

**“State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with age and maturity of the child.”**

*Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*

# **Birth - 25 Integrated Service/Collaboration SEND Youth Participation Strategy**

For disabled children and young people and those  
with special educational needs  
(Birth - 25 years old)

**Initial Strategy: 2016 - 2017**

Version 2



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# SEND Vision

## Our Vision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our vision is that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Bristol are given the best possible help towards a healthy, independent and fulfilling life. Working in partnership across organisational boundaries and with families, we identify, support and empower those who need it most.

Our strategic priorities are:

- One:** To improve outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND
- Two:** Preparing for Adulthood
- Three:** Person Centred Planning
- Four:** A seamless Multi Agency Offer

Developing the voices of disabled children and young people, and those with special educational needs, is part of our SEND Improvement and Development Plan. We want young people with special educational needs and disabilities to have a greater influence on the development of the services they use. We want to enhance the current youth participation landscape by resourcing and supporting young people and services to work together. Ultimately we want disabled young people and those with special educational needs to feel empowered to voice their aspirations and needs and to know they are respected and valued.

We believe developing young people's voices is an active process. We do not intend for this document to be static. We want this strategy to develop with Bristol's young people's direction so that they can take full ownership of it and ensure they are shaping services to meet their needs.

**SEND Partnership Board**

# Current context

In Bristol young people with SEND are currently being encouraged to feedback their views directly to the services they work with. There are pockets of participation work for disabled young people those with special educational needs and or disabilities. Some of the participation work is well embedded within services and some services work effectively in engaging with young people in developing their services for example Bristol Royal Hospital for Children's Youth Council and Bristol City Council's Youth Council. Other services are looking to develop their participation systems to ensure their young people are participating at a strategic level.

Part of the **SEND Improvement and Development plan** looks at youth participation and this document links to the 4th development point.

<b>4</b>	<b>Collaboration with children and young with SEND and their families.</b>
4.3	Develop and implement a strategy to improve the voice of the child across
4.4	In partnership with other agencies, including WECIL and Barnados, develop a young people's engagement process that feeds into the 0 - 25 Reference and Steering Groups to capture their experience of the EHC plan process.

Having a strategy will enable us to monitor our progress in capturing children and young people's voices and allow us to ensure others, including the Birth - 25 Reference and Steering Groups, are able to see what steps are being taken to develop the voices of children, young people in Bristol. This strategy supports Bristol in meeting its statutory requirements under the Children and Families Act 2014.

# The dream...

Young people take ownership of developments they want to see happening in Bristol. They tell services what they want to see and take charge of plans and developments. They tell services how they want to organise themselves and are resourced to do that. They are included within strategic decision making, in a way that suits them, and their views and opinions carry weight.

Young people are able to challenge services when they feel they aren't being included or their needs aren't being met. They are able to promote what they feel they need to be able to meet their aspirations and services value and respond to these. Young people feel positive about being able to find employment, live independently, have good health, be part of their community and reach their potential

Young people in Bristol are confident to express their views on the services they use. They know of a variety of ways to participate and services have developed inviting, innovative ways to encourage them to do this. They have opportunities to do this individually and collectively and know that they can do this for any service they use.

# Strategic objective

To empower, resource and support disabled children and young people (Birth – 25) and those with Special Educational Needs to participate in the strategic decision making of SEND services, including the Birth – 25 Integrated Service/ Collaboration.

## Scope of the strategy

**This strategy looks at children and young people from birth to 25 years old.**

We acknowledge that that will include exploring different transition points for children and young people. For example:

- From Early Years into School
- From School into employment, Further Education or social care provision
- In and out of hospital
- Out of children's services and into adult services.

By addressing a wide age range, which we take from the Children and Families Act, we aim for children and young people to be able to express their views of transitions.

**This strategy is for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs.**

We define disabled children and young people as those who have a significant impairment or special educational need. Currently this group of young people is under represented within Bristol's participation groups and we have set out a strategy that looks to address this inequality.

