



The voice of children,
young people and families
www.rcpch.ac.uk/and_us

RCPCH Guidance

**For chairs, committee
members and staff:**

Involving children, young people
and family voice in committees

March 2018

**Educate. Collaborate.
Engage. Change.**

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Introduction

The voices of children, young people and their families play a key role in influencing our work and help us to achieve standards for the best quality in paediatric care. Having a clear and supportive mechanism in place will enable the best possible opportunity for children, young people and parents/carers to join committees and be actively involved in representing the views of children, young people and their families.

This resource booklet will give you a shared understanding and agreement for best practice when involving children, young people and their families in your committees, including what is needed in order to have a meaningful experience as a lay representative.

This report has been directly informed by staff and RCPCH &Us Committee Representatives themselves.

“Parent/carers and young people provide a vital grounding and reality check, often understanding how things are “working” in reality rather than in policies”

RCPCH &Us parent/carer representative

Before you get started

Key themes

- Accessibility and flexibility
- Clarity of purpose
- Having a clearly defined engagement model
- Support

Key messages

One size does not fit all. Every child, young person and parent/carer is different and may need different support, materials or preferences to confidently share their voice.

- **Right people** – who do you need to hear from? Children? Young people? Parents/carers? Siblings? A particular experience, condition or background?
- **Right place** – where is the best environment to find out what children, young people and family’s views are? Could you meet children and young people in their setting, on their terms and share their voice with your committee?
- **Right time** – children, young people and families have multiple commitments to juggle including their voluntary role with your committee. To maximise lay voice within your committee, could you meet in school holidays, twilight sessions or at weekends to avoid them having to miss school, college or work?
- **Right model** – could a new approach create a more meaningful and relevant way to have voice in your committee that makes a difference? Maybe an RCPCH &Us project or running a challenge day rather than having a traditional lay representative?

A committee specific engagement plan is needed; development will be fully supported by the RCPCH CYP Engagement Team.

Initial points to consider for your committee

1. Why do we want the voice of children, young people and/or families?
2. How will it make a difference?
3. What topics, themes or demographics do we need to hear from?
4. How will we make it accessible?
5. How will we ensure it is meaningful, relevant and proportionate in terms of scope and remit?

Lay representatives in committees

Strategic voice

- RCPCH &Us Voice Bank reports on consultation responses collated by the RCPCH CYP Engagement team
- Representation at meetings either through:
 - lay representative roles
 - standing agenda items with visiting children, young people and parent/carer groups
 - virtual conversations through video calls or pre-records
 - staff advocacy

Operational voice

- RCPCH &Us Challenges – capsule one day projects on a theme selected by the committee with a group of children, young people, parent/carers, delivered by the RCPCH CYP Engagement Team
- RCPCH &Us Roadshows – consultations across the UK on themes or topics selected by the committee, delivered by the RCPCH CYP Engagement Team
- Project bids & development of specific output and outcome related areas of work

Individual voice

- Audience focused materials for members to use with children, young people, parents/carers they have regular contact with through their settings eg postcard consultations
- Capturing experiences, stories and narratives from individuals on relevant topics to be shared to inform on experience

The RCPCH CYP Engagement team are available to advise and support on bespoke committee engagement plans and have a range of resources, support and materials available to guide this development at:

www.rcpch.ac.uk/andus-participation

www.rcpch.ac.uk/and-us-resources

Case studies

Case study 1: The Infants, Children and Young People's Engagement Committee model

The ICYP Engagement Committee was established in December 2016 to provide overview and scrutiny on voice, engagement and participation of ICYP for the College. The Committee is chaired by the Registrar who has children and young people's voice within their portfolio, and was designed with engagement in mind, modelling a different approach for RCPCH committees.

Membership

- Three young people
- Three parent/carers
- Two voluntary sector representatives (UK wide charities with strong engagement programmes)
- Four paediatricians

There are a visiting group of children and/or young people at every meeting to bring fresh service user experience and to act as a critical friend to the Engagement Committee, preventing voice institutionalisation.

Meeting style: The ICYP Engagement Committee is a four-hour meeting on a weekend, delivered in a workshop style. The meeting is facilitated rather than chaired, all agenda items are turned into a range of games or group work activities, with the focus on creating opportunities to **educate, collaborate, engage and change**.

The meeting retains the traditional papers of any RCPCH committee: having an agenda, meeting actions log, meeting notes and a well-developed committee work plan. Committee members are supported to access these through plain English, use of visual reminders from workshop activities and one to one support where needed.

Visiting groups are provided with a 'who's who' for each meeting, with photos and short biographies of each member, following a request from our first visiting youth group from Central Bedfordshire Youth Voice. They are also sent a short briefing pack which explains how the Engagement Committee works and the topics that will be discussed, with an invite to present about their project and experiences.

Lunch is also provided in a different way, with no catered lunch, opting for a community share approach where a range of picnic items such as bread, cheese, salad, cold meats, yoghurts, and fruits are ordered in so that Committee members get involved in making their own sandwiches. This helps people to talk at lunch as they pass the butter or cheese, rather than pick up a catered sandwich and retreat to their mobile phone to check messages. It also supports attendees to have food that they choose and that they like – ensuring children and young people are comfortable with what they are eating following feedback that catered sandwiches "are too posh".

