

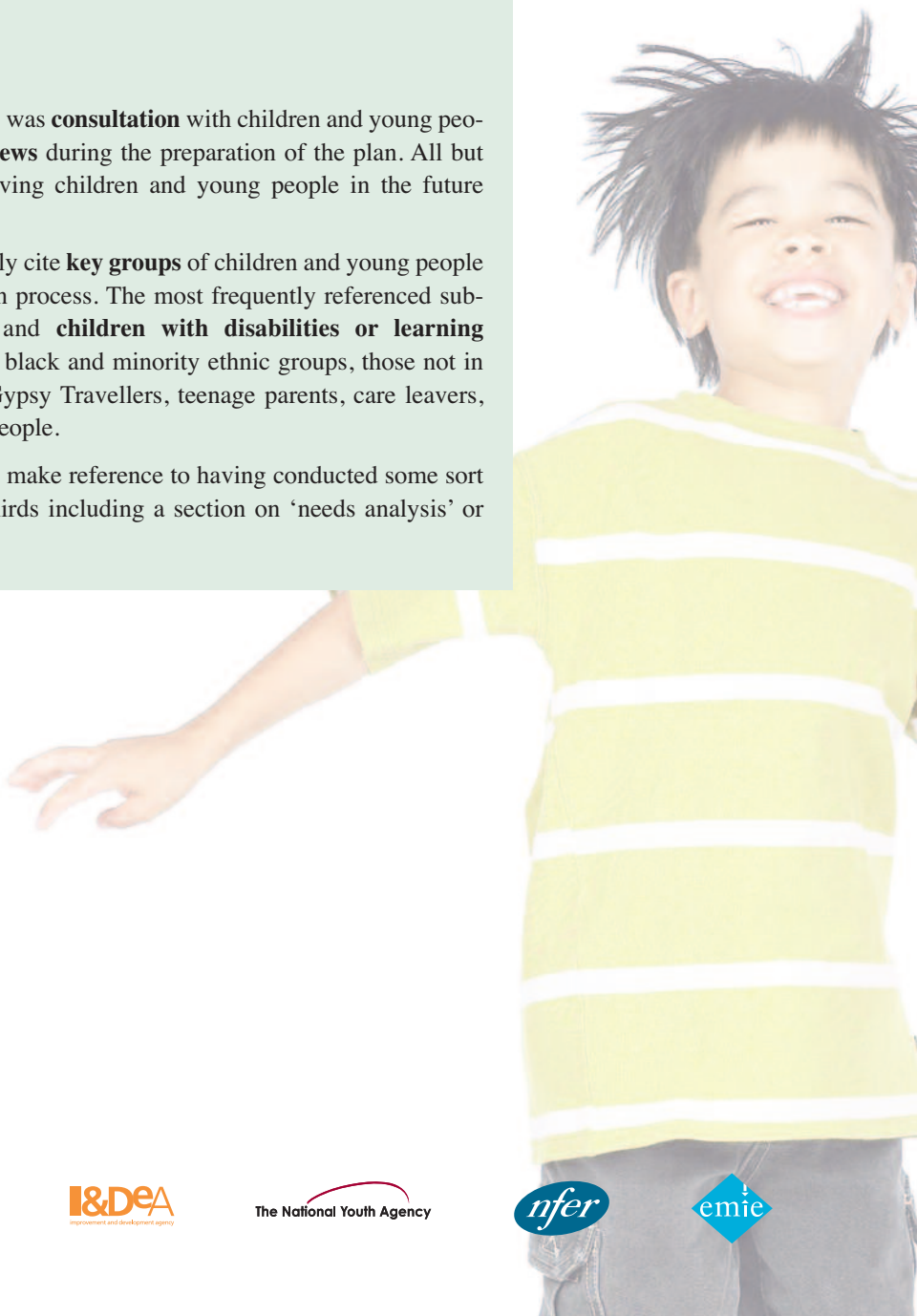
Consultation with Children and Young People and Needs Analysis

This paper is one of a series of 12 that presents the findings from NFER's analysis of Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs) from a representative sample of 75 Local Authorities.¹ It sets out how consultation with children and young people and needs analysis feature in this sample of plans, and includes illustrative examples. Areas covered are:

- The nature of consultation
- Characteristics of children and young people consulted
- The views of children and young people in the CYPPs
- Involvement of children and young people in future developments
- Needs analysis.

