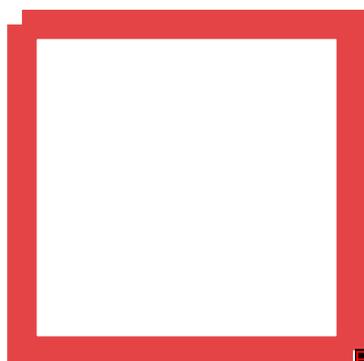


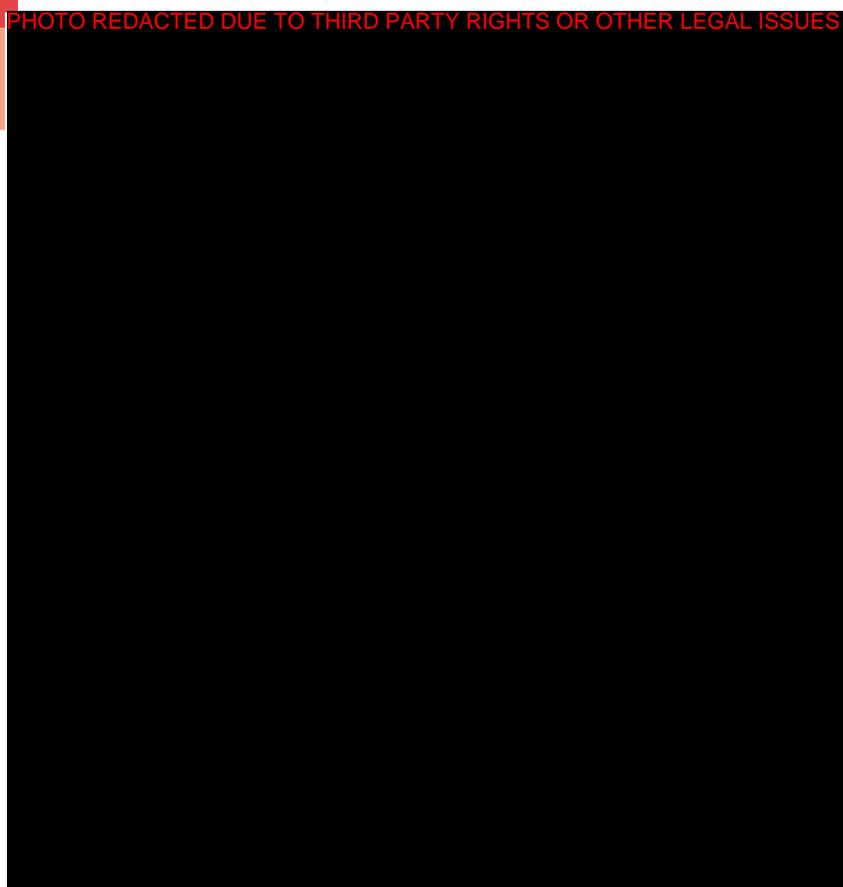
# Listening to Learn



An Action Plan for the  
Involvement of Children  
and Young People

June 2002

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*"Why do you decide things without us?"*

*"Mums and Dads and us should have a say in how the school is run."*

*"Children should have a say in what we learn. I'm not saying we should get to choose how it's exactly run, but we should have a say and at least give our opinion."*

*"If we plan our future we might do better than you think we would."*

*"We know we are here to learn and not have a party."*

*"Teachers think we want to have fun all the time, but we want to learn as well. But we want to have a choice in what we learn."*

*"I think it's good we get to see how they make decisions about our education because we just follow the rules but we don't know who makes them .... I think it's good we get to say what we think."*

*"I think that school students should get their say on almost everything."*

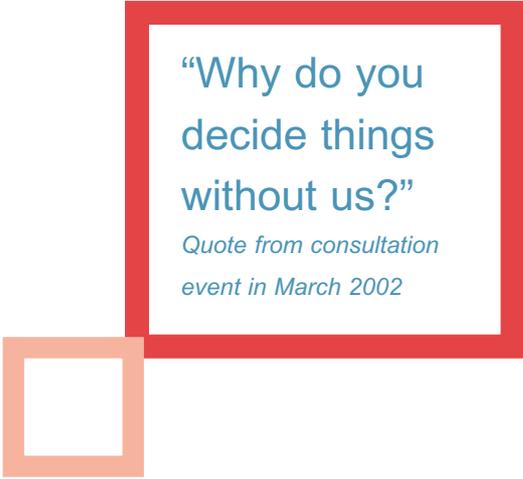
*"I think they should let us know when they are going to do things."*

*"... these are the people who decide what we learn and it's nice to have the connection. Now we can ask them questions. It's been really good."*

Quotes from consultation events in March 2002 and from the Department's Open Day for Children and Young People on 20 May 2002

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“Why do you  
decide things  
without us?”

*Quote from consultation  
event in March 2002*

# 1 Our Vision

## 1.1 WHY INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IS IMPORTANT TO US

As John Denham, Minister for Young People, said in his foreword to *Learning to Listen*<sup>1</sup>, Ministers across departments are committed to giving children and young people a real say and real choices about the government policies and services that affect them. This action plan reinforces the commitment of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to taking forward the core principles (set out in Appendix 1) on involving children and young people in its policies and services.

In March 2002 the government published *Reforming our public services*<sup>2</sup> which stressed the need to rebuild public services around the needs

of their customers. Understanding and responding to our customers is a critical part of this Department's approach and children and young people are very clearly key customers.

Our drive to increase the involvement of children and young people in the development of our policies and services is set firmly within the Department's overall strategic framework for the period to 2006. The Department has put children and young people at the heart of its strategy *Delivering Results*<sup>3</sup>. The action plan on participation will cover the same four years from 2002-3 as that covered by *Delivering Results*.

Involving children and young people makes a direct contribution to meeting

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<sup>1</sup> Children and Young People's Unit (2001) *Learning to Listen: core principles for the involvement of children and young people*. Available on the CYPU website [www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/downloads/LearningtoListen2.pdf](http://www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/downloads/LearningtoListen2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Office of Public Services Reform (2002), *Reforming our public services: principles into practice*. Available on OPSR website [www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page470.asp](http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page470.asp)

<sup>3</sup> Education and Skills (2001), *Delivering Results: A Strategy to 2006*. Available on the DfES website [www.dfes.gov.uk/delivering-results](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/delivering-results)

the Department's objectives. The three main benefits of participation identified in *Learning to Listen* are especially relevant to this Department:

- helping us to deliver better services to children and young people.

We want children and young people to have better life chances and we achieve that through raising the standards in all phases of learning from early education to 14-19, including making services more responsive to children and young people, their parents and communities.

- contributing to improved social inclusion and reduced poverty.

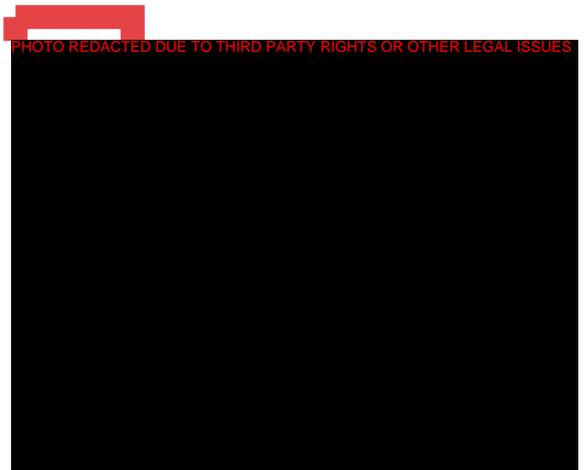
We want all children and young people, including the hardest to reach and those facing disadvantage and inequality, to get excellent services and to involve

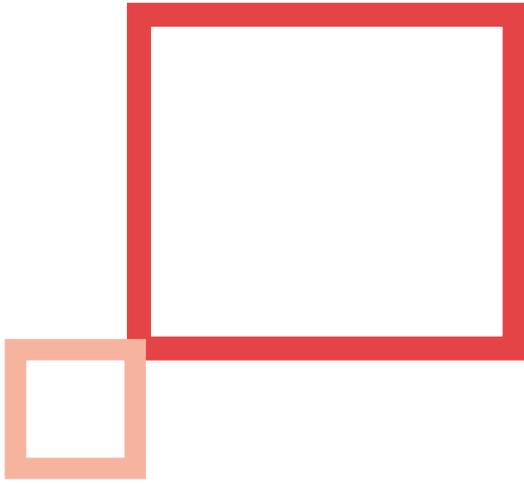
them in the development of those services.

- and promoting children's personal and social education and development.

Participation is in itself a valuable learning process which contributes to the development of personal and social skills and active citizenship. The introduction of citizenship education to schools, for example, will provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and action in their schools and communities.

We are committed to consulting and involving children and young people across our activities. We already have examples of successful practice within the Department upon which we are building. We are applying the principles





of participation to key current policy areas such as follow-up to the Schools White Paper<sup>4</sup> and the consultation paper on 14-19 learning<sup>5</sup>. In this action plan we identify what further action we propose to take.

We can only be successful if we are prepared to learn from those national and local organisations (including children's charities, youth services and schools) which support the involvement of children and young people. We do not want to re-invent the wheel but to work closely with those organisations and disseminate their experience and the lessons learnt widely within the Department and its agencies, identifying in particular what approaches are most effective.

This is a rolling programme. We will develop and refine our longer term plans in the light of early experience. We will report progress at least annually. Our vision is for a department which is

young-person friendly and accessible, responsive to their needs and aspirations, and renowned throughout government for leading change in this area. Over the course of the next four years we would like to move to a position where we have embedded participation in the culture of the Department and put clear standards in place for participation activity. As steps towards that goal we will share case studies and evidence of successful approaches.

## 1.2 PRACTISING WHAT WE PREACH

The Department is directly involving children and young people in the development and implementation of the plans set out in this report; and we will consult children and young people on the evaluation of progress against those plans.

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<sup>4</sup> *Schools - Achieving Success*, DfES (2001). Available on [www.dfes.gov.uk/achievinguccess](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/achievinguccess).

<sup>5</sup> *14-19: extending opportunities, raising standards*, DfES (2002). Available on [www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19greenpaper](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19greenpaper).

As part of the preparation of this action plan we asked the National Children's Bureau (NCB) to consult groups of children and young people, using as a

focus for the discussions some recent policy initiatives including the 14-19 consultation document.

### GOVERNMENT GETTING ITS MESSAGE ACROSS

Young people were asked how they would like the government to improve its communications with them.

One group said that, if the government sent out information in as many forms as possible, there would be more chances that everyone would see it. The internet is a popular form of communication; however, it is not accessible to everyone so using books, magazines, leaflets and posters would be helpful.

