



Lancashire
Children and Young People's
Trust

Participation in Lancashire: A year in the life of Lancashire Participation Network

2014-2015



We have had an outstandingly participatory year! Taking into account national awards; the highest Make your Mark votes to date; new and innovative ways for children and young people to influence decision makers; more involvement from children and young people than ever; as well as being recognised nationally for our outstanding systems and structures. All of this takes us one giant step towards our goal of empowering all children and young people to be listened to in Lancashire.

The Lancashire Participation Network (LPN) is a multiagency partnership comprising key services, organisations and settings in Lancashire. Our aims and objectives are collectively developed, monitored and celebrated (hence this report!) and we are proud that we include children and young people in partnership to embed and improve participation. We are even more proud that our network is seen as so successful that it is here to stay despite considerable changes to partnership working across Lancashire. In fact, it's pride that runs through this report and we want to show that off. Here are some of the reasons why:

Approximately 500 children and young people participate regularly in our participation structures (this includes Lancashire Youth Council, POWAR, LINX and the Young Carers forum)

There have been 72,851 child and young person participants involved in events, consultations and surveys in the last year

We have trained, supported, advised, engaged, empowered and facilitated. We have developed, piloted, rolled out and embedded. Ultimately, we have changed things for children and young people in Lancashire and critically we have done this **with** them.

What have we been up to?

1. Supporting and enabling young people to try new things and gain new skills

The opportunity to train and up skill children and young people, as well as give them new opportunities and experiences, is vital to ensuring they can lobby, influence and challenge decision makers. It's also something that children and young people value and always comment on in evaluations and feedback. In a recent LPN meeting children and young people said things like:

'I'm proud of talking in front of 40 people at the woodlands centre in Chorley'

'I am proud of taking part in LINX at Barnardos I enjoy being with people and going to meetings. I enjoy meeting new people. I'm proud of doing new things'

'I am more confident (because of participating)'

'Maggie Atkinson (Children's Commissioner) took a great selfie with me #LifeGoalsAchieved'

This is also something very hard to quantify or report on but something which staff and volunteers will comment on time and again. It's a good place to start from as it's the story of how Lancashire children and young people gain from the experience of having a voice and of being empowered. It's the distance travelled for young people from 'quiet' and withdrawn to them standing up and speaking in front of their peers or decision makers. It's the change that you see from someone who doesn't join in discussions to someone who leads them. It's the confidence you see blossoming in children and young people who aren't used to being listened to and being given the opportunity to get involved in decision making. We want to celebrate and recognise all these skills and experiences gained through participating.

2. Enabling CYP to voice their opinions nationally and locally in decision making

Top level participation involves children and young people taking a lead and we have ample examples including Preston Youth Conference; the PROUD and Celebrate YOUth awards; and the inaugural young carers conference.

At Preston Youth Conference 120 young people attended and engaged in diverse conversations and debates about issues that matter to them. The PROUD awards was organised by adults and young people from LINX (Children in Care Council) and young women from Crestmoor Residential Unit. Over 115 looked after children and young people were nominated for the awards and over 50 shortlisted children and young people were invited to a 'glitz and glam' event. There are also plenty of other outstanding examples of decision makers putting children and young people at the centre of their decision making, building their participation into what they are doing. An example of this was the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) conference in November which enabled 32 young people to explore CSE and feedback to senior decision makers.

Nationally, our children and young people have been causing quite a stir. The Member of Youth Parliament for Preston opened one of the UK Youth Parliament debates in the House of Commons. Members of POWAR (SEND forum) have been participating in EPIC – the Department of Education's advisory group around the Children and Families Bill reforms. Young people from LINX and POWAR have been representing on AMPLIFY – the advisory group for the Children's Commissioner for England. Members from LINX have also been advising the Care Quality Commission and attending the national care leaver's forum. Young people have been leading participatory research with UCLANs Centre for Participatory Research including national research on poverty and disability and Preston primary council carrying out action research. Children looked after and care leavers have engaged in the All Party Parliamentary commission for looked after children and care leavers and even invited the commission to come to Lancashire where they hosted a northern event on behalf of the commission.



David from POWAR speaking at the 18th Annual Conference for European Network for Ombudspersons for Children 2014

3. Takeover month



This year was even more successful than ever. 190 children and young people took part and well over 200 decision makers got involved including health, elected members, senior council managers, council services such as Young People's Service (YPS) and Integrated Health, the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Children and Young People's Trust. We were particularly excited about the opportunity for children and young people to facilitate a debate with Children's Social Care called 'making social care better'. This is the first time **all** the managers of social care have met collectively with children and young people let alone that those children and young people would lead and facilitate the conversation. Diane, Head of Children's Social Care fed back: *'I have had over twenty emails and texts from my management team saying how much they enjoyed it'*.

LINX and POWAR Takeover Senior Leadership Team of Children's Social Care, 2014

4. Lancashire Youth Council (LYC) and Make Your Mark ballot

We are delighted that the hard work of the Young Peoples Service and youth councillors has paid off as this year nearly every secondary school in Lancashire has elected representatives to sit on the district youth councils. The LYC Facebook page has a reach of 252 with 198 'likes' in February 2015. Lancashire also doubled the number of young people taking part in the Make Your Mark ballot and had the highest amount of online ballots in the UK. The percentage of the population involved has increased from 13.36% to 27.25%. Lancashire came 3rd out of the top 20 English shires/ counties (based on percentage turnout) and was 1st in the North West.