ICYP Engagement Committee evaluation feedback

What did you like about the Engagement Committee meeting?

- "The meeting was very interactive"
- "I enjoyed the interactive activities combined with group discussions. We managed to get a lot of things discussed and decided and the format was a good way to collaborate"
- "Everyone seemed more relaxed and friendly, possibly because it was the third meeting. We seemed to get through a tremendous amount of stuff just by being well led and focused. Loved the branding multiple choice activity which really got us thinking about branding as a concept"

- “It was fast paced with a range of activities! It was a real honour to help decide which posters would be put up at conference. I also enjoy making my lunch”
- “Meeting new people brilliant people brilliant ideas”.
- “That there are diverse ages, backgrounds, motivations within the ICYP Engagement Committee with acceptance and awareness that everyone is learning about this agenda and that we are not all experts”
- “It’s a small team so we get to know each other well through the meeting style being interactive and workshop based”
- “Flexible meeting times to facilitate attendance including half terms, weekends, drop in sessions”
- “Good balance of talking, thinking, planning, doing, delivering, achieving”
- “Visiting groups helps us to be open, transparent, give equal access, act as a role model and have people able to observe us”
- “It still feels like a committee – we have an agenda, action log, minutes, work plan but we try to be creative, having group discussions and varying the style of the meeting and activities and jargon free”
- “It feels that there is a strong sense of feeding into, influencing college work eg through the conference proposal for the CYP Team for 2018, developing the 2017 conference engagement session, engagement poster reviewing in 2017, developing the voice and choice action pack for the 21st Birthday, involving children and young people in meetings as visitors”
- “There is a momentum – it’s not just talking we are achieving and it is enjoyable and fun!”

Contact

Chair: RCPCH Registrar, Dr Mike Linney

Facilitator: RCPCH CYP Engagement Team Manager, Emma Sparrow

Email: and_us@rcpch.ac.uk

Case study 2: Voice through the RCPCH &Us programme

The RCPCH &Us programme provides voice reports, challenges and projects in development with Committee chairs, RCPCH staff and voice advocates.

RCPCH &Us voice bank report

Provided to committees capturing key comments, ideas, challenges and solutions from children and young people through consultation activity led by the RCPCH CYP Engagement team. Committees can put a request in for a report via and_us@rcpch.ac.uk based on themes that relate to their committee work plan.

Examples

- Voice Bank reports presented to the Emergency Standards Committee (2017)
- Facing the Future Programme Board (2017)
- Health Promotions Committee (2017)

RCPCH &Us challenges

Working with the RCPCH CYP Engagement team, committees can commission a challenge day, where a five-hour capsule project is developed, delivered and evaluated by the RCPCH CYP Engagement Team on a topic, theme or question identified by the committee. Between five and 15 children, young people or family members will take part, identifying views and comments on key themes, solutions and developing products or messages to be shared with the committee.

Examples

- Scottish Executive challenge day on State of Child Health recommendations (2017)
- Trainee Committee PAFTA challenge day (2017)
- SAFE Programme Board Blackpool challenge day (2016)

RCPCH &Us projects

Development of a long-term project approach to support a key theme, programme or target for the committee, working with children and young people directly. Commissioned through the RCPCH CYP Engagement team, projects will be developed and delivered following RCPCH guidance on safe working practices with children and young people by engagement experts.

Examples

- Facing the Future Programme Board young inspector's project (2017)
- START Programme Board young assessor's project (2016, 2017).

Case study 3: Having a lay representative on your committee

To provide the best experience for children, young people and family Committee Members, members of the RCPCH &Us committee review advisory group and the ICYP Engagement Committee developed the following checklists to support you on your journey. This is not an exhaustive list but a guide for consideration.

Clarity of the role

“Be as clear as possible as to what successful engagement with lay representatives looks like. Is it being involved in decisions? Is it sharing experiences?”

RCPCH &Us committee review advisory group member

Checklist

- Why do you want to have a lay representative and what impact will their involvement have?
- What are the benefits of having a lay representative on your committee?
- How many lay representatives do you need?
- Who are they representing? Do they need to report back to anyone?
- What are your expectations of a lay representative? Eg time commitment, knowledge, responsibility, actions, outputs
- What incentives, rewards are you able to offer?

Pre- recruitment

- Is your committee open to a lay representative shadowing a meeting?

Recruitment

- How will you find your lay representative?
- Have you completed a role profile?
- How will you advertise and promote the opportunity?
- What recruitment process will you use – expression of interest? Phone interview?

Need more advice?

- Have you consulted with the RCPCH CYP Engagement Team?

Induction and support

“Lay representatives need training in the work of the committee and the functioning of the organisation. They need a named member of staff as a point of contact and source of information.”