They wanted a glossy presentation and lots of colours. All methods of dissemination should use pictures and quotes from young people and more activities showing young people. *"Use caricatures; stupid as it sounds, it'll get people's attention and they'll have a look at it."*

Language was a key issue for the young people. One said about the language used by government *"it's quite hard to understand. So if you want young people to understand it, you've got to completely re-phrase it."* They commented that the language is too adult and that the government should get young people to simplify the words.

In terms of where to distribute documents, young people said *"send them anywhere there will be groups of people, like school, youth groups, anywhere."* They also recommended places *"where it can filter down, like Youth Councils and stuff, where you've got people who know what they are talking about. It must be something interesting."*

They emphasised that a consultation document should be something you can pick up without feeling that it had been rammed down your throat. They thought that having consultation documents in schools was a good idea but without teachers distributing them. Instead people who know about the subject should attend assemblies and talk about the issues. One suggestion was to have a travelling play where they hand out pamphlets at the end that are simple, with bullet points.

*Findings from consultation event with 13-18 year olds, March 2002*



We will involve young people, and those who work with them, to make our plans and opportunities for involvement widely available and accessible to children and young people, including through websites popular with them. We will consider producing audio versions of publications for those young people who are blind or partially-sighted. Each part of the Department will make arrangements in relation to their specific policy areas, working with expert organisations as appropriate.

We will also consider whether we should establish a DfES Advisory Forum of children and young people.

Some of the ways in which we expect to involve children and young people are identified in the table in Section 3. We will advertise opportunities to become involved through relevant websites (including the DfES website [www.dfes.gov.uk/youngpeople](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/youngpeople)), youth organisations, groups and councils, and other established networks. The contact point given at the end of this plan will

gather details of opportunities as they arise and you should get in touch if you wish to explore them.

### 1.3 THE EVIDENCE FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

We asked the NCB to carry out a review of the research literature on participation. The review is available on request (see contact at end of plan). Although focused primarily on schools it confirmed that the research in this country is patchy. We need to strengthen the evidence base for participation work but the potential is clearly there to do so. The research plans in 7.1 and the survey or evaluation elements of several of the proposals in Section 3 will help to realise that potential.

Although several research organisations conduct research on children and young people, it is not generally in the area of customer satisfaction — an important aspect of understanding and responding

to their needs. Furthermore, whilst there is considerable research evidence about the attitudes and expectations of teenagers, there is a distinct shortage of such information in relation to younger children and their experience of education in particular. However, the limited number of projects which have consulted younger pupils (for example, in school councils in primary and special schools) have been shown to be effective in addressing problems, raising attainment and attendance levels and improving teacher morale.

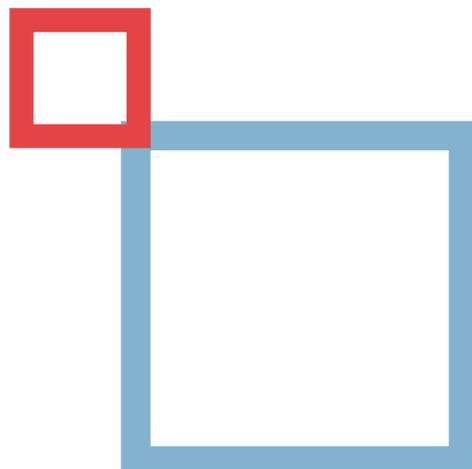
Where research projects have been undertaken they have generally been limited in scope or adopted a case study approach but they suggest that there could be a correlation between schools which take participation seriously and their performance. They support the view that there are important practical

and educational gains to be made by institutions which encourage their users to become actively involved in shaping their education; and that young people benefit by developing their citizenship skills.

In a review of the characteristics of effective schools carried out for Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) the authors note that:

*A common finding of effective schools research is that there can be quite substantial gains in effectiveness when the self-esteem of pupils is raised, when they have an active role in the life of the school, and when they are given a share of responsibility for their own learning'.<sup>6</sup>*

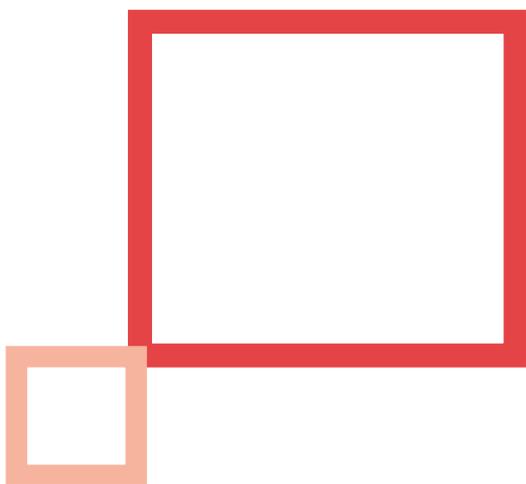
Compared with other European countries the research evidence is weak. One report<sup>7</sup> suggests that in



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<sup>6</sup> Sammons, P, Hillman, J and Mortimore, P 1995, *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: a review of school effectiveness research*

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Davies and Gordon Fitzpatrick, 2000, *The Euridem Project: a review of pupil democracy in Europe*



Denmark, Germany, Holland and Sweden children were encouraged to express their views, contribute to the life of their schools at every level, and to challenge those elements of school regimes and practice which were not working for them. As a result teacher-child relations and school environments were felt to be more positive, producing confident and articulate children who could participate effectively in wider democratic processes.

#### 1.4 SCOPE AND PARTNERSHIP

The Department's influence is potentially far-reaching. It is the government department which is responsible for education and training from cradle to grave, including early years, childcare, schools, colleges and workplace learning.

In addition to DfES, this plan covers Ofsted, the non-ministerial government department responsible for improving the quality and standards of education

and childcare through inspection and advice. The plan also covers the Sure Start Unit, which supports the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, and is located in the Department but operates across government.

We want to encourage and support participation in all the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), agencies and organisations which deliver our policies and services. Appendix 2 lists those organisations with whom we will work to implement this action plan.

While action at national and regional levels is important the local context is most immediately relevant to young people and we will progressively focus our attention on encouraging local services to be more accessible to young people and to engage them in service development and delivery.

There will be a major emphasis on schools. In doing so we will work with

local education authorities (LEAs), keeping in close touch with local authority Chief Executives and the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions. We will work with Government Office staff responsible for implementing DfES policies, including Children's Fund Regional Managers, whilst keeping the Cabinet Office Regional Co-ordination Unit informed.

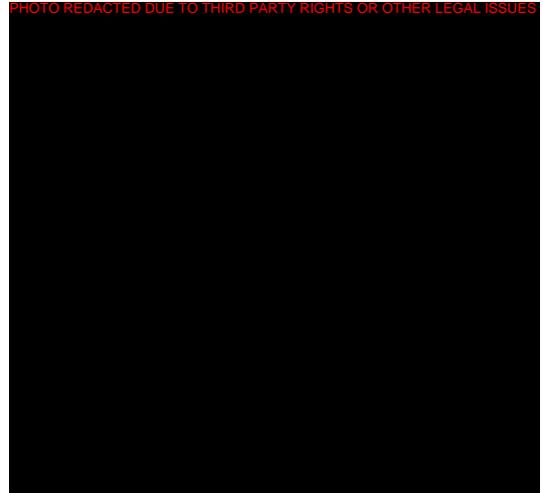
This is a wide remit and inevitably there are areas of mutual interest with other departments. Service Education, for example, is covered by the Ministry of Defence plan. The Department will work closely with other departments to ensure that there is a co-ordinated and concerted approach. We will work in partnership with the agencies and delivery organisations through which services are provided.

We place our plans not only within the context of the core principles but also within the broader Strategy<sup>8</sup> upon which the CYPU has recently consulted. We will draw on and contribute to CYPU initiatives, structures and resources, including:

- UK Youth Parliament
- Toolkits, websites and good practice databases
- Y Vote? Y Not? Programme on engaging young people in voting
- Framework for Monitoring Outcomes for Children and Young People
- Participation research project

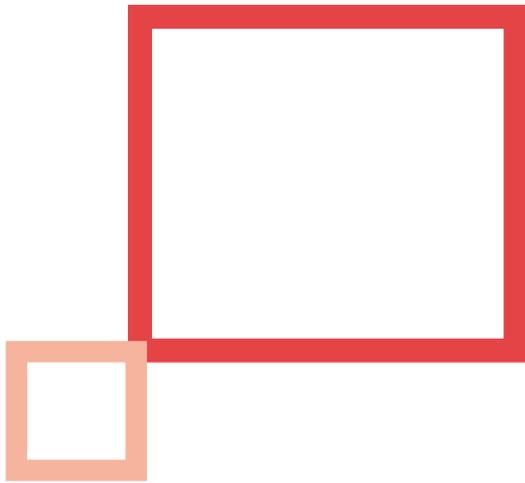
In particular we will explore how we can work with the Young People's Advisory Forum.

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<sup>8</sup> Children and Young People's Unit (2001), *Building a Strategy for Children and Young People*. Published on the CYPU website [www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/publications.cfm](http://www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/publications.cfm)



### **SELECTED RESPONSES TO THE CYPU CONSULTATION ON 'BUILDING A STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'**

There should be clearer information on how children can become involved (Somali children's event)

Let children have their say: introduce lifeskills in education. Provide safe fun places for young people to meet and enjoy themselves. Introduce systems to help overcome things that are troubling young people - relate to them, listen to their views (Kirstie, 17)

Children and young people need to be involved and their views considered about issues that relate to the local community (Rural children's event)

## 2 Our Priorities

### 2.1 OUR APPROACH

Although we have a foundation of good practice, it is not universal. We are embarking upon a systematic and long-term strategy to embed participation in all our thinking and activities.

We will ensure a balanced content for our plans by building on the achievements (set out in Appendix 3) which we have already made, as well as breaking new ground.

In determining our priorities we have taken into account the following factors:

- We must be realistic about our capacity to deliver whilst setting

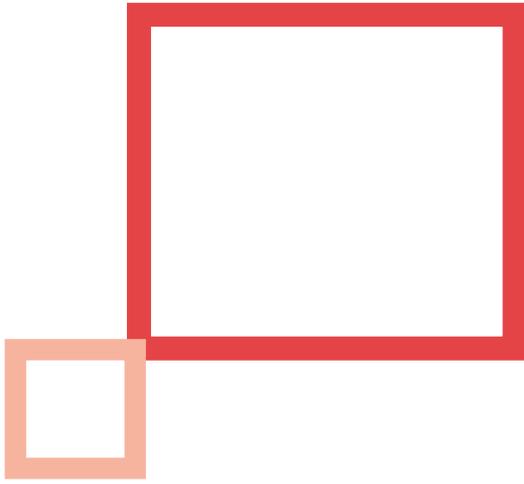
ambitious targets for sustained and incremental change over the longer term

- In particular we must heed the lessons of previous participation activity that it takes time to equip adults with the understanding, confidence and skills to engage effectively with children and young people
- The process of involving young people also takes time (usually more than anticipated) to win their trust; and to prepare, support, involve and feed back to them



“Mums and Dads and us should have a say in how the school is run.”