Summary of findings

- All 75 CYPPs analysed state that there was **consultation** with children and young people or **consideration given to their views** during the preparation of the plan. All but one make explicit reference to involving children and young people in the future development of the ECM agenda.
- Just over a third of the plans specifically cite **key groups** of children and young people who were involved in the consultation process. The most frequently referenced sub-groups are **looked after children** and **children with disabilities or learning difficulties**. Other sub-groups include black and minority ethnic groups, those not in education, employment or training, Gypsy Travellers, teenage parents, care leavers, and lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.
- All but one of the 75 CYPPs analysed make reference to having conducted some sort of **analysis of need**, with over two-thirds including a section on 'needs analysis' or equivalent.



The nature of the consultation

Every plan indicates that the views of children and young people had informed its development. More than four-fifths of the plans have a specific section on the contributions of children and young people. Even though just under a fifth of the plans have no labelled section on the views of children and young people, this did not mean their views had not featured in the plan's development. As expected, LAs use a variety of terms to describe this section, as presented in Table 1.

A small number of plans use several terms to describe the section on consultation, for example one used the title 'Engagement, participation and consultation'. Even though most plans use only one word to describe the section, many use different terms interchangeably throughout the plan to describe the contributions of children and young people. One plan goes so far as defining 'consultation' and 'participation' although it had labelled its section 'engagement'.

'[The Children's Trust] partners are aware of the distinctions between "consultation" and "participation". Consultation denotes a relationship in which service providers invite service users to comment on a pre-set agenda. Participation denotes a relationship in which service users are enabled to share in the full range of activities including strategic service planning, operational design and delivery, and monitoring and review.' (Unitary LA)

It should be noted that the terms used do not necessarily reflect the type or level of children and young people's contributions, for example one local authority uses the word 'participation' but had carried out questionnaire surveys of children and young people.

Table 1 Terminology used to describe consultation sections

Terms	Examples
Consultation	'Consulting children, young people and community' 'Consultation and review arrangements'
Thoughts or views	'Views of children, young people and their families' 'How children and young people, parents and carers have their say'
Involvement	'Involving children, young people and their families' 'How children and young people, and parents and carers, were involved and what they said'
Participation	'Participation of children, young people and their parents' 'Participation by children, young people and parents and carers'
Engagement	'Engaging Children and Young People' 'Engagement of children, young people and their families'
Listening	'Listening to children and young people' 'Listening to children, young people, parents and communities'



Data sources

Two-thirds of the 75 CYPPs analysed explicitly state undertaking at least one consultation exercise with the specific aim of informing the development of the CYPP. About a quarter of plans use evidence collected for other purposes (for example, data from a Young People's Council that has been active for a number of years or a survey carried out by the PCT) as well as, or instead of, specifically consulting children and young people to inform the development of the plan. Some examples of using existing evidence collected for other purposes are given in Table 2.

Table 2 Existing evidence used to inform the development of CYPPs

Methods	Examples
Surveys	Service-user surveys (for example a youth service or library-user survey); JAR 'Tell Us' survey findings; 'Communities that Care' survey; surveys carried out for the PCT or specifically on health related issues; surveys of young people and surveys carried out for Connexions.
Large group events	An 'Article 12' (of UNCRC) conference; a conference 'to support local activity and ... developing international work' and a Building Schools for the Future conference. A further plan states an event was held but does not provide details.
Small group events	Young People's Council; Youth Parliament; a group to inform the LA's participation strategy and a group on Young People's Health.

