

# Reading SEND Good Practice Guidelines

**Co-produced with children and young people with SEND in Reading, and their families**

‘SEND’ stands for special educational needs and/or disabilities.

**The following agencies have agreed to follow these guidelines:**

- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Brighter Futures for Children (Reading Borough Council’s children’s services)
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
- Me2 Club
- Reading Borough Council
- Reading Families’ Forum
- Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust
- A number of Reading schools

## Purpose and scope of guidelines

The co-production of services for children and young people with SEND and their families is central to making sure local services meet the needs of local families. Children, young people and their families in Reading will actively influence decisions affecting them and coproduce the support that they receive.

These guidelines set out our aims and objectives, how we will achieve co-production, and how we will evaluate and measure the success of our work.

## Definitions

Co-production is an inclusive way of working which actively supports beneficiary involvement in decision making.

In the context of children, young people and families, it is about designing support with their input and agreement rather than making decisions on their behalf.

It includes collaboration with children, young people and their families on an individual basis and in the development of a wider strategy.

## Aims and objectives

In co-producing our work with children, young people and their families, we aim to:

- **design and deliver high-quality, fully quality-assured services** that respond directly to the needs and priorities of children, young people and their families

- **ensure children, young people and their families feel genuinely included and valued** while supporting the development of self-advocacy skills, confidence and independence.

## Law

The importance of the participation of disabled children and young people is reflected in both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and more recently in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Children and Families Act 2014 Section 19: Requires local authorities to involve children, young people, and parents in the development and review of local services for children and young people with SEND. Local authorities are expected to ensure that their SEND services are developed in partnership with those who use them. Part 3 of the act also emphasises the need for local authorities to provide services that reflect the voices of children and families in the shaping of SEND provision.

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) – section 2.6 says that local authorities should involve children, young people, and parents (including local parent/carer and youth forums) when planning or buying services that give information, advice and support. This helps make sure the services genuinely meet local needs. Local authorities should do this in a way that makes everyone feel fully involved and that they have a real say in shaping the services they need.

The Equality Act 2010 - The Act requires that services be accessible and responsive to the needs of children and families, which should include involving them in the design and evaluation of services.

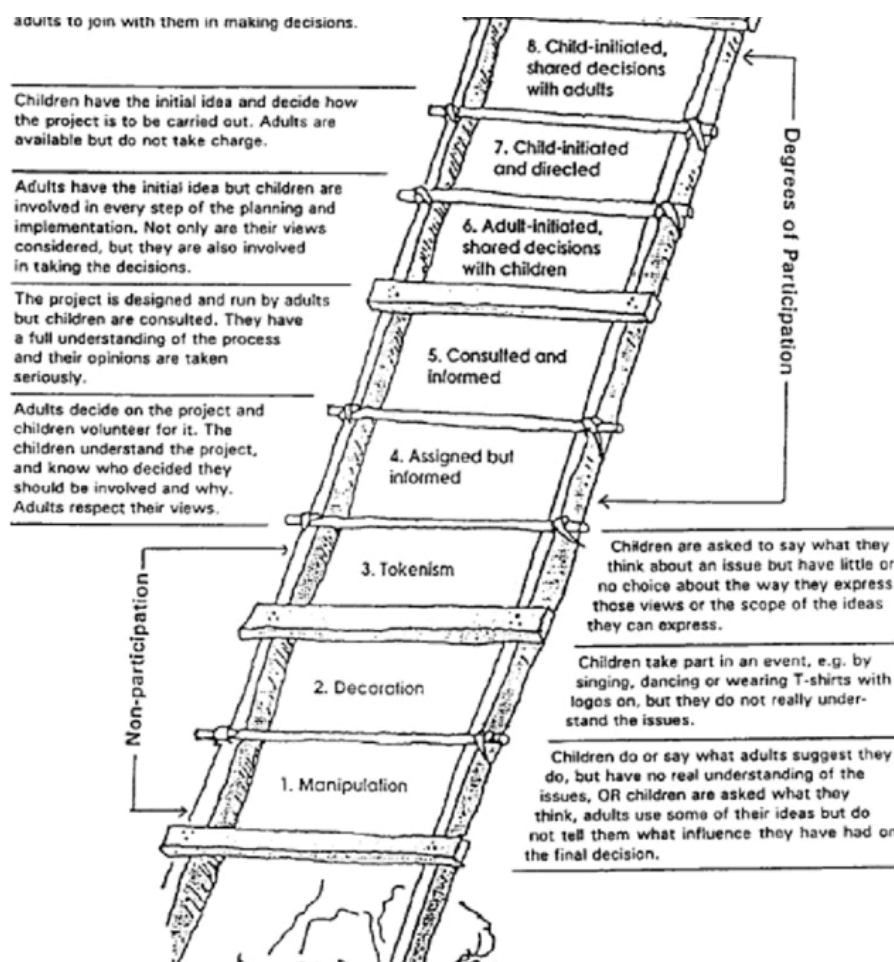
## Implementation

We commit to:

- **Asking children and young people with SEND and their families for their views** on new services or improvements and letting them know what is possible within our budget, rules and staffing
- **Giving children and families the chance to help shape services** without forcing them to take part
- **Ensuring professionals gather views as part of their work**, without expecting school staff to do this during holidays
- **Involving children, young people and families from the earliest stage** of service development and throughout the process, avoiding school holidays where possible and allowing reasonable time for responses
- **Inviting children, young people and families to help interview key staff** who will work in children's services
- **Explaining the impact of their contributions**, showing what has changed because of their feedback
- **Providing regular updates** on decisions and changes (or reasons why changes weren't made) following their input
- **Including children, young people and families in decisions about their own care and support**, such as social care plans and education, health and care plans (EHCPs)

## How?

We will follow Roger Hart's "Ladder of Coproduction" to make sure our work truly involves children and young people. Roger Hart is a child-rights expert and professor at the City University of New York. He has worked with UNICEF and written books about how children can take part in decisions that affect them.



We will work to remove barriers to children and their families being involved in coproduction. We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure:

- Venues and timings are accessible to our children, young people and their families
- We will be clear about the different ways that children, young people and their families can get involved and let them know questions beforehand where possible
- We will give time to children, young people and their families to process information and ask questions
- We will adapt our communication to the needs of the individual child or young person such as using visual aids and Makaton
- We recognise that parent carers can also have individual needs and will make all reasonable adaptations to ensure they are comfortable to give their views

- We value the contributions of children, young people and their families from all communities in Reading, including but not limited to offering translation services where needed and culturally sensitive venues, timings and refreshments
- We are a trauma informed town and recognise the traumas that our families may have encountered and seek to enable them to contribute their views in a safe environment
- We will maintain confidentiality in communicating with children, young people and their families, not using individual names or distinguishing information unless this is relevant to their individual support or is needed for safeguarding
- We will maintain ground rules for groups of children, young people and families gathered to co-produce work with us, including confidentiality and mutual respect.

### Recognising children, young people and their families' contributions

Children, young people and their families will receive recognition for their work co-producing services, be thanked for their work and informed of the outcome.

### Evaluation

We will use the following evaluation questions:

1. What did we do or are planning to do differently as a result of involving children, young people and their families in planning our work?
2. What impact did/will this have on children, young people and their families using the new/improved service?
3. We will ask children, young people and their families what impact being involved in co-production had on them in terms of self-esteem and self-advocacy skills
4. We will analyse any patterns in those children, young people and families who take part, and those that choose not to, compared with all service users in terms of gender, racial origins and type of additional need.

The SEND Strategy Board will receive a report at least annually prepared by Reading Families' Forum (parent carers) and Me2 Club (young people).