*Quote from consultation event in March 2002*



- The Department must not always set the agenda but actively seek and be open to the opinions of children and young people on what matters to them
- What is timely and important for the Department in terms of policy development
- How the work supports *Delivering Results* and its emphasis throughout on working with others and understanding our customers
- While we have to focus on priority areas we will continue to develop a common appreciation of active involvement in all parts of the Department

## 2.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Above all we must ensure that policies and services respond more closely to the needs of all children and young people. We will make a particular effort to secure and act upon the views of children and young people who are

hardest to reach; those with disabilities or special educational needs; those from Black and minority ethnic groups; and those in rural areas. We will work with organisations close to the interests of these groups.

## 2.3 PRIORITY AREAS

In the light of those factors the broad priorities for 2002-3 are set out below:

- We will develop existing work and plans (for example, taking forward the Connexions active engagement strategy and outcomes of the 14-19 consultation)
- We will work with schools and LEAs, and others including Ofsted, to develop statutory guidance on consulting pupils about decisions which affect them.
- We will pilot measures where appropriate so that we can learn from their evaluation before more widespread application. We will in addition enhance or learn from pilots

planned by others including 'pathfinders' on 14-19 learning and *Hear by Right*<sup>9</sup> pilots on involving young people in local democracy

- We will identify 'test-beds' to forge a close working relationship between schools and the Department as a basis for developing and sharing effective practice, within the context of wider partnerships including Connexions
- We will begin the process of building capacity in children and young people's participation through awareness-raising, training and development for Departmental staff and the provision of support and guidance (see Section 5 for more details)
- We will build up our information and evidence base through surveys and databases. We will identify the issues

which matter to children and young people

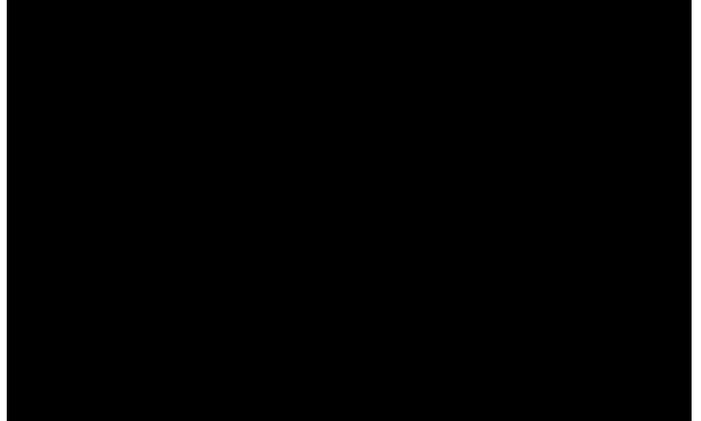
- We will begin the process of engaging NDPBs and agencies by influencing their planning cycles in particular but substantive action for most is unlikely to begin until 2003-4

#### BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR

It is too early to be specific about our plans beyond 2002-3 but we expect the emphasis to be on:

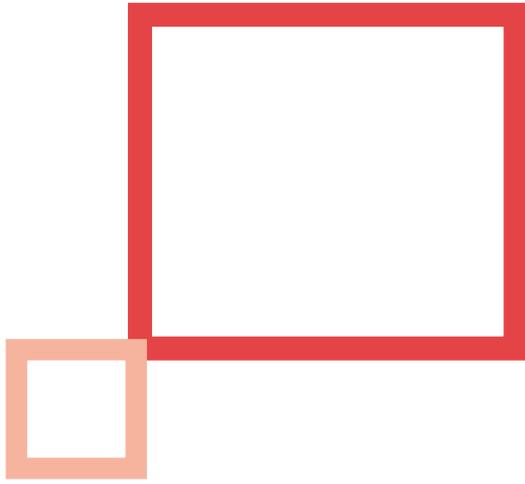
- applying lessons of pilots/extending pilots
- rolling out beyond the Department to NDPBs, agencies and service providers
- building on developments in schools including citizenship education, pupil

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<sup>9</sup> *Hear by Right: setting standards for the active involvement of young people in democracy*, National Youth Agency/Local Government Association (2001). Available on [www.nya.org.uk/download-PDF/hear%20by%20right.pdf](http://www.nya.org.uk/download-PDF/hear%20by%20right.pdf)



involvement in consultation and inspections

- refining and applying success and impact measures and quality standards to participation work

There will be continuing activity to involve children and young people on a wide range of fronts (by youth services for example) but detail on the specific plans for influencing policy developments in 2002-3 is given in Section 3. Proposals for capacity-building are set out in Section 5.

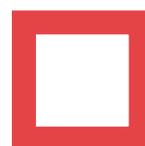
## PARTICIPATION AND RAISING STANDARDS: SUMMERBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL, STOKE-ON-TRENT

As part of the headteacher's policy of greater involvement of pupils, more responsibility was placed on the children, giving them a voice in the development of the school. A school council was elected, then an Eco council - a group of children and parents who encourage conservation and recycling and play an active role in improving the environment of the school. Librarians were elected to run a newly refurbished library and prefects chosen as positive role models for others. Circle Time led to all the children having an opportunity to shape development.

To enhance this change and success, a digital camera was purchased and the school converted into a mirror of positive self-images of children and teachers. Celebrations range from birthdays and courtesy awards to individual successes which the children bring to teachers' attention as a direct result of being more comfortable with sharing success.

Equality of opportunity thrives, from holding gym and dance clubs at 8am so that Muslim children can attend (the majority spend 4 - 7pm at the Mosque) to the creation of concept and language partners in class to enable all children the opportunity to overcome barriers and succeed. Parents are included in courses and training to promote the concept of family learning.

In January 2001 Ofsted recognised that the school (which was placed in Special Measures in 1996) had become an effective school where: *"the pupils' enthusiasm for school life, showing initiative, taking responsibility and the very good relationships within school all make a positive contribution to their learning."*



### 3 Our Plans for Involving Children and Young People in 2002-3

“Everybody should have the chance to learn in a place that suits them, with people that they can relate to and work they can cope with.” *Quote from consultation event in March 2002*

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the Department more accessible by               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– producing a ‘rough guide’ to the Department for children and young people</li> <li>– holding further open days for children and young people at the Department’s offices throughout the country</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Considering whether to set up a DfES Advisory Group of Children and Young People</li> </ul>	By March 2003	Understanding Our Customers	Design/write
		By March 2003		Consultation and communication
			By September 2002	Representation

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Family Learning:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>holding a Family Learning Weekend, an annual national event to encourage families to learn together, co-ordinated by the Campaign for Learning and supported by the Department.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	11-13 October 2002		<p>Many organisations — schools, libraries, employers, etc — will offer a wide range of fun, accessible ‘taster experiences’ for all the family to enjoy. The Department encourages its own families to get involved</p>
<b>EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Early Years and Childcare Unit, in conjunction with the Sure Start Unit, are               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commissioning the Institute of Education to undertake a review of listening to young children’s views and experiences of childcare and early years provision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2002	Sure Start; Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships; nurseries and pre-schools.	A wide variety of techniques will be employed including observation, talking to children individually, drawings, etc.

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<p>The study will produce examples of involving young children in the design, provision and evaluation of services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– consulting on Investors in Children (a proposed quality rating scheme for childcare providers) including taking the views of children about the quality of childcare services. The study will include a review of the existing literature on children's views of childcare.</li> <li>• The Partnership Awards Scheme run by the Daycare Trust on behalf of the Department will consider including a new award category 'consulting with</li> </ul>	<p>Spring 2002</p> <p>2002</p>		<p>Consultation</p> <p>Consultation</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<p>children' for the awards scheme this year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will consider children's views during the consultation on regulating over 7s providers.</li> </ul>			<p>Consultation</p>
<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will introduce statutory guidance to schools and LEAs on consulting pupils after consultation on the guidance.</li> <li>Launch' of citizenship education in schools and the development of related 'education with character' proposals</li> </ul>	<p>2002-03</p> <p>September 2002</p>	<p>Education Bill 2001</p> <p><i>Schools — Achieving Success</i></p>	<p>Consultation</p> <p>Involvement in development and delivery</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Educational Needs (SEN): involving children and young people in the development of SEN policy at school, local authority and national level</li> <li>Ethnic Minority Achievement — raising the achievement of Black and minority ethnic pupils including consulting young people.</li> </ul>	<p>From Autumn 2002: act upon recommendations from a report from Council for Disabled Children (CDC)</p> <p>Commission an external organisation to carry out a series of targeted focus groups seeking ethnic minority children's views of education. This qualitative study will complement the tracking study of the opinions and attitudes of children and young people (see 7.1).</p>	<p>SEN Code 2002 introduces new requirements for pupil participation in the planning and review process.</p> <p><i>Schools - Achieving Success</i> outlined the government's commitment to raise standards for ethnic minority pupils. The Department is developing a coherent national strategy for raising ethnic minority achievement.</p>	<p>Focus groups of young people to inform the report and a consultation seminar to consider emerging options for action.</p> <p>A series of focus groups involving young people from those ethnic groups known to be at risk of underachieving - Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean - at key stages in their school careers. All groups would be single sex.</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackling difficult behaviour: consult and work with 10-20 children and young people to gather views on how to deal with bullying, exclusions and support; and how to contribute to positive learning environments and schools' behaviour policies.</li> <li>Supporting schools facing 'extremely challenging circumstances': to survey pupil attitudes in schools participating in this project</li> </ul>	<p>During 2002 commission an external organisation to carry out the work</p> <p>Identify the schools and pupils</p> <p>Carry out consultation work</p> <p>Analysis of outcomes</p> <p>Feedback to young people</p> <p>Baseline survey undertaken in January 2002, reporting to project in July 2002.</p> <p>Interim survey in January 2003, reporting in July 2003.</p>	<p>Improving Behaviour Project</p> <p><i>Schools — Achieving Success</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-National Steering Group involving young people</li> <li>-Young people will lead the consultation work in each area</li> <li>-Focus Groups</li> <li>-IT including priority search'</li> <li>-Interviews and questionnaires</li> <li>-Art work</li> <li>-Drama workshops</li> <li>-'Circle time'</li> <li>-Video workshops</li> </ul> <p>Completion of questionnaires</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Workforce Unit: to establish a baseline of children's perceptions of their teachers and performance indicators that reflect what they think makes a good teacher and a good head teacher.</li> <li>Work Experience: develop new models of work experience where young people are involved in agreeing the nature of provision.</li> <li>Extended Schools: we will consult children and young people on draft guidance on setting up extended schools</li> </ul>	<p>By March 2003</p> <p>2002-3</p> <p>Spring 2002</p>	<p>Transforming the School Workforce Programme</p>	<p>Combination of survey and focus group work</p> <p>Consultation</p> <p>Consultation</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil Health and Safety: consulting children and young people on supplementary guidance on educational visits and in the triennial review of the Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme</li> <li>• Information and Communications Technology in schools: involving young people in taking forward the vision published in <i>Transforming The Way We Learn</i> (see Appendix 3)</li> </ul>	<p>May-June 2002</p> <p>2002</p>		<p>Through the UK Youth Parliament and discussion shows on Youth FM radio</p> <p>Involvement in development and delivery</p>
<b>OFSTED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofsted consultation on new draft Framework for inspection that has greater emphasis on seeking pupils' views about their school.</li> </ul>	<p>Pilots of ways of seeking pupil views in 2002 before implementation in September 2003</p>	<p>Increasing pupils' participation in inspection</p>	<p>Consultation through meetings, questionnaires and electronically</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More systematic collection of pupils' views</li> </ul>			
<b>CONNEXIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the active engagement of young people               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– guidance for Connexions Partnerships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>June 2002 — guidance on Youth Charters</p> <p>June 2002 — Training Young People in Governance Resource Pack</p> <p>Autumn 2002 — Guidance on incentives and rewards for young people's involvement</p>	Active Engagement of Young People Strategy	All types of involvement from design, development, delivery to quality assurance.