Focus of consultation

Across the CYPPs, the focus of the consultation with children and young people can be grouped into six main areas, and some plans feature more than one of these areas. These are presented in Table 3.

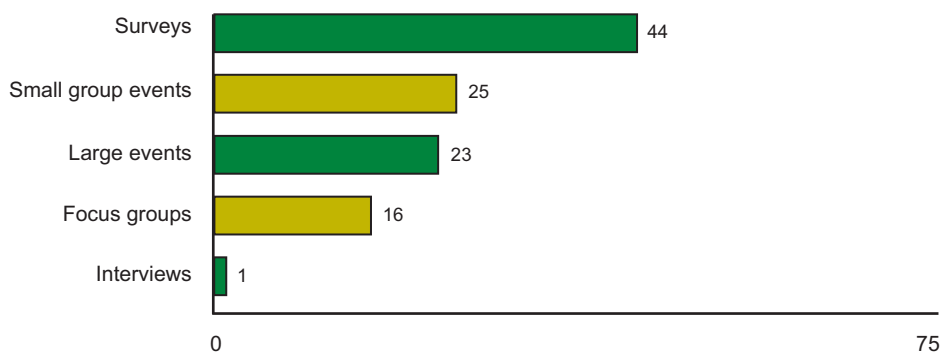
Table 3 Focus of consultation

Children and young people were asked:	Examples
To identify and/or agree priorities and/or targets	'We consulted extensively to engage others and get agreement for our priorities for improving outcomes.' (Metropolitan LA)
For their views based around the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes	'Young people explored the five outcomes through giant board games – what the outcomes meant to them and what they felt the priorities should be.' (Unitary LA)
About issues that are important to or affect them	'We asked children and young people what they thought about living in [name of authority], what they liked and did not like.' (London borough)
Whether the CYPP reflects their views	'Children, young people, parents and carers will be consulted specifically on how well the plan reflects the issues they have raised and to identify new areas for inclusion in future revisions of the action plans contained within the CYPP.' (Metropolitan LA)
About service development	'What can public services do differently to improve life for children and young people in [name of authority] over the next three years?' (London borough)
For their views on other topics	'The children and young people's views presented below are drawn from a range of independently commissioned consultation exercises carried out by youth services, schools, Connexions and other agencies. "I want my social worker to be like me." (BME child with a disability)' (Unitary LA)
About other issues	'How they would like to be engaged in the future on issues that affect them.' (London Borough)

Methods of consultation

Where details are included in the CYPPs, the methods used to collect the views of children and young people are presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Methods used to collect views of children and young people

Two plans do not give any description of the consultation, and a third does not specify the methods used to consult children and young people (e.g. ‘... we consulted with children and young people.’)

Figure 1, refers to ‘small group events’. This includes a school council, Young People’s Parliament, or, in one case, a summer school:

‘Supported by [area] Youth Service and [area] Children’s Fund, eight young people aged 9 to 18 formed the “Young People Go Loud” Steering Group. They spent a week at a “Summer School” to introduce them to the ideas and concepts of Every Child Matters, and enable them to contribute confidently and effectively.’ (Unitary LA)

Figure 1 also refers to ‘large events’, for example, a conference for young people:

‘Young people in particular have been very engaged in identifying the priorities and told us during three major events the important changes they wanted to see the partnership make.’ (London borough)

The characteristics of the children and young people consulted

Numbers involved

It is not possible to provide details of the total or average number of children and young people consulted across the plans, as the CYPPs differ in the level of detail they provide (e.g. plans might specify the numbers of those involved for certain activities but not for others; plans might give ball park figures only). However, where plans do set out the number of children and young people involved by method, the following ranges are reported:

- from 66 to 9,929 involved in surveys
- from three to over 300 involved in small group events (e.g. where several small group events took place)
- from 50 to 1000 involved in large group events
- from 8 to 500 involved in focus groups.

