

Change is a key indicator of impact.

Ask children and young people what positive impact and change looks like for them.

Some types of impact may appear more difficult to measure. Understanding and tracking impact is part of an ongoing journey.

Children and young people have great ideas about *increasing their safety*.

By closely working with them, you can **improve the effectiveness** of your *protective and supportive actions*.

'If you don't listen to us, you won't get it right for us.'

PARTICIPATION is PROTECTIVE

'...Being treated as a competent person, equal to my youth worker, is important for building a strong, lasting relationship.'

It is **essential** to listen to the voices of *widely diverse children and young people*, throughout **all** participation activity.

'If I feel heard and respected then I feel more accepted and not judged...'



University of Bedfordshire

research in practice

The Children's Society

"IF YOU DON'T LISTEN TO US, YOU WON'T GET IT RIGHT FOR US."

Youth Voice in Strategic Change

<https://www.tce.researchinpractice/org.uk/>

Once you hear it, you **must** act on it.

'Don't put me in a box and conclude that all my issues are like any other young person's.'

'I think the big thing is actually taking on what we say, take it to heart and listen. Then do something about it and feed that back to us...'

Learn from others and work together to build a participation plan; include approaches that make the most of all the work going on in your area.

'...Just because we've got less life experience doesn't mean that our feelings or our thoughts are any less valid.'

Investing time and resources to develop *meaningful* children and young people's participation could *transform practice and organisational culture*.

There will be some quick wins, and other *significant ones that emerge over time*.

'Give us a chance to express what we want, but also be patient enough to give us the time to think about what we want as well...'

'...Not everybody knows straightaway what they want or how you could help them. You need to be patient.'

'Talk to more people, ask more widely and also [be] more targeted, like youth-led groups and care homes...'

'...Develop relationships with people who support young people in those places and take their lead on how best to engage and encourage participation.'

Real action **must** follow, otherwise participation activity becomes **tokenistic and performative** and can undermine children and young people's trust.

