HAMPSHIRE SEND Youth Forum

SEND PARTICIPATION GUIDE



Hampshire County Council

NHS

Office for Health Improvement & Disparities

HAMPSHIRE PARENT CARER

Hampshire SENDIASS

WHATS IN THIS GUIDE



01 **Introduction**

We explain who we are, what this guide is for and how it can be used

02 **SEND Participation**

What is participation and how does it link to Hampshire County Council SEND Participation strategy

03 **Participation Models**

These models explain how you can do participation really well and how to make it meaningful

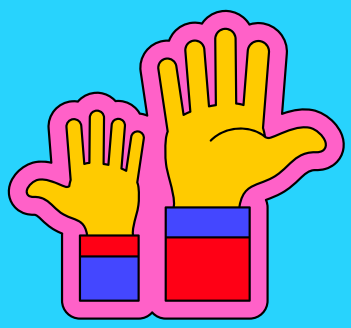
04 **Good and Bad Practice examples**

Young people shared examples of what they think makes good and bad participation

05 **Tips and Resources**

We share some ideas on how you can do participation including real life examples the young people have been involved in

WELCOME



What is this guide for?

This guide has been co-produced with young people from the Hampshire SEND Youth Forum to support meaningful participation across services that engage with children and young people with SEND.

It is designed to help children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) understand how they can have a say, and how adults and organisations can support them to do so.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for:

- Practitioners and professionals working in education, health, social care, and youth services.
- Decision-makers and leaders who want to embed youth voice and co-production into their work.

Participation means more than just being asked for your views—it's about being listened to, involved in decisions, and having the power to shape the services that affect your life.

SEND PARTICIPATION



What is Particpation?

Participation means having a voice and being actively involved in decisions that affect your life. For children and young people with SEND, it's about being listened to, respected, and included—not just in conversations, but in shaping services, policies, and communities.

Participation can look different for everyone. It might be:

- Sharing your views in a youth forum
- Giving feedback through a poll or survey
- Helping design a new service or resource
- Being part of a consultation or working group

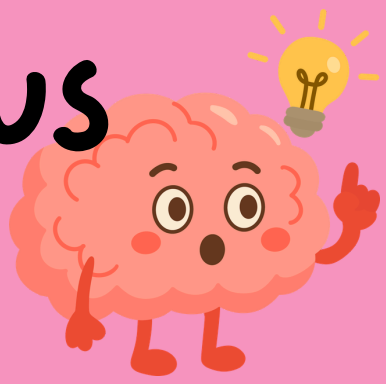
How does this guide support the SEND Participation Strategy?

This guide helps bring the Hampshire SEND Participation Strategy to life by:

- Showing how participation can happen in practice.
- Providing tools, tips, and examples to professionals to support inclusive engagement.
- Reinforcing the values of co-production, accessibility, and empowerment.
- Helping everyone understand their role in creating a culture where young people's voices are heard and acted upon.

It's not just about being asked it's about being heard and seeing your ideas lead to real change.

MODELS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND PARTICIPATION



Young people in the SEND Youth Forum highlighted two models that help explain participation:

The Lundy Model
This model focuses on four key elements:

1. **SPACE**
creating safe, inclusive environments for young people to express themselves.

2. **VOICE**
supporting young people to share their views.

3. **AUDIENCE**
ensuring the right people are listening.

4. **INFLUENCE**
making sure young people's views make a difference.

Hart's Ladder of Participation

This shows different levels of involvement, from being informed to leading decisions. It helps organisations reflect on how they engage with young people and how to move towards more meaningful co-production.



Young people initiated and shared decisions with adults

- Young people led activities where decision making is shared between them and adults as equal partners

Young people initiated and directed

- Young people led activities with little input from adults

Adult initiated shared decisions with young people

- Adult led activity where young people are consulted and informed about how their input with be used and the outcomes of adult desicions

Consulted and informed

- Adult led activity where young people are consulted and informed about how their input with be used and the outcomes of adult desicions

Assigned but informed

- Adult led activities in where young people understand the purpose, decision making and have a role

Tokenism

- Adult led activities where young people may be consulted with minimal opportunity for feedback

Decoration

- Adult led activities where young people understand the purpose but have no input into how they are planned..

Manipulation

- Adult led activities where young people are directed without understanding the purpose for the activities

WHY PARTICIPATION MATTERS



Participation isn't just a nice idea it's a right. United Nation Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12 guarantees every child the right to express their views freely in all matter affecting them, and to have those views considered and taken seriously. When young people with SEND are involved in shaping services, it leads to better outcomes, stronger communities, and more inclusive decision-making.

What young people told us

Through the SEND Youth Forum, young people shared examples of what makes participation meaningful—and what doesn't:

✅ Good Practice

- The Big Conversation: A space where young people felt heard and valued, with fun elements like freebies to encourage engagement.
- Trusted Adults: Having someone familiar present during discussions helps build confidence.
- Time and Space: Not feeling rushed, having private rooms and being given information in advance all help reduce anxiety.

❌ Poor Practice

- Feeling Rushed: In schools, young people often felt they didn't have enough time to share their views.
- Lack of Introductions: When professionals didn't introduce themselves, it felt impersonal and intimidating.
- No Follow-Through: Promises made without action can damage trust.

WHAT CAN MAKE PARTICIPATION BETTER?