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
		<p>Spring 2003 — guidance on involving 'hard to reach' young people</p> <p>Spring 2003 — training package for young people on the recruitment/selection of staff</p> <p>December 2002</p> <p>26 June 2002</p> <p>March 2003</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– training workshops for national and regional officials</li> <li>– national conference</li> <li>– report on involvement of young people in Connexions</li> </ul>			

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– We will involve young people in piloting mystery shopping in a Connexions Partnership</li> <li>• Connexions Card: to encourage and motivate young people to continue in learning post-16</li> <li>• Millennium Volunteers (MV) will run two pilot schemes.</li> <li>– ‘Young Citizens’ will look at ways to involve 14 and 15 year olds in MV.</li> <li>– Active Citizens in Schools is aimed at 11 to 15 year olds (years 7-11) in 10 schools around England to help connect young people and their communities.</li> </ul>	<p>2002</p> <p>National launch in Autumn 2002 following regional roll-out</p> <p>Summer 2002 — Early 2003</p> <p>Preparatory work from October 2001. Finishes September 2004</p>	<p>Customer Focus</p> <p>Connexions Strategy</p>	<p>Peer research</p> <p>Evaluation and focus groups of young people</p> <p>Young people will be key members of the Steering Group now being established.</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<p>Young people's involvement in the development of the pilots will be a key feature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the Neighbourhood Support Fund we will pilot a one-year programme called Young Leaders in the Community to develop participants to become youth workers.</li> </ul>	<p>By the end of January 2003 participants should be qualified to NVQ3 level.</p>		
<p><b>14-25 LEARNING</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14-19 proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– publication of the outcome and analysis of consultation, including with young people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>September 2002</p>	<p>14-19 Green Paper</p>	

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– continuing consultation with young people in developing and implementing plans</li> <li>• Dance and Drama Awards: the external evaluation will survey Award and non-Award students aged 16 and over</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>Three-year evaluation will finish in January 2003</p>		<p>Consultation, development and evaluation</p> <p>Surveys</p>
<b>AGENCIES/NDPBs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and Skills Council (LSC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Young People's Learning Committee (YPLC) sub-group on engaging young people will develop a policy statement and best practice guidance for use by local LSCs. The draft will be circulated widely to those organizations involved with consulting young people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Draft by Summer 2002</p> <p>Final version end September 2002</p> <p>Final policy decisions Autumn 2002</p>	Young People's Learning Committee and Engaging Young People Working Group	

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Council has just launched its first national learners' survey designed to measure customer satisfaction including that of 16-19 year olds. The survey will be conducted three times a year for the next five years.</li> <li>- The local LSCs will collect the views of current non-learners (including 16-19 year olds) to inform future provision.</li> </ul>	<p>The first results will be available in Autumn 2002</p> <p>Continuous process</p>		<p>A random sample of around 8,000 post-16 learners, including 16-18 year olds, will be interviewed by telephone three times a year for the next five years. Some of these learners will still be on courses and some will have left recently</p> <p>Local Surveys</p>

AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– involving young people in the development and evaluation of ‘pathfinder’ Entry to Employment courses for young people not yet ready to take up a Modern Apprenticeship, vocational education/training or employment.</li> <li>– Family learning: the LSC will fund LEAs and their partners to provide opportunities for families to learn together.</li> </ul>	<p>Consultation with young people Spring-Summer 2002.</p> <p>Involvement of young people in the evaluation of ‘pathfinders’ August 2002-August 2003</p> <p>2002-3</p>	<p>Family Learning</p>	<p>Consultation and evaluation</p> <p>Activities include family/local history, IT, sports, crafts and languages, and are available through schools, museums, libraries, colleges and other organizations, often at weekends and during school holidays.</p>



AREAS FOR ACTION	OBJECTIVES	MILESTONES	CONTEXT	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– will consult young people as part of the Partnerships for Progression initiative which aims to increase demand for higher education. It involves working with schools, colleges, higher education institutions and employers to raise aspirations and achievement.</li> </ul>	2002-3	Partnerships for Progression initiative	Consultation

# 4 Making It Happen

## 4.1 COMMITMENT FROM THE TOP

The first core principle is:

“A visible commitment is made to involving children and young people, underpinned by appropriate resources to build a capacity to implement policies of participation.”

Commitment and enthusiasm for children’s and young people’s participation comes from the top of the Department. Ministers have enthusiastically embraced the core principles as a vehicle for extending and improving the achievements already made on this front.

Upon publication of *Learning to Listen* we moved quickly to present the core

principles to the DfES Board and Directors, to reinforce their commitment to participation and starting the process of spreading that commitment to all levels and parts of the Department and beyond. A further presentation, on the emerging action plan, was made to the Board and Directors in April 2002.

All senior staff have received personal copies of *Learning to Listen* and copies have been made widely available to other staff.

In conjunction with the National Children’s Bureau we mounted a pilot awareness-raising seminar for senior staff on 22 March 2002. We will take the evaluation of this event into account in planning a staff training and development programme.



## 4.2 DEPARTMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS

Success will depend on everyone in the Department playing their part and actively promoting and applying the principles. The overall work is being led jointly by the Department's Schools and Youth Directorates but with strong links to the Strategy and Communications Directorate. We have made the following arrangements to support staff and ensure a co-ordinated approach across the Department:

- A central point for advice and guidance has been established
- A lead person or champion has been appointed in each Directorate as a focus for raising awareness, sharing practice and promoting the benefits of participation
- A Steering Group of senior officials and Directorate champions has been established to oversee the implementation of the core principles

Those Directorates which sponsor NDPBs or Agencies or have a clear

responsibility for service providers take the main responsibility for ensuring that the core principles are understood and implemented by them.

We are encouraging all Directorates to incorporate action on participation in their business plans. We are developing internal progress monitoring/reporting arrangements to feed into our reports to the CYPUP, which will publish in April 2003 the first annual report on government involvement of children and young people. The action plan includes considering the development of standards and associated success indicators.

We are encouraging all parts of the Department and its service providers to implement the principles enthusiastically, impressing on them the efficiency and effectiveness of adopting active involvement practices. We will consider over time whether it would be helpful to reinforce that approach by producing guidance for the Department's Performance Management System.

### 4.3 ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

We believe in an active definition of the involvement of children and young people which goes beyond consultation.

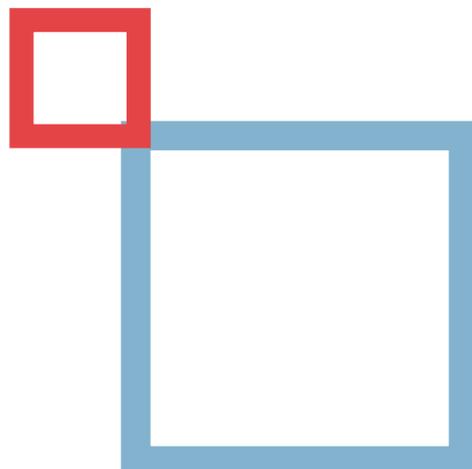
Active involvement will:

- be embedded both in policy and delivery
- not be a supplementary (bolt-on) activity but built in to everyday policy and practice
- provide an opportunity for all staff to be creative and to learn from, and share with, each other

We are determined to support staff in overcoming the challenges to the full involvement of children and young people. We aim to achieve:

- a new perspective and priority focus on children and young people as our customers, including starting from the position of the child or young person and building from that
- altered working practices

We will work with our partners and other customers to understand and address any concerns about increasing children and young people's participation. We are developing a communications strategy to guide that work.



## YOUNG PEOPLE INFLUENCING CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON CONNEXIONS PARTNERSHIP

Connexions Cheshire and Warrington, in collaboration with the Youth Services, has established a young people's reference group which meets regularly to comment on services to young people in Cheshire and Warrington. The main focus is to express young people's views about the Connexions Service and Youth Services, and suggest improvements.

There is a core group comprising young people 13 - 19 who plan action and find ways of involving other young people. It is not a closed group - any young person is welcome to join as long as they show a strong commitment.

So far the group has:

- Produced copy and suggested the design for the Connexions Entitlement Charter
- Opened the Crewe Connexions Centre and talked to Ivan Lewis, the then Minister for Young People and Learning, and Anne Weinstock, Chief Executive of the Connexions Service National Unit, at the Warrington Centre opening
- Been consulted on citizenship projects
- Contributed towards the Connexions marketing strategy
- Given a presentation as part of an Ofsted visit
- Attended a residential to plan how they will operate as a group and communicate with other young people and adults
- Developed sub-groups to work on training, their website and publications
- Been allocated a budget and will decide on how they spend the funding
- Made presentations at the Warrington Youth Conference, the *Hear by Right* conference attended by Ivan Lewis and the Cheshire Local Management Committee
- Attended the Connexions Partnership Training Weekend in Birmingham with 7 other partnerships
- Been involved in the interview process for trainee Personal Advisers
- Made a presentation to the Government Office for the North West with the Chief Executive of Connexions Cheshire & Warrington on the Business Plan for 2002-03.

The Young People's Reference Group has consulted a wide range of young people about all aspects of Connexions, including running focus groups, photographic shoots, workshops and a residential event.

# 5 Supporting Better Delivery

## 5.1 WHAT WE NEED TO DO

An important and early priority is to begin the process of capacity-building - to develop the awareness, understanding and familiarity with participation practices for all staff as a foundation for specific activity.