**Children and young people are listened to.**

We appreciate the importance of making sure children and young people's views and aspirations are listened to for services and process that effect their lives. We want to make sure services are developed to meet their needs and aspirations and that they are involved in processes that support them reaching these aspirations.

**We will work in partnership.**

At the heart of this strategy is partnership working. We acknowledge that for any

SEND Youth Participation Strategy to work we need to work across the services and organisations that support disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs.

### **An active and accessible definition of participation.**

We are constantly developing our understanding of good what participation is and the best ways of supporting children and young people to take up opportunities and to make more accessible opportunities (*See our What Is Participation poster*)

### **Opportunities to participate individually and collectively.**

We want to make sure children and young people have opportunities to feedback individually their views on the services they use. We also believe it is empowering when young people have the opportunity to gather collectively to support each other and express themselves in a collective voice.

# Developments to meet the strategic objective

## **The voice of individual children and young people.**

We are working to improve the voice of children and young people in process like Education, Health and Care plans and Child In Need assessments. This is being done through the SEND Improvement and Development plan.

One of the key developments to support this is WIKIs, personalised, private websites that young people and families own, Wikis supports them to collect and share their information from one place and can support young people in advocating their views, needs and aspirations. Wikis provide young people with a way to self-advocate or to advocate with support.

*For more information on WIKIs see [www.rixresearchandmedia.org](http://www.rixresearchandmedia.org)*

## **Supporting services to led child and young person's participation**

We want to support services in developing their skills to support the participation of children and young people in their services. To do this we are using 'AIM for the Stars', Bristol's accessibility, inclusion and participation self-evaluation framework. By assessing where services are in their current level of participation services will be supported to develop their understanding and ability to support participation through the Preparing for Adulthood Network and Bristol's Local Offer Network.

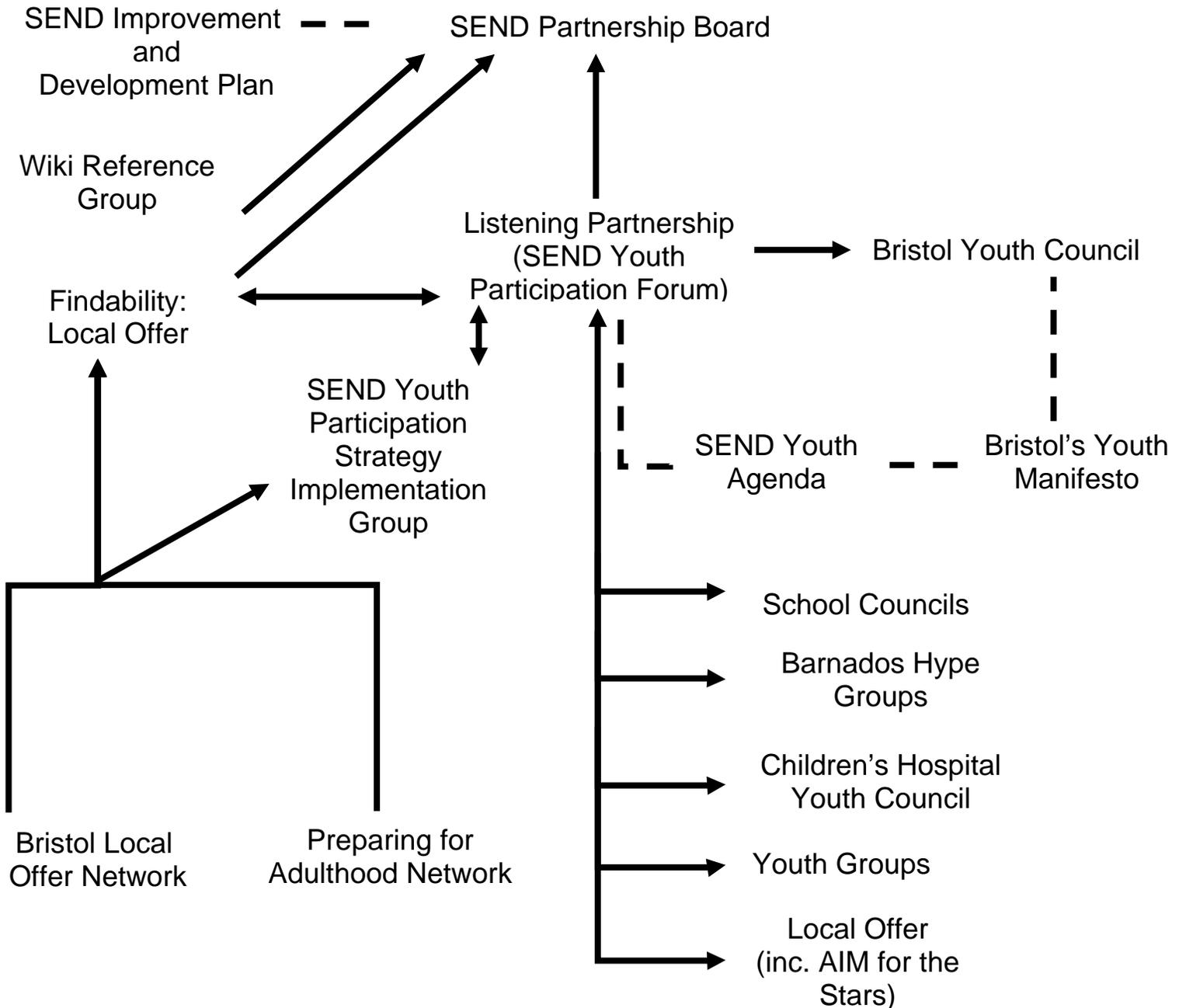
*For more information see [AIM for the Stars Full Framework](#).*

