TF12 5JH
Young Health Champions	<a href="http://www.sja.org.uk/shropshire-young-health-champions">http://www.sja.org.uk/shropshire-young-health-champions</a>	Amanda Hollinshead	amanda@sja.org.uk	01952 567402	Focus on health in Shropshire, an inclusive groups which is a mix of CYP with and without SEND.	St. chads Church Hall, Shrewsbury. Also working across Shropshire
		Oswestry		01691 661722	Supported employment/travel training	Adult Social Care, Shropshire Council, Victoria Centre, Victoria Road, Oswestry, SY11 2HT

# Appendix 1 | Engagement Toolkit

## Shropshire's Toolkit for Engagement of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

### Purpose of this Toolkit

This document has been created to support the engagement of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Shropshire. The aim of this is to ensure the views of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are heard, both in their immediate circle of support, and by the local area. This will enable the views of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to influence area planning and strategy.

### How to use the Toolkit

This Toolkit includes activities that have been successfully used to gather the views of children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities. It is intended to provide an inspiration, however you will know what will work best with the children and young people that you work with. So please try your own methods or adapt the ones in this toolkit to suit the needs of the children and young people you work with.

Tailor activities to participants communication preferences, and consider what participants would usually be doing when you plan to do an engagement activity. For example if participants would usually be doing an art activity, where possible, try to use an art based activity to explore their views.

### Ensuring children and young people's views are heard by the local area

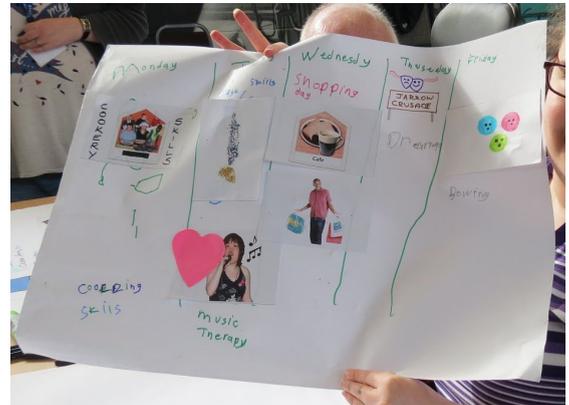
To enable the views of children and young people to influence decision making in the local area there will be topics that the local area will request that you explore. It is recognised that services working directly with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are best placed to gather their views.

For all of the activities the final step is to send the views of children and young people to the local area. At this time it is requested that you send the outcomes (photographs of what children and young people produce, notes from discussion, videos, etc) to Gerry Dean ([Garry.Dean@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Garry.Dean@shropshire.gov.uk))

## 'Week in the Life' poster

### What you will need:

- Large paper (flip chart paper, sketch pad paper, anything A3 or larger)
- Pictures - these can be from magazines, photos of the participant doing different activities, or images from a photo or symbol set that the participant is familiar with.
- Coloured pens
- Glue sticks
- Stickers that can be used to show if something is good or bad, for example smiley and sad faces or hearts.



### Who it works well for:

This activity can work well with anyone who can indicate a choice between two images. It works well as a group or 1:1 activity.

### Instructions

#### Step 1.

Explain that we are going to create a poster of a typical day/week in our life. Provide a selection of magazines and activity cards which show a different activities (e.g. studying, working, watching TV, going online, meeting friends, different hobbies such as art, sports, shopping)

#### Step 2.

Ask each participant to pick out all of the activities that they do in a typical day/week. There should be blank cards available as well and facilitators should probe on activities that are missing, and support participants to draw these or choose an image from a magazine.

#### Step 3.

After everyone's typical activities have been selected, ask participants to stick their cards onto a timeline to show what they do at different times of day.

*Extension activity questions:*

- What specific services and support are you currently using? How are you using these things and what is your experience?
- Where do you do different activities? (e.g. at home, at a day service, out in the community?)
- Who do you do these activities with? (e.g. family, friends, peer supporters, paid support workers)
- Do you get a choice in the activities that you do? (e.g. if chose watching TV, do you do it because you want or do you have to? Do you get to choose what you watch?)

#### Step 4.

Explore what people like doing. Use stickers to identify participants favorite activities on their posters

At the end photograph participants with their posters (with consent).

*Extension activity questions:*

- What is your favourite part of the day / week and why? (Stick dots / hearts on fave parts)
- What support do you need to do the things you enjoy the most?
- What stops you doing the things you enjoy the most?

## Mini mes

### What you will need:

- Paper
- Blank little people (available at Poundland or Tiger)
- Coloured pens
- Glue sticks
- Stickers
- Coloured card/paper to use for making clothes
- Magazines



### Who it works well for:

This activity can work well with anyone who can indicate a choice between two images. It works well as a group or 1:1 activity.

### Instructions

#### Step 1.

Participants make mini versions of themselves by personalising a blank mini me.