Age ranges

Of the 75 plans, over half specify the age-range of the children and young people who were consulted. Generally, this ranges from five to 19 years. Almost a quarter of the CYPPs refer to having



consulted with those aged between 11 and 19; and just under a fifth state they consulted with five to 11 year olds. Other plans are less specific, mentioning, for example, 'different ages' or 'school aged children'. Unusually, one plan makes reference to consulting with 0 to 19 year olds, while another cites consulting with the under 5s using the Early Years Service. Overall, there appears to be no difference in the methods used to consult with the different age groups.

Key groups

Just over a third of CYPPs explicitly refer to specific sub-groups of children and young people involved in the consultation process.

'We have undertaken to be very accountable to the young people, especially particular groups; for example, young people looked after by the local authority, those with disabilities and those who live with considerable disadvantage.' (London borough)

Where these plans provide detail on the sub-groups involved (as the example above shows), these include, in order of frequency:

- looked after and accommodated children (LAC)
- children with learning disabilities or difficulties (CLDD)
- black and minority ethnic groups (BME)
- those not in education, employment or training (NEET) and Gypsy Travellers
- teenage parents
- care leavers and lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.

Those who live in considerable disadvantage, seeking asylum or who are young offenders are each referenced once. Furthermore, a range of consultation methods is used with each of the specified sub-groups.

The views of children and young people in the CYPPs

The analysis explored the ways in which the views of children and young people are reflected in the CYPPs and in the development of targets and priorities. Six plans do not specify how the views of children and young people were presented. Table 4 shows examples of the different ways children and young people's views are presented in the plans.

The following is an example from a London borough plan illustrating the link between the views of children and young people and the priorities:

Table 4 Link between the views of children and young people and priorities

Key Issues for Young People	Actions to Date	Further Action	Children and Young People's Plan objectives
More affordable Leisure facilities	New leisure contract for the coming 15 years will give reduced cost access	Development of the Youth Opportunity Card to increase access to Leisure facilities to vulnerable children and young people	Being Healthy 2.2 Enjoy and Achieve 5.2 Making a positive contribution 3.2



Table 5 How children and young people’s views are presented in CYPPs

Presentation of views:	Examples
Quotations and/or visuals	Some plans include drawings from children to illustrate their views, others use direct quotes, for example: ‘I love where I live because there is so much to do and the people are friendly.’ (London borough) ‘What young people said: “stop fast food on our high street or give us more options ...” (Unitary LA)
Summary of the views of children and young people	‘Children and young people have expressed very clear views and have told us that they would like: [views of children and young people listed] ... These issues are well reflected in the priorities and objectives in the Children and Young People’s Plan.’ (London borough)
Direct link between the views of children and young people and the priorities	Plans report the views of children and young people under each outcome (see example provided in the Table 4). In one example, quotations from children and young people are cited with individual target numbers highlighted against each one. Another shows how the LA’s initial ten priorities have been amended in light of the contributions made by children and young people.

Involvement of children and young people in future developments

All but one of the plans make explicit reference to involving children and young people in the future development of the ECM agenda.

‘We will increase the involvement of children, young people and parents in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.’ (County LA)

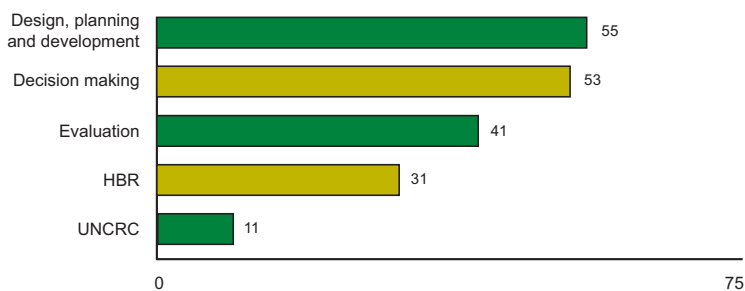
Interestingly, over a third of plans make specific reference to the Hear By Right (HBR) standards of participation to which they shall adhere.

