

01 What is 'The Voice of the Child?'

This is a phrase used to describe the real involvement of children and young people. It does not only refer to what children say directly, although it is essential this is heard, but it refers to many other aspects of their presentation. It means seeing their experiences from their point of view and taking into account the child's daily lived experience.

The phrase means more than simply seeking their views; it is about enabling them to take as active a role as possible in decision making.

07 'VOICE'

Value the views and opinions of children in Oldham by listening to them

Open, friendly and non-judgmental in our engagement, developing trusting relationships.

Involve children in the planning, design and delivery of services

Communicate through a wide range of methods in a manner that is understood

Ensure that views are captured through different mediums to shape future services.

'Nothing about me, without me'

06 What is good engagement?

- Strong relationships between children and workers
- Children are part of decisions made about them.
- Children have an understanding of their situation.
- There is good recording of children's views.
- Children's views are reported, considered and recorded and plans are formulated to reflect them.

02 What is the legal context?

A legal duty exists to listen to the wishes & feelings of all children, including children in care.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) state that children should be heard and have their views taken into account.

The Voice of the Child is an integral part of all partner inspections, including Ofsted, CQC, Policing and JTAI.

03 Local Context

Reviews have found that opportunities were not always created to ensure that children's voice were heard and recorded to understand the lived experience of the child.

04 What should I consider?

The Voice of the child is not just around verbal communication but also observations. The voice of the child is applicable from 0-18, irrespective of stage and development.

Think about the best environment for the child. Adapt your use of language to suit the child and utilise any tools used by your agency.

Voice of The Child

05 What else should I do?

Create opportunities to see the child alone

Present the true voice of the child and record what children say in direct quotes (e.g., 'I feel sad/happy/worried when...'). This is more powerful than something interpreted by a professional.

Considered non-verbal communication and your observations of their behaviour.

Recognise children's behaviour as a means of communication. Practitioners should ensure that the voice of the child is documented in any face-to-face contacts.