#### Step 2.

Participants stick their mini me onto a piece of paper and decorate it to show their ambitions. This can be done with drawings or with collage using magazines. This can vary depending on the aim of the task, for example where participants would like to live, what jobs they would like to do, who they would like to live with, etc. It can be a combination of all of these things, and more.

Possible questions:

- Where would you like to live and with who?
- What would you do? (For work? For fun?)
- What support would you have?
- What kinds of things enable you to live a good life (what relationships / activities / occupations / services / support)?

Extension or alternative activity:

#### Step 3.

Participants use mini me templates to create a character. The character needs to be from Shropshire, this is the only restriction.

#### Step 4.

Create a dream life for this character by sticking it onto paper and decorating around it with drawing or collage to show what life this character would have - where would they live, what would they do in it's free time, what work or study would they do?

## Peer to peer filming

### What you will need:

Recording devices, for example iPads.

### Who it works well for:



This activity can work well with participants who are familiar with technology and are comfortable being filmed. It can work with participants who are less familiar with technology, with support. This activity works best for exploring topics that can be shown rather than just talked about. For example how participants use technology, participants views on the location or venue they are in (eg school or college).

### Instructions

#### Step 1.

Explain that participants are going to be researchers for the session, their task is to find out what their peers think about the set topic.

#### Step 2.

Ask participants to work in groups of two or three and film each other giving their views, and showing what they are talking about.

#### Step 3.

Watch the films as a group, unless participants are not comfortable doing this. Discuss whether there are any themes or trends, or whether there are lots of varied views.

#### Step 4.

For students who agree to share their films with the local authority, ensure the films are saved to a location the facilitator can access. After the session send the films to the Gerry Dean.

#### *Extension activity:*

Edit the films together to create one film that compiles the views of all the children and young people involved.

## Prompt Cards

### What you will need:

- A selection of images about a range of topics.
- Collages created from these images - these can be physical or digital and then shown on a screen or whiteboard.

### Who it works well for:

This activity can work well with participants who have methods for communicating their views (whether that is verbally, signed, or using a form of communication aid). This activity works well in small groups or on a 1:1 basis.



### Instructions

#### Step 1.

Create the prompt cards before the session. Create one card for each topic you plan to discuss. Examples of topics include:

- Fun
- Education
- Work
- Home
- Relationships

#### Step 2.

Introduce the first topic, allow participants to view and discuss the images on the board, then prompt participants to explore how the topic relates to their own lives - for example if the topic is 'fun' discuss what participants do for fun. Note responses either onto the board or separately.

#### Step 3.

If you have more than one topic complete the activity with each one in turn.

Extension activity

#### Step 4.

Use the cards to explore what people would like to do in the future. For example if you are discussing 'home' after talking about where participants currently live and who they live with, discuss where they would like to live in the future and who with.

# Soap Operas

## What you will need:

- A range of magazines
- Large paper or a paper table cloth that can be drawn on
- Glue sticks
- Coloured pens

## Who it works well for:

This activity can work well with participants who have methods for communicating their views (whether that is verbally, signed, or using a form of communication aid). This activity works well in groups. It is helpful if participants are familiar with soap operas.



## Instructions

### Step 1.

Explain to the group that they will be creating their own soap, ask if they watch any soaps currently. Ask the group to create a soap (like Eastenders, Hollyoaks, etc) but it must have people with special educational needs and disabilities in it, and it is set in Shropshire.

### Step 2.

The groups need to create characters for their soap (using images from the magazines, or drawing), and come up with a name for their soap.

### Step 3.

Groups then create a plot for their soap, drawing, writing, sticking, onto the large paper or table cloth. Ask questions about character and plot as this is done.

*Extension activity:*

### Step 4.

Add in a topic (related to the local areas current topic request), for example 'your soap has to include people traveling on a bus' or 'your soap needs to have people doing jobs in it'.

When sending outputs for this activity to Gerry, you may need to provide some explanatory notes or notes about discussions that took place whilst the activity was completed, alongside photographs of the outputs.

## Appendix 3 | Draft agreement for services

Shropshire Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are given the opportunity to have their views heard at a strategic level.

As a local authority we recognise that participation is embedded in existing services on a day to day basis. However, to enable children and young people to have a voice at a strategic level, their views on specific topics must be shared with the local authority, with their consent.

As a service in Shropshire working with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, we are asking you to commit to ensuring that children and young people's views are heard.

We (Shropshire Council) will periodically request that you (insert service name) offer the children and young people using your service the opportunity to engage in an activity to explore their views or ideas about a specific topic. We will provide you with a toolkit of possible activities, however we recognised that you as a service are best placed to decide on most meaningful way for the children and young people you work with to participate.

The outcomes from these activities can be captured in the format that works best for the children and young people who choose to participate, for example photos, videos, artwork, writing, or notes taken during a discussion. These outcomes, or photographs of them, should be promptly sent to (insert contact person at local authority here).

We will provide you with feedback on what influence the children and young people's views and ideas have had, and of any decisions that have been made as a result. We request that you then feed this back to the children and young people using your service in the format which is most appropriate for them.