## **Preparing for Adulthood Action Plan**

We recognize the importance of building young people's capacity to voice their views on the services they use. We will be working to further develop the Listening Partnership, Bristol SEND Youth Participation Forum and working in partnership with other organisations to improve the ability for young people with SEND to take up participation opportunities.

*For more information see [Preparing for Adulthood Action Plan \(SEND Youth Participation\)](#).*

# Governance of the Strategy



**SEND Youth Participation Strategy Implementation Group:** This group will monitor the effectiveness of the strategy and review ways to improve it. See *SEND Youth Participation Strategy Implementation Group*.

**Bristol Local Offer Network:** This is a quarterly meeting to engage services and providers with Bristol's Local Offer and support the development of their understanding of participation.

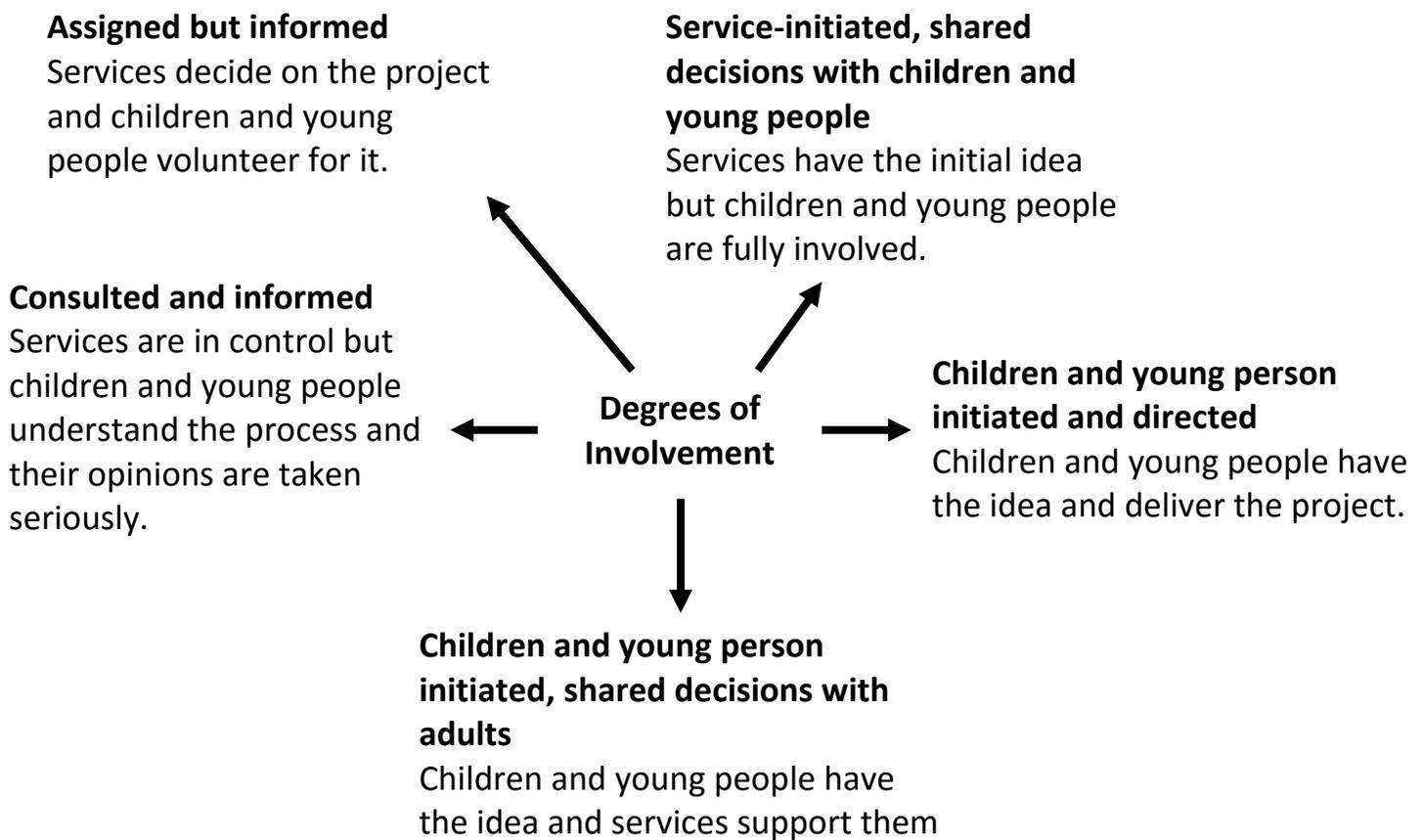
**Preparing for Adulthood Network:** This is a quarterly meeting to engage services and providers with Bristol's Local Offer and support the development of their understanding of participation, with a focus on those who work directly with those aged 14 – 25.

**Wiki Reference Group:** This group monitors the development, implementation and roll out of Wikis.

# Different ways of participating

Disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs will have different ways that they will want to participate in the development of services. We want to offer opportunities that appreciate the different ways young people might like to be involved in voicing their views, aspirations and needs. To look at the different ways of involving children and young people we have created a SEND Youth Participation Strategy Involvement Model.

## SEND Youth Participation Strategy Involvement Model



*Adapted from: Empowering children & young people training manual: promoting involvement in decision making (Save the Children). Phil Treseder, 1997.*

To achieve any of these degrees of involvement it is important that:

1. Clear, accessible information is provided that is suitable for the children and young people being involved.
2. A clear pathway for involving children and young people is developed, including thinking about the necessary resourcing to provide an equal access for different SEND groups.

# Reviewing the Strategy

This is an initial strategy. It will be stand for one year when it will be reviewed to see what the next steps for the strategy are. The review should take place by June 2017.

## **Related Documents:**

SEND Improvement and Development Plan

Preparing for Adulthood Action Plan (SEND Participation Strategy)

SEND Youth Participation Strategy Implementation Group

AIM for the Stars Full Framework

What is Participation? Poster

Version 2	19 May 2016	Nakita Singh	Changes following wider consultation
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