Young people suggested practical ways to improve participation experiences:

- Policies that are followed through
- Clear routines and advance notice of changes
- Polls and feedback tools
- Introductory sessions to build trust
- Understanding accessibility needs in advance

Participation works best when it's consistent, respectful, and tailored to individual needs. This guide aims to help everyone involved understand how to make that happen.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



There are lots of ways for young people with SEND to get involved and have their voices heard. Whether you want to share your views, help shape services, or connect with others, there's a place for you.

For Practitioners and Professionals

You can:

- Promote opportunities for young people to participate.
- Create safe, inclusive spaces for youth voice.
- Use tools like polls, feedback forms, and introductory sessions to support engagement.
- Share updates and celebrate young people's contributions.
- Invite young people to be part of decisions about operational delivery (e.g. visits, activities, uses of funding)

For Decision-Makers

You can:

- Invite young people into spaces where decisions are made.
- Create accessible opportunities for them to be part of consultations and working groups early in the planning processes.
- Use the Lundy model and Hart's Ladder of Participation to guide your approach.
- Ensure feedback leads to action—and let young people know how their input made a difference.

TIPS FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION



Creating spaces where young people with SEND feel safe, heard, and empowered takes thoughtful planning. Here are some practical tools and tips many of which were suggested directly by young people in the SEND Youth Forum to help make participation inclusive and impactful.

1 INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS

- Help young people feel prepared and confident before participating.
- Include introductions, expectations, and accessibility support.

2 POLLS & SURVEYS



- Quick and easy ways to gather feedback.
- Can be anonymous to help young people feel more comfortable sharing honest views.

3 TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS & FACILITATORS



- Give space and time: Avoid rushing conversations. Let young people process and respond at their own pace.
- Think about the space you use: Create safe environments for sharing.
- Involve trusted adults: Their presence can help young people feel more secure.
- Share information in advance: Especially when routines or settings are changing.
- Know accessibility needs: Ask ahead and adapt your approach accordingly.
- Follow through: If you promise action, make sure it happens and let young people know how their input made a difference.

RESOURCES



The following resources have been developed and used by Hampshire SEND Youth Forum. Young people have told us they find them helpful in engaging them in participation opportunities and would like to share with you.

Please feel free to use / adapt these resources in your own participation activities.

Resource one - Session plan

Young people have told us knowing information in advance such as who will be running the event, information on the venue or the room can ease a lot of anxiety. We share these with the young people before each forum, workshop etc.

Resource Two - Icebreaker

Icebreakers can be a great way to get the group talking and feeling more comfortable. The group size will depend on the type of icebreaker, for bigger groups human bingo is great. It is important to be aware of who is attending your session and what they can take part in so pre session registration is a great place to ask these types of questions.

Other icebreaker ideas

Resource one - Session plan

Workshop info

Who will be at the workshop?

Made up name

Made up name

Getting Here

Address: EII Court West, The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UG



From Winchester Train Station

From Winchester train station:

- Head right down Station Road
- Take a left down Newburgh Street
- Take a right down Sussex Street
- After a few minutes you will arrive at EII Building



By Bus

Closest bus stop:

- Westgate (Stop PA)

By Car

- Pay and Display car park in Tower Street - including disabled spaces

*Please note, Tower Street can be expensive to park in for long periods, there are other carparks in Winchester but may involve a walk to get to EII

Plan for the workshop

- Meet *Made up name* in reception at 4pm
- If you are running late or need help finding us call/ text
- **Agenda for workshop:**
    - Introductions
    - Icebreakers
    - Activity
    - Food

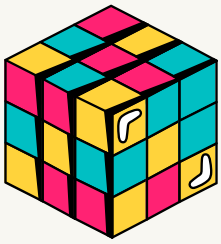
We will be in the Mitchell Room which will look like this:



If you have any questions please email: madeupemail@info.com

Resource Two - Icebreaker

Human BINGO

 HAS A TATTOO	 HAS A DOG	 CAN DRIVE
 SPEAKS MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE	 CURRENTLY DOING EXAMS	 HAS A SIBLING
 WON AN AWARD	 LIKES SUSHI	 LIKES RUNNING
 CAN SING	 HAS MET SOMEONE FAMOUSE	 CAN COMPLETE A RUBIX CUBE

THANK YOU



This Participation Guide has been created in partnership with the Local Area Partnership Board and the young people from the SEND Youth Forum.

A huge thank you to all the young people who shared their experiences, ideas, and honest feedback. Your voices have shaped this guide and ensured it reflects what meaningful inclusion should look like.

To find out more about the Hampshire SEND Youth Forum and their work, please visit: 👉 Hampshire SEND Youth Forum

We also want to thank the Local Area Partnership Board for their collaboration, support, and commitment to improving participation across the local area.

To find out more about the Partnership Board and their work, please visit: 👉 Local Area Partnership Board

Together, we are creating spaces where every young person feels heard, valued, and able to take part.

If you have any questions you can reach out via haveyoursay@hants.gov.uk

Hampshire County Council NHS Office for Health Improvement & Disparities HAMPSHIRE PARENT CARER Hampshire SENDIASS

Evaluation



So we can monitor the impact of the resources Hampshire SEND Youth create we would be really grateful if you could answer a few questions on how useful you have found the resource.

Your responses will be used by Hampshire SEND Youth Forum when developing future resources and will share feedback on the impact of the resource with the Local Area Partnership Board.

SCAN HERE TO TAKE PART IN OUR EVALUATION.

OR ALTERNASTIVY CLICK THE LINK TO TAKE PART 👉 EVALUTATION

Wordsearch

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Words:

- Youth Voice
- Survey
- Inclusion
- Forum
- SEND
- Co-Production
- Participation
- Respect
- Equality