Lancashire Youth Councillors 2014

5. Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) consultation

Children and young people aged from 18 months to 25 years shared their ideas and opinions about Lancashire in a number of consultations events and also in their own services and settings. The methodology was designed and developed by colleagues and young people from the LPN. We hoped to particularly engage children and young people with SEND and to hear the voices of children under five. We also hoped that children and young people and the services/organisations that they work with would engage in a 'conversation' about the future plan for Lancashire. We are pleased that this was indeed the case. For example, four under-fives groups engaged in conversations about Lancashire focusing mainly on

healthy eating and teeth. A large number of SEND children and young people engaged in completing the questionnaire; in attending events; and also in discussions in their settings.

Over 2,000 children and young people responded to the CYPP consultation. We also enabled a group of young people to help us shape the film we made to communicate the messages of the CYPP. The group helped us develop a script; procure a production company to make the film; and participated in the filming.

The LPN also supports and enables services and organisations to consult with children and young people. This includes the consultations with young people about their views of sexual health services working with colleagues from public health and work with Trading Standards to consult and develop messages around energy drinks.

6. PULSE

This group have been working hard this year. We are particularly proud of the #lifesupsanddowns campaign (emotional health and wellbeing). This includes the actual flash mob at the Fishergate Centre in Preston and being shortlisted for a national award. To date, 20 settings have performed the flash mob and had follow on lessons and assemblies. The flash mobs have been viewed by over 4,500 people on YouTube. Over 2,500 CYP in settings have learnt about the #lifesupsanddowns messages through the flash mob; assemblies; follow on lessons; and displays around schools.

They have also been working on the Lancashire Young Film Makers Competition – at least 13 different settings have entered the competition with over 20 varied and creative submissions. Watch this space to hear about the winners and watch the films.



PULSE Flashmob, April 2014

7. LINX and Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

The Corporate Parenting board has always worked closely with the LINX group but in the last year there have been some brilliant changes which have put looked after children and young people at the centre of discussions and decisions. Changes include that at every meeting members of LINX now lead on half the agenda. They also continue to lead one whole meeting a year – in this year's young people led meeting, the CPB made loom bands as an ice breaker and children as young as six years old participated. Children and young people from LINX also continue to regularly meet with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Director of Children's Services. These changes make a BIG difference as they hand over more responsibility to looked after children and young people and put them at the centre of decisions we make for and about them.

8. Young inspectors

Lancashire has aspired to have Young Inspectors in place and wonderfully we can now say we have not one, but three Young Inspectors groups. The CSI (Children's Services Investigation) team are the original group supported by the LSCB and the council to participate in multi-agency inspection processes and also carry out inspections of services which interest them. In the last year they have completed three inspections. Lancashire has also worked with Barnardos Participation Service to develop a LINX young inspectors group who have been inspecting both internal and external fostering and residential providers. The newest young inspectors group is the POWAR group who will be inspecting services for children and young people with SEND.

9. Awards



LINX members picking up their Diana award at Corporate Parenting Board summer 2014

We could not end this report without drawing attention to all the awards which, for us, are the chocolate flake and sprinkles on the top of our fantastic year! LINX and POWAR received a national Diana award and Barnardos North West were awarded the gold Hear by Right Standard and commended for their participation structures and systems – something Lancashire has played a big hand in. The Crewⁱ has been awarded the NHS England 'excellence in participation' national award and positive practice in mental health 'innovation in CAMHS'. Lastly, but by no means least, PULSE have been nominated and shortlisted for two national awards. Individual children and young people from all these groups have also been nominated for umpteen awards for their participation, campaigning, commitment and lobbying.

ⁱ The Crew: Lancashire wide young people and parents and carers (whose family use the service) who have previously used the acute inpatient mental health service (CAHMS tier 4). The group works in close partnership with management and commissioners in respect of service development and improvements.

Our vision for 2015-16

We want to increase the numberⁱⁱ of children and young people having an impact on decisions that affect their lives. Crucially this is particularly important for those children and young people who are most vulnerable and most need to be listened to. It's a big challenge but one we feel confident we can continue to have an impact on. Just look what we can achieve in one year!

ⁱⁱ See below: Numbers of young people participating through consultation and formal structures during 2014-15

Numbers consulted with 2014-2015

Consultation and participation	Numbers
Children and Young People's plan	2,000
Young People's views of sexual health services	120
Trading standards	3,471
YPS Annual user satisfaction (Jan 2014)	1,084
Children Society and Complaints and compliments service	110
Agency residential	44
Peer Support commission	46
ACERS YPS satisfaction survey	185
Young carers annual survey	154
Pupil attitude questionnaire	32,598 (2013-14 figures)
Child Sexual Exploitation event	32
Preston Youth Conference	120
Local democracy week	
Make Your Mark	32,887
Total:	72,851

Total numbers participating in formal structures:

Participation group	Numbers
Lancashire youth council	250
Young Carers	20
POWAR	99
LINX	67
PULSE	28
Total:	464

Join us in making children and young people's participation even more of a success in 2015/16. Visit the CYP Trust website to access a host of information and guidance around participation – including a selection of 'How to Guides'

[CYP Trust website – Participation of children and young people](#)