

Chapter 8: Making a Positive Contribution

Children and young people who play their part in creating a successful and vibrant society are more likely to be 'fulfilled'. Consequently, we will:

- Increase opportunities for, and encourage, **volunteering** by young people
- Make actively involving children and young people in shaping services a **KEY PRIORITY**
- Reduce school exclusions
- Reduce offending and re-offending.

Actively Involving Children, Young People, Parents and Carers

A vital part of our vision for services for children and young people is that they should have a '**voice**' and be **actively involved** in decisions that affect them.

In practice, this means:

- Children and young people participating in the design, delivery and evaluation of services – priorities set by children and young people feeding through to relevant policies and plans, both nationally and locally
- Children and young people having input into the use of resources
- Practitioners understanding the principles of children and young people's involvement how their practice ensures participation at all levels in all organisations.

Our aim is that children and young people will feel valued for their contributions and are able to speak up on matters that are important to them.

We are continuing to develop ways of making sure we effectively hear the views of all children, young people, parents and carers in Leicestershire by:

- Improving the systematic involvement of **parents and carers** – parents and carers are frequently consulted, but their involvement in shaping services is not always at each stage of the process
- Continuing to support and develop the '**Pyramid of Participation**' (see Appendix 1: Pyramid of Participation) developed by the County Youth Council of Leicestershire (**CYCLE**) – a body of young people aiming to represent the views of young people in Leicestershire
- Building a culture of participation within organisations by promoting the '**Hear by Right Standard**' framework

→ Continuing to listen to, and act on, the views of **children in care**. The County Council's **T2C** (Time to Change) group, is an effective voice in the development of services but will be working to improve:

- How younger children in care contribute to service planning (as recommended by the Joint Area Review 2007)
- Participation of children in care in reviews.

Reducing Exclusion

Children and young people excluded from school will achieve less well and are more likely to be at risk of poor outcomes. Therefore, we are developing new ways of working to **reduce school exclusions** and help children and young people get support when they need it.



Reducing Offending and Re-offending

Children and young people have told us that they particularly want to **reduce anti-social behaviour** – it is disruptive and damaging to children, young people and communities. In Leicestershire the County Council, Police, Health, Probation, District Councils, Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships and the voluntary and community sector are working together in an effective partnership to **reduce offending and re-offending** and enable young people to make a positive contribution. **We are:**

- Continuing to work to **prevent youth offending** and reducing the numbers of First Time Entrants to the Criminal Justice System
- Further **reducing re-offending** (a Leicestershire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 priority) by ensuring those young people who offend, are;
 - in education, employment or training (**EET**)
 - receiving prompt assessment and treatment for **substance misuse**
 - receiving prompt assessment and treatment for **mental health** issues
 - in suitable accommodation
- Reducing the use of **custody** for young people (custody is generally accepted to have very little rehabilitative effect for young people)
- Reducing the harm caused by young people who present a significant risk to others.