

Pro Forma for Participation Works Network for England regional case studies

Region: North East			
Submitted by: Sasha Blythe Date of submission: April 2009			
Please indicate which sector this case study is an example of:			
Voluntary sector activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Statutory sector activity	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Corporate sector activity	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (<i>please specify</i>)			
Please indicate which themes this case study can be used to support (<i>tick all that apply</i>):			
Arts & creativity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Learning & research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Measuring change	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Online tools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rights/citizenship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safeguarding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hard to reach groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Workforce development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth-led project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>please specify</i>)	
Name of project: The Explorers (Practitioner led research)			
Name of lead person on project: Sasha Blythe			
Contact information for further details thechildrenssay@actionforchildren.org.uk 0191 4901059			
Aims of the project: To engage with a group of children and young people to carry out a piece of research, investigating children and young people's understanding of the CAF (Common Assessment Framework), their familiarity with the system and their views on the documentation.			
Timeline for the project (expected start and finish date, if known): The work began in October 2008 and although the research is now complete and submitted to CWDC the work still continues.			
Please name any other organisations involved if this was a project developed as a partnership:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action for Children • Gateshead Council • CWDC 			

Who funded this project?

CWDC

How many young people were involved?

Core group of 7 young people (The Explorers) worked to engage a further 104 children and young people across Gateshead.

How were children & young people involved in decision-making?

Children and young people were involved at various levels. Although we recognise the decision to apply for the funding and set the initial question was not that of the children and young people every effort was made throughout the project to involve children and young people at all other levels.

Throughout the project children and young people decided and agreed meeting times, structure of their sessions including what they would be doing that day, ice breaking activities, what refreshments would be offered and when. The children and young people gained a greater understanding of the CAF process and then created their own methods to explain the process to other children and young people. They wrote their own story, planned a workshop, decided on costumes, recorded each session, and facilitated 4 different workshops, completing an evaluation at the very end.

What changes has children & young people's involvement led to?

The approach of involving of a young mentor was adopted for the second time and due to its success this model will now be used for all pieces of work undertaken by the project. The next step will be to work with a volunteer coordinator within Action for Children to see how children and young people taking on the young mentor role can "formally" become volunteers with possible accreditation.

The actual research is very recent so there has not been time yet to act on any of the recommendations. The recommendations made form a strong piece of work children and young people and The Children's Say will embark on in 2009-2010.

What did children and young people involved in this work achieve from this experience?

The young researchers worked to gain an understanding of CAF and its documentation in order to develop a creative method which would allow them to obtain a larger group of children and young people's views on the subject.

Children and young people worked as part of a team, mentored one another and improved their self esteem.

Children and young people have gained confidence, made new friends, become more aware of other people's problems, made a positive contribution.

What next for the project?

As a result of these findings the project will work with children and young people to develop ways in which the CAF and its documentation can be more child and young person friendly. The learning will be shared from this research including the approaches used to engage children and young people in decision making.

What next for the participants?

3 of the Explorers have attended a creative workshop run by CWDC. The aim of the day was to spend the day with CWDC designers and those who work in the integrated working team at CWDC, to help come up with a friendly leaflet / resource

that can be used to explain CAF and LP to children and young people across the country. The purpose was to get ideas and design innovations so that many children and young people can understand and benefit from the CAF and LP.

The Explorers will be attending a celebration event to present their research findings on the 1 May 2009.

The project will continue to work with the Explorers to act upon the information gathered, implement any changes and carry out further work identified through research.

Quotes from staff, management, children, parents/ carers:

From children and young people:

“doing this work has made me more confident and I’d like to do this kind of thing again”

“I can now stand up in front of a crowd”

“I feel proud of what I’ve done”

“The work was fun but lots of hard!!”

“I’m hoping this piece of work helps to make children happier”

From member of staff:

“The Explorers worked very well as a team and dedicated a huge amount of their own time to this piece of work. This was a great opportunity to bring together 7 children and young people to research (CAF) The Common Assessment Framework and to gather the views of other children and young people in a very creative way. Their ongoing commitment has been recognised both locally and nationally.”

Participation Works wants to share your good practice to a wider audience to enable others to learn from your experience and develop their own participation practice.