We aim to provide two types of support:

- Structures and systems within the Department to support staff
- Specialist advice and expertise through working with outside organisations

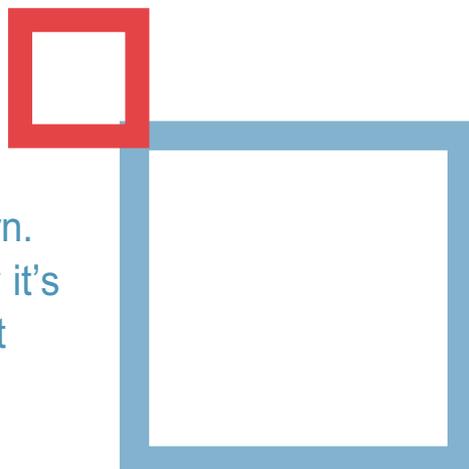
## 5.2 SUPPORT FROM WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT

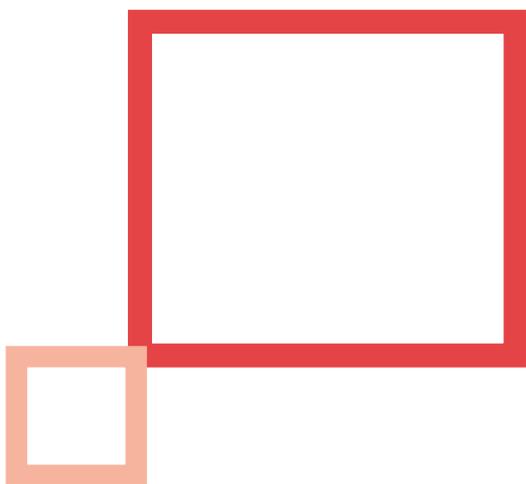
We will establish and develop the following support:

- Departmental seminars at various levels, within individual Directorates and at all sites
- A staff training programme. This will be tailored to the needs of staff but could include training in approaches for working with children and young people; ethical issues; practical issues associated with organising consultation events; budgets; evaluation techniques; incentives and rewards for involvement

“Children should have a say in what we learn. I’m not saying we should get to choose how it’s exactly run but we should have a say and at least give our opinion.”

*Quote from consultation event in March 2002*





- We will consult Government Offices on the best ways to support regional and local developments
- We will take advantage of relevant planned activities to reinforce messages about participation
- We will feed back the lessons from activity in one area to other areas to improve the standard of participation work across the Department and its agencies

In addition we will consider with our partners the scope to:

- 'Twin' local youth projects, groups or forums with parts of DfES
- Establish a telephone helpline

We will also consider, in discussion with CYPUP and expert organisations:

- What additional guidelines on involving children and young people are required, particularly tailored to the needs of Departmental staff. This will involve reviewing existing toolkits,

for example, before deciding whether further practical help is required

- Setting up a practice database, taking care not to duplicate the CYPUP plans for its own practice database and the Connexions Service National Unit 'Observatory'. The goal would be for this to become a *good* practice database once standards are in place. Such a database would provide a point where all relevant developments could be notified, recorded and updated and ensure that links are made between them. It will provide a developing 'map' of Departmental practice and a source of data for analysis

### 5.3 EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

The task of capacity-building is huge and it is clear that the Department will need additional expertise and support. We are considering how we might best enlist such support from a youth organisation or organisations. We expect an expert organisation to be able

to help particularly in the following areas:

- as a 'sounding board' and for advice on specialist issues
- provision of training and awareness-raising
- reviewing, producing or supplementing guidance
- identifying good practice and the evidence for effective participation activity
- arranging large-scale consultations with children and young people

#### 5.4 DRAWING ON LOCAL EXPERTISE

We are particularly interested in the idea of identifying schools with whom the Department would form a close

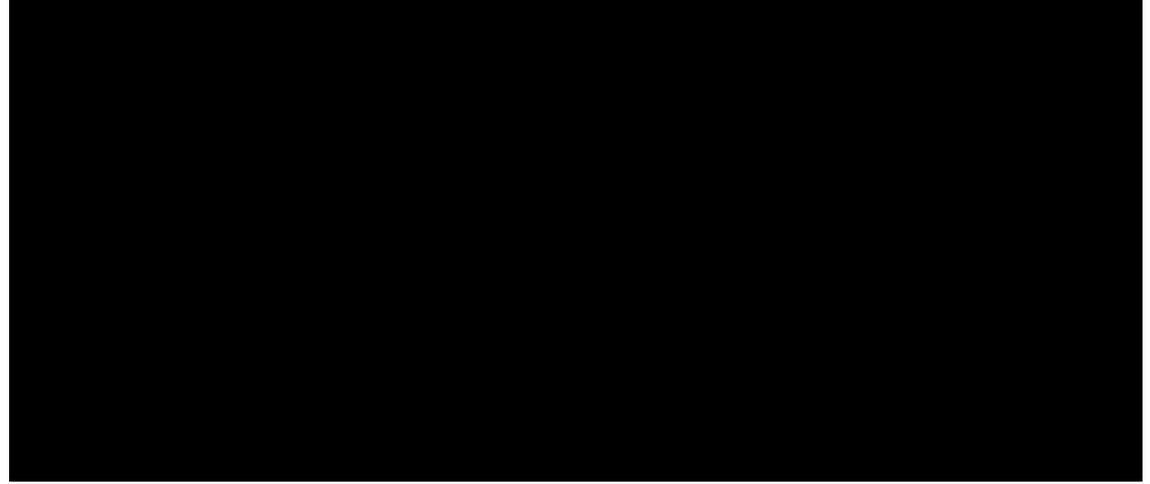
relationship on participation issues including offering secondments to staff from those schools, consulting the pupils directly on Departmental policies and producing evidence of effective practice. Schools with 'beacon' status would be well placed to do that and, as part of their role as Beacon Schools, would spread good practice and opportunities for involvement to other schools. We will be particularly interested in the contribution to raising standards.

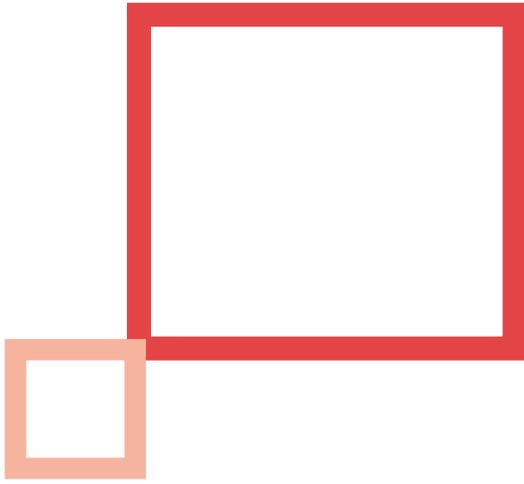
We will consider setting such work in the context of wider partnerships such as Connexions Partnerships to extend the opportunities for sharing and developing effective practice.

#### 5.5 DEPARTMENTAL SYSTEMS

We will develop our consultation systems, building in particular on our

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recent experience of consulting young people on the 14-19 proposals.

We will investigate software systems for consulting young people for possible use by the Department.

We are introducing a template for written consultations to ensure consistent approaches across the Department. And we plan to introduce a 'Research Portal' on the DfES intranet so that staff have access to research and evaluation data, including tracking and polling survey results and details of consultation exercises with children and young people.

We will develop internal systems to ensure that:

- children and young people are consulted on DfES proposals for policies, programmes or services which involve or affect children and young people
- where appropriate, Departmental publications and other forms of communication are vetted for child-friendliness

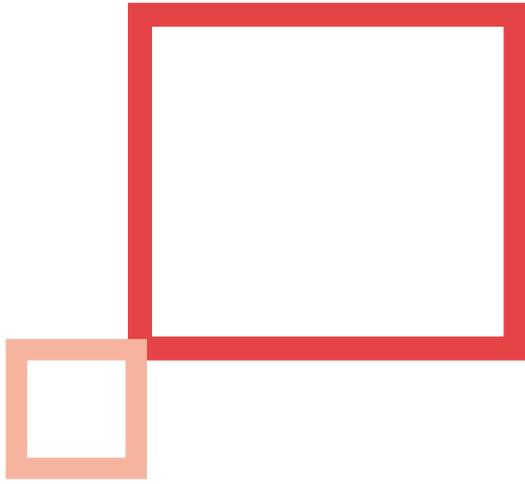
## ADAM SHORT - A YOUNG PERSON LEADING 'COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS'

Adam's Community Champions' projects are unusual because they have an impact that goes far beyond his own community. He has helped to set up a team of young person-led community champions called ECCO (which stands for Exploring, Celebrating and Creating Opportunities). Adam has worked with and supported this team of 15 young people (aged 15 - 24) from all over the North East of England. ECCO are looking at ways that they can encourage other young people to become active citizens. For example, they are organising a conference where young people can get together with people in positions of power to discuss citizenship and other issues that matter to them. This project is entirely led by the young people involved in it and Adam has played a key role as a peer facilitator and educator.

Adam has also been working on another Community Champions supported project. He is helping to organise a Summer School at the Atlantic College in North Wales. The aim of the Summer School will be to bring together young people from all over the world to talk about the value of being active within the community and to learn from each other and share good practice.



"If we plan our future we might do better than you think we would."



“Teachers think we want to have fun all the time but we want to learn as well. But we want to have a choice in what we learn.”

*Quote from consultation event in March 2002*

## 6 Key Resources

### 6.1 OUR APPROACH TO RESOURCING

There are financial implications to any additional participation activity. In setting out our vision for the future, we realise that we may not get there overnight. We will review our plans once the outcome of the 2002 Spending Review is known when we will be clearer about our overall pressures and priorities - but we are determined to use existing resources innovatively to support action in specific policy areas and to achieve maximum impact from them.

Involving children and young people is a government priority. We expect participation activity to be integrated into the work of each part of the Department and the resources needed to support it have been identified from within existing budgets by refocusing resources on this priority area. For example, the Connexions Service National Unit has budgeted to spend £225,000 in 2002-3 supporting the involvement of young people in the development and delivery of the Connexions Service.

## 6.2 CENTRAL RESOURCES

We recognise that action will be dependent to some extent upon advice and guidance being provided from the centre. We are therefore injecting extra resources for this purpose. We are appointing a small team to provide the central co-ordination and advice within the Department; and we have allocated a modest budget for centrally-commissioned support for children and young people's participation work. This budget is intended for external consultancy, seminars, research and communications.

The work on involving children and young people will have strong links with a planned small Customer Focus Unit in the Department which will act as a centre of excellence, offering advice and facilitation to Departmental staff on understanding and involving customers including children and young people.

Corporate Services and Development Directorate and the Learning Academy are supporting changes in working practices and training and development activity.

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“We know we are here to learn and not have a party.”

Quote from consultation event in March 2002

## 7 Research, Quality and Standards

### 7.1 RESEARCH

Existing surveys do not yield the full range of information and evidence on children and young people’s participation to inform policy development. We are therefore planning a forward programme of research and surveys. We will work with CYPU and others with an interest in DfES to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Our plans include:

#### ***A Tracking Study***

We propose to research the views of children and young people through surveys. The surveys would take place at regular intervals to ensure that changes of perceptions and expectations are tracked over time and the effect of policy changes can be assessed.