RCPCH member, committee chair

Checklist

Before the first meeting

Have you:

- arranged a meeting (in person or telephone call) for the lay representative and the chair to discuss the priorities and committee work plan?
- explained how the committee runs, style, how to speak in committees? Eg do you raise your hand to the committee chair?
- considered where would be the best place for the lay representative to sit? It can help to sit opposite the chair, so it is easy to see if they want to speak
- created a jargon buster sheet with key terms or acronyms for your committee or area of work?
- created and share a committee information pack? For example, a 'who's who' and an outline of the committee's role and purpose
- provided a general introduction to the College work?
- shared practical information about how to get to the meeting or teleconference details?
- identified the single point of contact for the lay representative for any questions, advice or catch ups? Have you informed the lay representative?
- ensured you have name tags/labels available at the meeting (and flags for those dialling in to sit by the phone) to help lay representative remember who is who and what their role is?
- do you have special arrangements in place for someone with a disability? Eg physical sensory, emotional, hidden
- is there potential to pair the lay representative with a member?
- pre-booked any travel and accommodation where possible so that there is no need for an expense claim (this maybe a reason why they may not be able to attend if they must cover expenses up front)
- completed a risk assessment and gathered consent details? Remember, the RCPCH CYP Engagement Team has a template)
- pre-ordered petty cash with finance? We recommend organising this one week in advance of the meeting.

First meeting

Have you:

- formally introduced the lay representative to the committee?
- scheduled a catch up before and after the first meeting?
- provided printed papers with any plain English summaries needed? Remember, not everyone has a printer or a tablet to use in meetings
- checked their buddy is present and have a backup in place?
- refunded any petty cash claims?

Post meeting debrief

Have you:

- asked the lay representative how they found their first meeting?
- checked if the lay representative has any questions about meeting?
- checked if there is anything they have not understood and need clarification on?
- checked if they have any expenses to claim?

Accessibility

“Doodle polls which include a spread across evenings, weekends and day time, term time and holidays. (eg it’s sometimes better for parent/carers if their CYP are at school, but better for CYP if it’s out of school hours or term time).”

RCPCH &Us committee review advisory group member

Checklist

- Have you created a glossary of jargon/acronyms?
- Are your papers and discussions in plain English?
- Are your papers available in various formats? Eg large font, pictures, non-white background, braille to account for different needs
- Are your meeting times accessible to those who have child care needs? Are in education or full time employment?

Examples of lay representation on committees/programme boards

- Epilepsy Programme Board
- Ethics and Law Committee
- ICYP Engagement Committee
- I Can, We Can Advisory Programme Board
- RCPCH Board of Trustees

Top tips

Lay representatives in committees

- ✓ Lay representatives must have printed copies of the agenda and minutes available at the meeting.
- ✓ Lay representatives must feel their input is always meaningful and they are supported.
- ✓ Travel cost and related expenses to all meetings must be provided. Check if on the day cash is needed to reimburse for expenses (can be arranged in advance with the RCPCH Finance team).
- ✓ Financial rewards or incentives need to be agreed in advance (not a requirement but expectation or provision needs to be clear).
- ✓ As part of their induction, introduce lay representatives to key staff/committee members.
- ✓ Committee chairs should prioritise the views of lay representatives (not be put off by other members perspectives).
- ✓ Create a standing agenda item for lay representatives and ask them to contribute to the agenda.
- ✓ More information about current members with their professional backgrounds would also be helpful in familiarising lay representatives with the committee members. Eg the 'who's who' example from the ICYP Engagement Committee.
- ✓ Spend some of the meetings in small groups or pairs.
- ✓ Virtual attendance (with working equipment) or actual attendance – needs to be well thought out to make sure lay representatives feel they are fully involved. Eg if virtual, the lay representative could prepare a briefing paper with their views which is either read out at the committee meeting or presented verbally if they are there in person.

Further resources available at:

www.rcpch.ac.uk/andus-participation

Acknowledgements

The RCPCH Children and Young People's Engagement Team would like to thank all the RCPCH &Us Committee Members past and present for their time, interest and commitment.

In November 2016, the Children and Young People's Engagement Team launched a review of the scope and involvement of children, young people and families in College committees as part of the RCPCH &Us innovators programme. College staff, officers, committee chairs, RCPCH &Us members and existing RCPCH &Us supported Committee Members were encouraged to share their views and ideas.

Engagement activities

- RCPCH CYP Engagement Team scoping with RCPCH &Us Committee Members (Nov 2016 – Feb 2017)
- Online survey (Feb - Mar2017)
- RCPCH &Us Committee Members review meeting (Apr 2017)
- ICYP Engagement Committee Review (Apr - Sep 2017)
- RCPCH CYP Engagement Team observations (ongoing)

In summary, 49 people took part in the review at various stages.

In particular, we would like to thank everyone who completed our survey, our RCPCH &Us Committee Review Advisory Group members *Kate Quail, Joan O'Kane, Rachael Lewis* and *Carrie Lumsden* and all of the members of the *RCPCH Infants, Children and Young People's (ICYP) Engagement Committee* for guiding us towards this final product.

To find out more

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