

**Report for:** Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

**Item number:**

**Title:** **Voice of the Child Guidance**

**Report**

**authorised by :** Ann Graham, Director, Children's Services

**Lead Officer:** Sarah Pike, Principal Social Worker,  
sarah.pike@haringey.gov.uk

**Ward(s) affected:** NA

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

The Voice of the Child Guidance for practitioners in CYPS is presented to Members of CPAC for information so they can be assured of the focus of this issue for staff.

**2. Background information**

- 2.1 Children's Social Care has a legal duty to listen to the wishes and feelings of all children, including children in care. This is outlined in the landmark Children Act of 1989, which established this requirement as a 'paramount principle'. All subsequent legislation and practice guidance has sought to reinforce this message as a key aspect of social care provision.
- 2.2 Children and young people have a right to be heard. This is reinforced in the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (1989) which states that it is a child's right to be heard and to have their views considered regarding decisions that affects them.
- 2.3 Children's views are integral to evidence-informed social work and practitioner's practice. Respecting a child's experiences is also fundamental to the values of effective social work. The Voice of the Child is a general term used to express how we go about creating meaningful engagement with our children and young people, ensuring that they are at the heart of everything we do.
- 2.4 Day to day direct work should focus on listening to and responding to what children and young people say is important to them, take their views into account and consider their wishes.
- 2.5 This Practice Guidance has been written to assist practitioners in capturing the child's voice by ensuring that it is placed at the heart of any planning, decision-making, and service delivery.

- 2.6 It also aims to improve the quality of decisions being made by professionals in their day-to-day work, resulting in improved outcomes along with the better use of resources and greater consistency across the service.
- 2.7 Children and Young People's Services must demonstrate that they listen to children and young people, both in relation to their own individual circumstances, as detailed in this guidance, and in terms of influencing the design and delivery of services. A separate paper will be shared on the Council's plan to promote the Rights and Participation of children and young people in Haringey.

### **3 Contribution to strategic outcomes**

- Borough Plan 2019-2022
- People Priority: A Haringey where strong families, strong networks and strong communities nurture all residents to live well and achieve their potential

### **4 Use of Appendices**

Voice of the Child Guidance

### **5 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Children Act 1989