The surveys would track children and young people’s views. Focus group work with children in Years 1 to 11 (conducted in early 2002) has helped to inform the nature of the proposed surveys. The tracking study will comprise:

- An initial pilot survey (or baseline stage) of 7-16 year olds beginning in June 2002
- Subsequent termly ‘waves’ starting in Autumn 2002
- Qualitative research with young people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds

#### ***Schools***

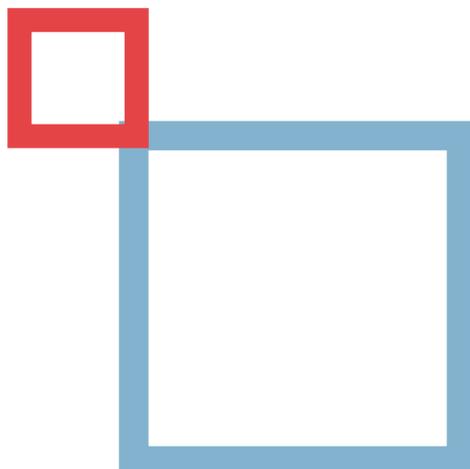
We will assess the literature and research evidence on the *impact* of participation on the attitudes of young people towards their places of learning;

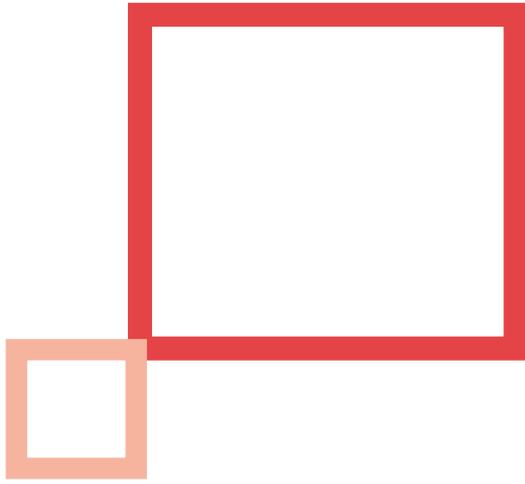
on teaching and learning practices; on school organisation and decision-making; and on educational standards. This will include:

- assessing the evidence base for existing Departmental activity
- building on Ofsted's work to date and plans for the future, working with them to investigate whether there is a correlation between schools which practice active involvement and higher school standards
- work with research organisations to identify and analyse relevant findings from the UK and abroad, with a particular focus on evidence-based research
- commissioning further research where indicated

### ***Citizenship***

We are launching an eight-year long study of the impact of the introduction of citizenship education to schools, including on participation activity. The study, which is being conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), will collect detailed information on how schools teach citizenship and relate these approaches to student outcomes to assess which models are particularly effective. 11,250 young people in 75 schools will be surveyed following entry to Year 7 and again in Year 9, Year 11 and at age 18. NFER will also conduct a cross-sectional survey of 2,500 students in each of Years 8, 10 and 12. There will also be a literature review, updated annually, and 20 case studies. The Department will produce an annual report each year by the end of October from 2002 to 2008 with a concluding report in 2009.





In addition there will be qualitative work with the post-16 age group.

### ***Cohort study of young people 14 — 25***

Following a scoping study we will include satisfaction questions in a full survey which is planned to start in Autumn 2003.

### ***Youth Cohort Study***

Where relevant we will draw on the Youth Cohort Study (YCS), which is a series of longitudinal surveys that contacts a sample of an academic year-group of young people in the Spring following completion of compulsory education and again one and/or two years later.

### ***Connexions***

The Connexions research programme includes a commitment to buy into the YCS. The survey will provide a national

picture of awareness levels and involvement with Connexions in those Partnerships which started in 2001. The survey will also provide some useful information on the views of young people on the support they received when taking post-16 decisions. The survey results will be available in Autumn 2002.

In addition a survey of the views of young people using the Connexions Service is planned for the end of 2002 and annually thereafter.

The Self Assessment Schedule and Ofsted inspections will contribute to evidence-gathering and provide opportunities for Connexions Partnerships to involve young people in the quality inspection process.

## 7.2 QUALITY AND STANDARDS

We are developing our approaches to quality and safety by working closely with other departments and the CYPU, which is issuing its own guidance. We will follow the advice set out in a range of publications from government departments<sup>10</sup> as well as in guidance from children's charities.

In developing standards we will have regard to:

- the standards underpinning Ofsted and other inspection agencies' approaches
- Carnegie Young People's Initiative<sup>11</sup> work to evaluate participation initiatives and produce standards

- the *Hear by Right* Standards produced jointly by the National Youth Agency and Local Government Association
- the principles and standards identified in the forthcoming Connexions Youth Charter guidance and in the Children's Society *Young People's Charter of Participation*<sup>12</sup>

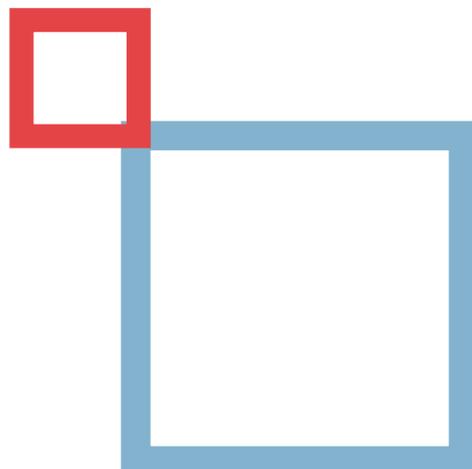
In the longer term we will work with CYPU and partners to refine and apply success and impact measures and quality standards. We will involve children and young people in quality assurance of our plans and initiatives and ensure that feedback from them informs policy and service development.

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<sup>10</sup> *Make it Happen: Report on Six Children and Young People's Participation Events* (Department of Health, October 2000), *The active involvement of young people in the Connexions Service: Managers Guide and Practitioners Guide* (DfES 2001) and *Listen Up: a dialogue with young people* (Cabinet Office/Home Office, 2000)

<sup>11</sup> Carnegie Young People Initiative. Website [www.carnegie-youth.org.uk](http://www.carnegie-youth.org.uk)

<sup>12</sup> The Children's Society, *Young People's Charter of Participation*. Website [www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)





### 7.3 CHILD PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

We will ensure that those who work with children and young people are familiar with child protection issues. We will expect them to have a basic understanding of the legal principles underpinning information sharing, including:

- The **Data Protection Act 1998** which controls the sharing of personal and sensitive information about people, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of that information;
- The importance of obtaining **consent** before sharing personal and sensitive information.

- The **common law duty of confidence**. Personal and sensitive information held about children and families is subject to a legal duty of confidence.
- The need to respect **human rights**. If a statutory body wishes to disclose information, it must ensure that that disclosure is lawful and in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.

# Further Information

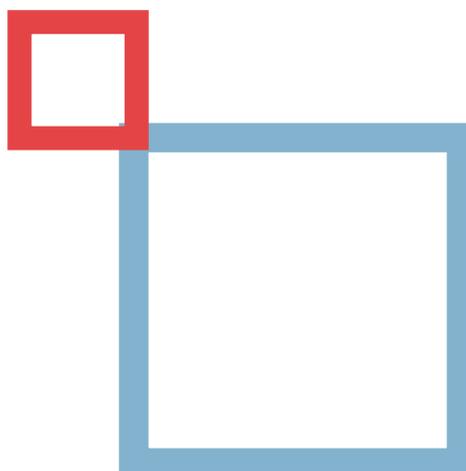
For further information or enquiries, including details of how to get involved in shaping the Department's policies and services, please contact:

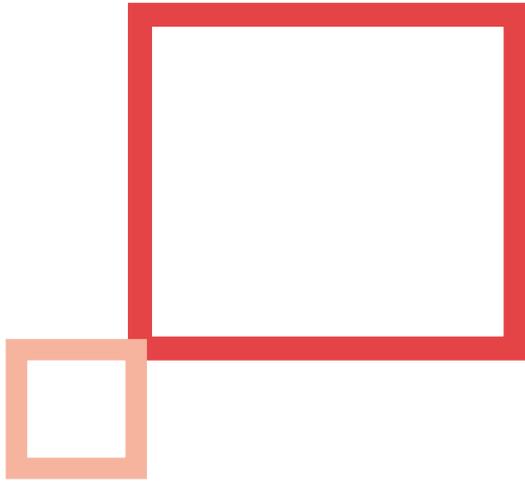
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# Appendix 1: Core Principles

## **A VISIBLE COMMITMENT IS MADE TO INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, UNDERPINNED BY APPROPRIATE RESOURCES TO BUILD A CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES OF PARTICIPATION**

- There is visible commitment to the principle and practice from Ministers and senior management teams
- Participation is built into the departmental or agency values and is reflected in strategic planning, delivery, resourcing, communication and business improvement activities
- Opportunities are provided to enable relevant staff to develop the skills and attitudes to engage effectively with children and young people

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT IS VALUED**

- Children and young people are treated honestly. That means that

their expectations are managed and that they are helped to understand any practical, legal or political boundaries of their involvement

- The contributions of children and young people, proportionate to their age and maturity, are taken seriously and acted upon, and feedback from children and young people confirms this
- Feedback on the impact of children and young people's involvement is timely and clear

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED**

- Children and young people are not discriminated against or prevented from participating effectively on grounds of race, religion, culture, disability, age, ethnic origin, language or the area in which they live

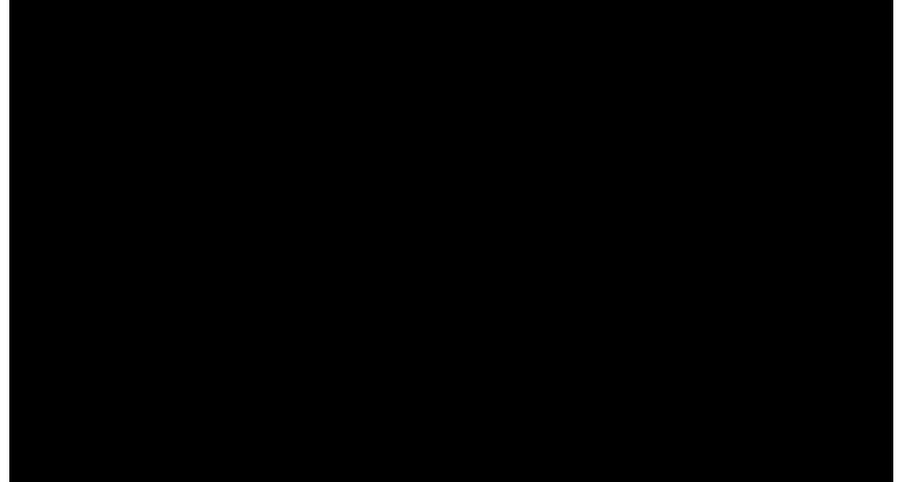
- Departments and agencies take a proactive approach in targeting those facing greatest barriers to getting involved (for example, younger children, children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in rural areas or disadvantaged neighbourhoods, children missing school, young people in the youth justice system, refugees, traveller children, disabled and other children with special needs or special personal or family circumstances) to ensure they are aware of and take up appropriate opportunities to have their say
- Where necessary support and opportunities for training and development are provided to children and young people so that they can contribute effectively