‘The Hear By Right standards, published by the National Youth Agency in partnership with Local Government Association, outline a set of shared values for the participation of children and young people ... Using the Hear By Right standards as the basis for consulting with children and young people, will allow future consultations to be coordinated and to be based on common principles, facilitating on going consultation.’ (County LA)



Figure 2 illustrates the breakdown by type of future involvement.

Figure 2 Breakdown by type of future involvement



A minority refer to the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

'We will have a clear approach to citizenship, rights and responsibilities, based on the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child which fosters a culture of mutual respect.' (County LA)

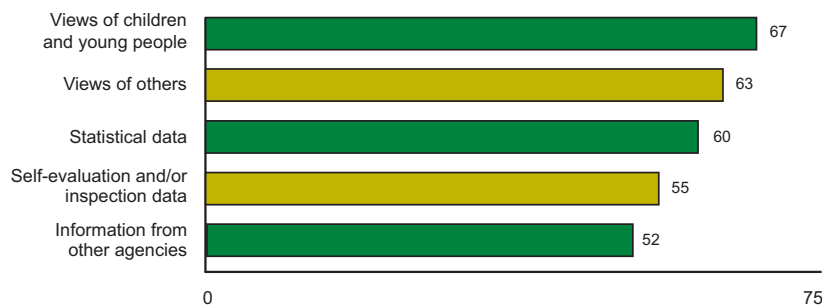
Needs analysis

All but one of the 75 CYPPs analysed make reference to having conducted some sort of analysis of need, with over two-thirds including a section on 'needs analysis' or equivalent and referring to a range of different data sources.

'To develop the plan we have analysed the needs and views of local children, young people and families. We have taken into account the recommendations of OfSTED, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the council's Annual Performance Assessment.' (Metropolitan LA)

'A range of information has been used to inform our analysis, including demographic data, performance data linked to the Annual Performance Assessment, and a range of local data and intelligence on how services are currently being used. The views of children, young people and families are a crucial element of this process, and these are sought through a variety of consultation processes.' (Metropolitan LA)

Figure 3 References to different data sources informing analyses of need



In terms of the analysis undertaken by LAs to identify targets and priorities, Figure 3 shows the number of plans that cite different data sources as informing their analysis of need.

Examples of the above data sources include:

- the views of others: parents, carers, persons or bodies representing children and young people or families, and community residents.

'The results of the [name of borough] Residents' Surveys in 2004 and 2005 have also been drawn on to provide adult resident perceptions, including parents' and carers' views on local services for children and young people.' (London borough)

- statistical data: the use of national and local data sets such as Census data, school performance data, health statistics, geographical statistics.

'YOT recorded a total of 4,144 offences from April 2004 to March 2005.' (County authority)



- self-evaluation and/or inspection data: for example from Annual Performance Assessments or Joint Area Reviews, but also self-evaluation and/or inspections of individual agencies.

'As part of the needs analysis we carried out an assessment against the key judgements in the new inspection framework for children's services (Joint Area Review). ... As part of this inspection we produced a needs analysis (as above) and a self-assessment document. We have been able to build on this information when writing this Children and Young People's Plan.' (Unitary authority)

- information from other agencies: information from a variety of sources including individual agencies' plans, reports, performance targets and meetings.

'The needs assessment has been carried out in partnership with the Children's Services and the Primary Care Trust and has included the voluntary and community sector and private sector providers. Data has been collected from a wide range of sources including demographic studies based on the Index of multiple Deprivation, educational attainment data, public health inequalities, teenage conception, youth offending, and substance misuse data.' (Unitary authority)

Notes

- 1 When interpreting these findings from analysis of 75 plans, it is necessary to bear in mind that LAs had freedom to draft their CYPPs in order to meet their needs and circumstances best. Therefore, there would be no imperative for every plan to include all the pieces of information and detail discussed in the findings in this paper.

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