

Improving children and young people's involvement in social work

This scenario was developed to support learners to consider what a children's human rights approach might look like in practice.

The social work service in a local authority is looking to improve involvement from children and young people at all stages of their interaction with their service.

The social work leadership team:

- Gathered feedback they had received from children, young people, and families about their service. They considered what changes had been made as a result of feedback, and what was still to be actioned.
- Considered the best way for children and young people to be able to give input at all stages of their interaction with social work.
- Used a Child Rights Impact Assessment to ensure all aspects of children's rights were considered when implementing the agreed changes.
- Updated policies and procedures to include: quickly informing children and young people about any changes to their situation; supporting consistent relationships between children and young people and their social workers; actively involving children and young people in decision making; and improving how information is recorded, with consideration for children and young people's feelings when reading about themselves.
- Worked with a specialist third sector partner to consider how their communications needed to be adapted to suit children and young people at different ages and developmental stages.
- Developed a variety of new materials with information about their processes, procedures, and data collection. This included images, documents translating legal concepts into simple words, and community language versions.
- Ran dedicated staff training focused on active listening and how to minimise power imbalances. Training included paying close attention to what children and young people communicate through body language and working in playful and creative ways. It also covered how to check if a child or young person has understood information and how to confirm that workers have correctly understood what children and young people are saying to them.
- Ensured a clear feedback mechanism was in place that was accessible to children, young people and their families, and confirmed feedback was responded to promptly with clear explanations or actions.
- Evaluated the success of these changes using a Child Rights Impact Evaluation and made changes as necessary to ensure they were achieving their desired outcomes.

Reflection questions

Are there ways that children and young people's views could be taken into account in your decisions?

Are children and young people able to give feedback on your service?