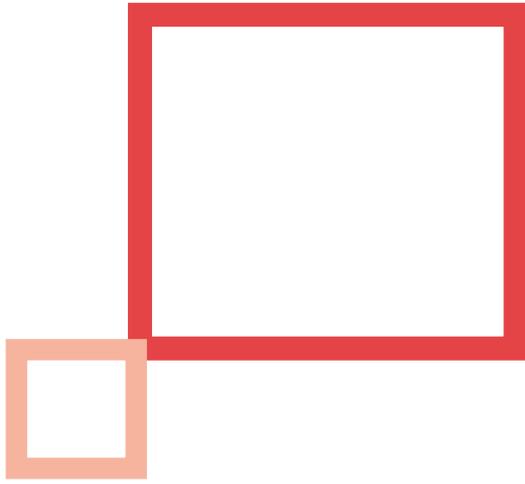
- Relevant information is available to children and young people in good time and in appropriate formats, is jargon free, culturally appropriate and accessible

**POLICIES AND STANDARDS FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PROVIDED, EVALUATED AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVED**

- The rationale and success criteria against which progress will be measured are set out from the start
- Children and young people are involved in reviewing lessons learned
- Departments and agencies agree quality standards and codes of conduct for working with children and young people, and set out how confidentiality and child protection issues will be handled

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## Appendix 2: Partners in Delivery

### **OFSTED (NON-MINISTERIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT)**

Adult Learning Inspectorate  
Awarding bodies  
Basic Skills Agency  
BECTA  
Childcare providers  
CITB  
Colleges of Further Education and Sixth-  
Form Colleges  
Connexions Partnerships  
Early Years Development and Childcare  
Partnerships  
ECITB  
General Teaching Council for England  
Government offices (DfES presence)  
HEFCE  
Higher Education Institutions  
Investors in People UK  
Learning and Skills Council  
Learning and Skills Development  
Agency  
Local (Education) Authorities  
National College for School Leadership

National Youth Agency  
Nurseries  
Training providers  
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority  
Quality Assurance Agency  
Schools  
Sector Skills Councils  
Student Loans Company  
Teacher Training Agency  
University for Industry  
Voluntary organisations  
Youth services

# Appendix 3: A Platform for Action — what we have already achieved

The Department has already embraced participation in a number of policy areas. In this section we describe some recent achievements.

## DEPARTMENT-WIDE

- Over 130 young people were invited to Sanctuary Buildings, the Department's main London base, on 20 May 2002 when they took part in a series of workshop discussions and met Ministers.

## EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE

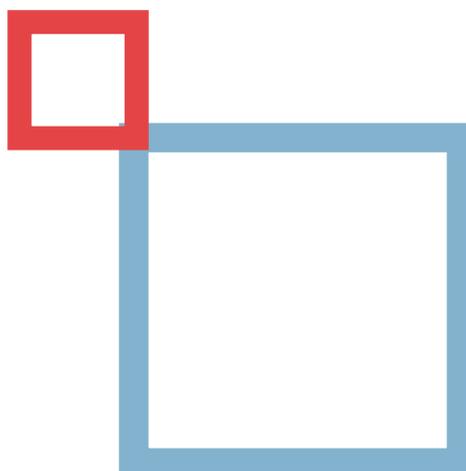
The Department's Early Years and Childcare Unit supports the development

of nursery education for 3 & 4 year olds and childcare for children aged 0-14. Involving and engaging very young children presents particular challenges but effective approaches have been developed. The Unit:

- Issued guidance to Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs) on incorporating the views of children and young people in their annual audits of childcare provision. Good practice guides for EYDCPs on 'Conducting childcare audits', 'Developing High Quality Childcare' and 'Communication and consultation strategies' all contain advice and case studies about involving children.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Kids Club Network on behalf of DfES, *Developing and supporting high quality sustainable childcare*, Case studies — Pg 4, 10,17, DfES Publications, 1999  
Kids Club Network on behalf of DfES, *Communication and Consultation strategies*, Case studies — Pg 5,6,7,16 DfES Publications, 2000  
Kids Club Network on behalf of DfES, *Conducting Childcare Audits*, Case studies — Pg 10,11,12, DfES Publications, 1999





“I think they should let us know when they are going to do things.”

- Organised In February 2002 a seminar for all Unit staff on involving children, in partnership with the Coram Early Excellence Centre
- Sure Start: there are a number of examples across the country of Sure Start consulting and involving children. For example, a worker from the Children’s Society has worked with under 4s at Sure Start Trevu on a range of issues, including seeking and presenting their comments as part of the opening day for their new building

## SCHOOLS

The Department has made it clear that consultation is a key part of the education system — in implementing the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 strategies, as part of citizenship education and in becoming and remaining an accredited ‘healthy’ school. The Department has supported the

development of School Councils UK’s school toolkits<sup>14</sup> to stimulate more schools to have councils.

The Department arranged in partnership with Save the Children Fund a consultation day with pupils on 5 November 2001 on the Schools White Paper, with two follow-up visits to the Department and Parliament in January and February 2002.

Children and young people with **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** and disabilities have been consulted as part of the recent key policy developments on SEN, including on the SEN and Disability Act 2001, guidance on inclusive schooling issued in November 2001 and on the new SEN Code and Toolkit which came into effect in January 2002.

**Young people in public care** have also been actively involved in the development and implementation of joint

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<sup>14</sup> Clay, Di (eds) (2000) *Primary schools council toolkit*, London: Schools Council UK  
Clay, Di (eds) (2001) *Secondary schools council toolkit*, London: Schools Councils UK

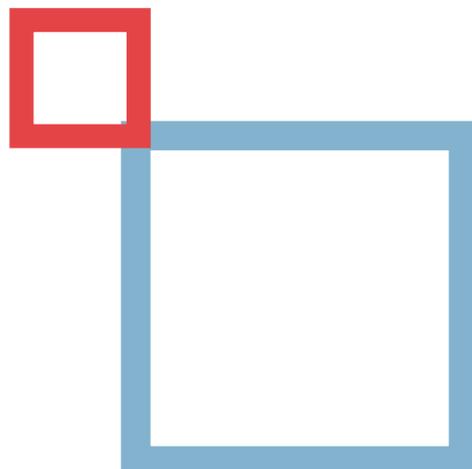
Department of Health/DfES guidance on the education of looked after children as part of the Quality Protects programme<sup>15</sup>.

Other schools-related initiatives include:

- Peer Support: The Department funded the NCB to develop the national Peer Support Forum which helps schools running peer support projects. The funding has resulted in a literature review and map of peer support provision, a series of meetings and regional workshops and the development of an e-mail network/bulletin.
- The Student Review of the science curriculum: over 350 students aged 16-19 across the country helped design possible questions for the review questionnaire. By mid-March 2002, just under 2000 students

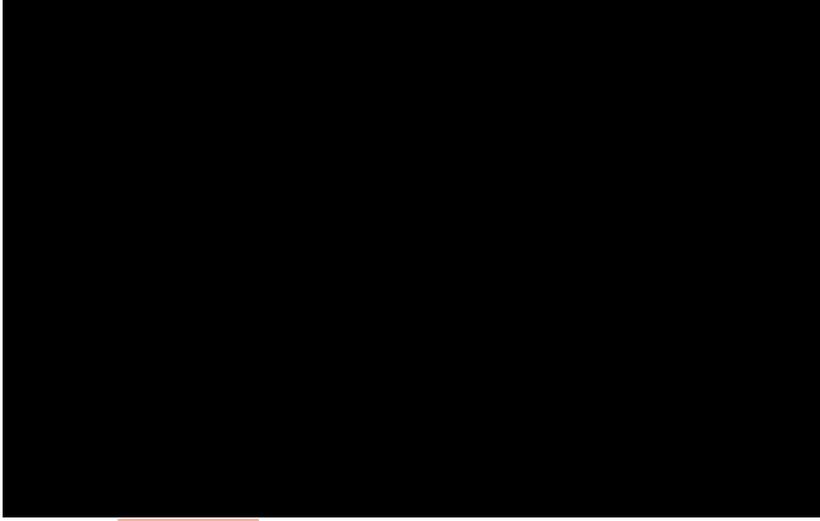
across the country had responded to a web questionnaire. The conversion of hits to completed questionnaires at the web site was nearing 45%. This is in itself impressive as web questionnaires normally have conversion rates of well under 10%. The Parliamentary Select Committee on Science and Technology subsequently decided to take evidence from students. The universal view of students taking part in the review was highly positive

- Study support: through its publications and external partners the Department has emphasised the importance of consulting and involving young people. Study support embraces two specific projects: Pupil Learning Credits and Playing for Success — which have their own techniques for promoting consultation and participation among



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<sup>15</sup> *SEN and Disability Act 2001 - Explanatory Notes*  
*Inclusive Schooling - Children with Special Educational Needs*  
*Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001*  
*SEN Toolkit 2001*  
*Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care*  
All publications are available on the SEN website at [www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen) or from DfES Publications.



young people. The University of the First Age encourages student involvement through Junior Boards, Learning Steering Groups, Student Councils and Peer Tutors

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT): pupils were invited to submit their views electronically as part of the evidence-gathering leading to the publication of *Transforming The Way We Learn*<sup>16</sup> on 9 January 2002, which set out the vision for the future of ICT in schools. The Department also published *Young People and ICT*<sup>17</sup> on 7 March 2002: this report presents the outcomes of independent research carried out by Taylor Nelson Sofres — Social towards the end of the National Grid for Learning Programme and includes information about the attitudes of young people and their parents towards the use of ICT in education. Pupils are involved through a series

of Kids' Councils in the management of GridClub, the award-winning online learning environment for 7-11 year olds

- Premises: the importance of seeking children's views is highlighted in a recent DfES bulletin<sup>18</sup>. It includes the example of the Kingsdale Project, where the Department funded School Works to remodel a decayed 1960s secondary school in Southwark, which involved consultation with pupils. School Works has sent a Tool Kit to all secondary heads<sup>19</sup>

#### OFSTED

Following piloting of questionnaires for sixth form students when their schools are inspected, Ofsted has consulted on a revised Framework for school inspections that incorporates a section on pupils' and parents' views. The consultation ended on 31 May 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Available from DfES Publications Ref DfES/0008/2002

<sup>17</sup> Available from DfES Publications Ref DfES/0250/2002

<sup>18</sup> *Schools for the Future: Designs for Learning Communities*. DfES Building Bulletin 95. TSO (2002) ISBN 0-11-271128-6. £25.00

<sup>19</sup> School Works Tool Kit. School Works Limited (2001) ISBN 0-9541258-0-0. £35.00 (free to schools)

Ofsted will pilot the new inspection arrangements later in 2002, including questionnaires for all secondary-aged pupils, and develop guidance for inspectors to use from Autumn 2003 onwards.

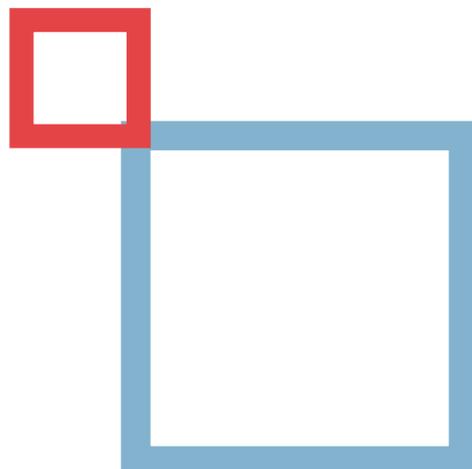
## CONNEXIONS

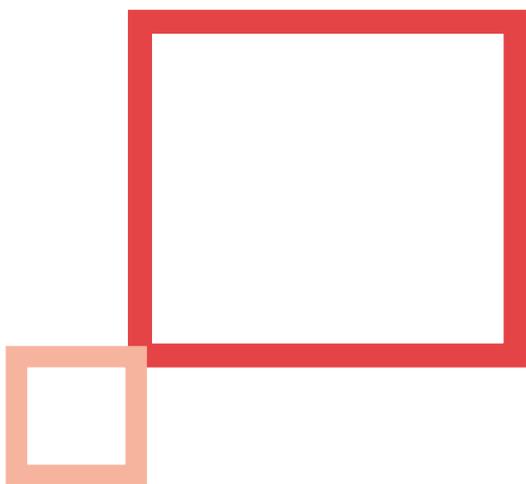
*The Partnership Business Plans submitted from Connexions Partnerships planning to start in 2002 revealed that more than 10,500 young people had been consulted about their needs in delivering the Connexions service.*

Connexions is a new advice, support and development service for 13-19 year olds being rolled out across the country. Connexions Partnerships have made a strong commitment to involving young people in the design, development,

delivery and quality assurance of the Connexions Service. We can point to real progress on a number of fronts:

- The production and dissemination of 'The Active Involvement of Young People in the Connexions Service Guide for Managers & Guide for Practitioners'. This guidance has been very well received to the extent that we have made a second print run and produced a CD Rom version
  
- The establishment of a national network of 'Youth Engagement Co-ordinators' from all 47 Connexions Partnerships. The network has provided valuable feedback on our products and policy development, as well as providing access to young people





- Quarterly Government Office network meetings on involving young people in Connexions
- Setting up an ‘Observatory’ currently containing more than 100 pieces of evidence on involving young people. *Evidence for the Observatory tells us more than 17,500 young people have been involved in Connexions to date*
- The involvement of young people in events and steering groups which have developed policy and guidance on, for example, Youth Charters; training young people as Board/Local Management Committee members; professional practice and quality standards
- Young people were asked to be ‘expert readers’ of the Business Plans submitted by Connexions Partnerships

**Youth services** have a long history of engaging young people. Locally they actively support young people’s involvement in local democracy, youth councils and community planning. The Department, in partnership with the National Youth Agency, consulted young people on the proposals for Transforming Youth Work<sup>20</sup> and, as part of that process, young people constructed a website<sup>21</sup> to share their views. The objectives of the Transforming Youth Work Development Fund for 2002-3 emphasise projects which are designed to involve young people.

**National Voluntary Youth Organisations** (NVYOs) applying for funding from the NVYO Grant Scheme 2002-05 were asked to explain how young people will be involved in the design and implementation of the project and how their continuing involvement in the decision making and management processes will be achieved.

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<sup>20</sup> *Transforming Youth Work: Developing youth work for young people*, DfES (2001). Available from [www.dfes.gov.uk/careerpubs/uploads/cp/youthservice.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/careerpubs/uploads/cp/youthservice.pdf)

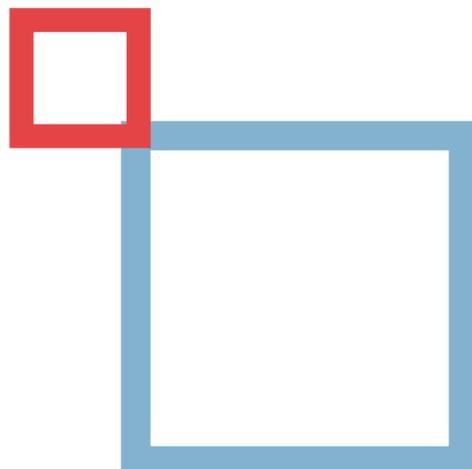
<sup>21</sup> [www.youthconsultation.co.uk/tywnya](http://www.youthconsultation.co.uk/tywnya)

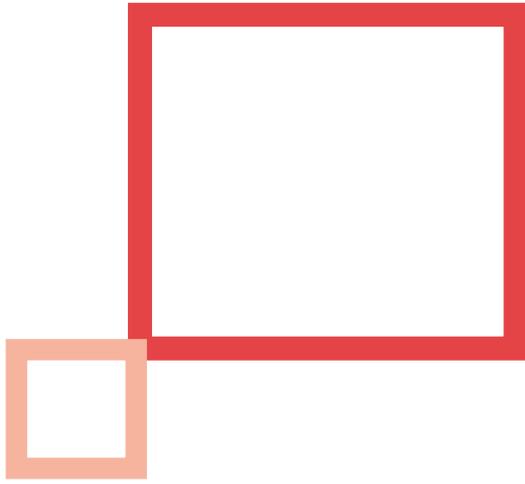
**Millennium Volunteers:** around 180 projects around the country provide a wide variety of volunteering opportunities for 16-24 year olds. Projects are encouraged to involve their volunteers in the design and delivery of the voluntary activity in which they are involved. National and regional Youth Forums have also been set up so that young volunteers can have their say and act as spokespeople for MV as a whole.

The **Neighbourhood Support Fund** re-engages the 'hardest to help' young people aged 13-19 in mainstream education, training or employment. It delivers a wide range of projects engaging young people in a variety of activities and encouraging them to contribute fully.

## 14-25

**14-19 consultation:** In February 2002 the Government published the 14-19 consultation document with proposals for a new phase of learning for young people aged 14 to 19. A version of the document especially for young people was produced and made available widely through schools, popular internet sites and youth councils and the document has been supported by consultation events for young people. Ministers have also been keen to hear the views of young people and Ivan Lewis, the Minister for Young People and Learning, appeared before the Education Select Committee of the UK Youth Parliament during the consultation to debate the proposals.





**Community Champions:** the Community Champions Fund has been working in close partnership with Changemakers North East to develop a pilot of Young Person Led Community Champions to give young people 14-25 the opportunity to advocate to other young people within their communities and improve their citizenship and participation. There are plans to develop similar initiatives elsewhere.

**Further Education colleges** (including sixth-form colleges) are required to have at least one student representative on the college corporation.

**Dance and Drama Awards:** Surveys of young people aged 16 and over are included in the continuing evaluation of the Awards.

**Higher Education:** Each year, through the Central Office of Information, we commission research of first year students and their parents: to explore how they navigate higher education student support; to evaluate the

awareness, use, effectiveness and impact of our information materials and media; and to identify any areas for improvement.

#### **FAMILY LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

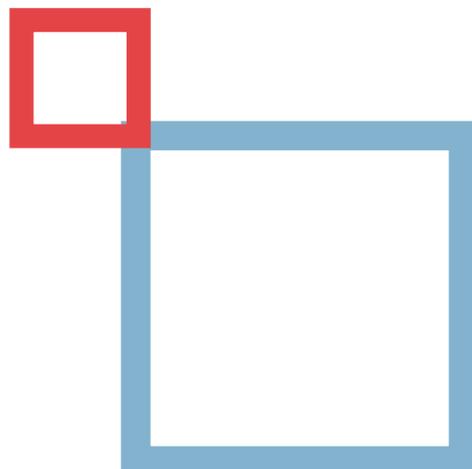
Family literacy and numeracy is a national initiative to enable parents and their children to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, learning together. Courses in literacy and/or numeracy are run in co-operation with local schools and involve a variety of opportunities for parents and children aged 0-11 to learn in structured or semi-structured environments. The Basic Skills Agency manages the programme on behalf of the National LSC and the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit.

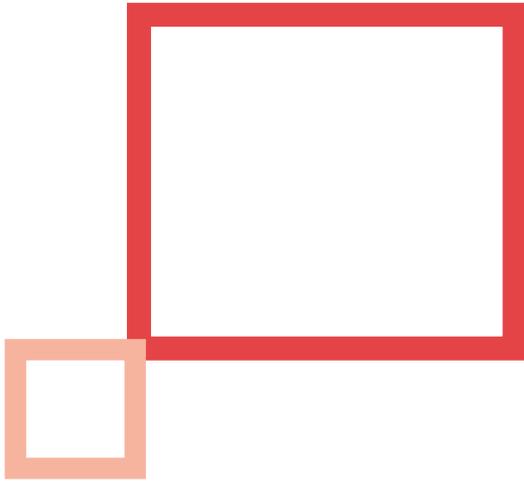
#### **LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL (LSC)**

The LSC Young People's Learning Committee has a sub-group considering how the LSC can best engage with young people in developing its policies and programmes. The group

commissioned the Learning and Skills Development Agency and the National Youth Agency to research the ways in which local LSCs and providers consult young people. Most of the key recommendations are relevant across the Department and its agencies:

- Continuous engagement of learners depends on them seeing the results
- Reports on what the service intends to do as a result of consultation need to be short and simple
- Timing of consultation is important - before business plans are drawn up
- Those contracted to provide learning should consider, as part of any contract, what consultation will be undertaken
- The voice of the learner should be incorporated formally and informally within organizations
- Adequate funding needs to be set aside
- Best practice in consultation should be trawled
- There is much consultation taking place in services for young people; processes should be coordinated to avoid duplication and offset 'consultation fatigue'





## SURVEYS

We have established the basis for collecting information on young people's views and experiences through the following surveys:

- One of the research networks supported by the Department and others as part of the Economic and Social Research Council *Teaching and Learning Research Programme* includes a focus on consulting students. The study is due to be completed in 2003 but there will be a series of short project reports from Summer 2002
- Annual opinion surveys of young people and stakeholders, with supporting studies including tracking a cohort of young people at risk, is an important part of the Connexions evaluation strategy
- The Youth Cohort Study (YCS) provides a wealth of information and we have increased the number of satisfaction questions in the current YCS wave for 16 year olds. The results are expected in Autumn 2002
- Preliminary focus group work has been undertaken to inform the planned tracking study (see 7.1)