



One minute guide

Voice and Influence Opportunities

No. 65, March 2025

What are voice and influence opportunities?

Voice and influence opportunities enable children, young people, parents and carers to have an influence over decisions and actions that affect them. There is more information about the importance of this in the [Voice and Influence guide](#).

Children, young people and their parents and carers should feel they can express their views and have their voices heard in all aspects of their lives including their home, schools, the services they use, places of work, local communities and their city.

How can services find out about and share voice and influence opportunities?

Services can sign up to receive regular communications from the Voice, Influence and Change Team to find out about voice and influence opportunities. This is also a mechanism for services to share opportunities and promote good practice.

Opportunities and good practice are also shared via Leeds Youth Voice social media platforms ([Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)) and the Child Friendly Leeds [Wish 3 webpage](#).

Services wanting to meet or consult directly with young people can contact the Voice, Influence and Change team who may be able to facilitate them meeting with youth voice groups in the city.

Children, young people, parents, carers and families who have contact with Children's Services

Staff working with individual children and families must ensure their thoughts, wishes and feelings are heard and influence decisions taken in meetings, reviews and plans and that they are kept up-to-date and receive feedback. Staff are also encouraged to ensure meetings are child and family centred, for example [Family Group Conferences](#).

In handling sensitive, complex or safeguarding issues there may be times when an adult advocate for the child or young person is able to support them to share their views. In Leeds, we commission an [advocacy service](#) to enable children and young people to have the opportunity to access this support. Advocates have access to training and resources to strengthen their knowledge and skills in building relationships and using creative approaches to seek the views of children and young people.

When children, young people, parents and carers feel their voices have not been heard or they have had a really positive experience they can contact the [customer relations team](#) for further advice and support.

Voice and influence opportunities for parents, carers and families

Children's centres: Parents and carers can be actively involved via group feedback, focus groups and service activity evaluation forms. Staff at individual centres can provide further information.

Schools/ colleges: Parents and carers can apply to become parent governors, take part in school consultations and some schools have active parent forums or parent councils.

Community: Local organisations and groups may provide opportunities for parents/ carers to have their say via consultations or getting involved in developing community projects. Parents and carers can also attend community committee meetings to share their views.

Citywide: Parents and carers can sign up to be part of the [Leeds citizens panel](#) and share their views on services the council provides and issues affecting where they live. There are also citywide parent/ carer forums for example for foster carers and for families with children with SEND. Find out more [here](#).

Voice and influence opportunities for children and young people

Schools / Colleges: Children and young people wanting to get more involved in decision making in their school/ college should speak to the member of staff responsible for the school council or student leadership to find out about the opportunities available. Find out more [here](#).

Community: Local groups may provide voice and influence opportunities for young people in the local area or who are accessing their services e.g. youth groups, young people led projects and campaigns, social action projects, recruitment panels and consultations. The communities team work with community committees to develop opportunities for 8-19 year olds to take part in to helping to decide how local funding is spend on youth activities. Find out more [here](#).

Citywide: The Voice, Influence and Change team run city wide programmes and projects provide for young people aged 10-19 (up to 25 with additional needs) to have their voices heard on city-wide issues, work with decision makers and campaign on issues that are important to young people. Find out more [here](#).

Issue based / targeted:

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can influence SEND services by joining the SEND Youth Council or taking part in city wide events and programmes for specialist settings and provisions.

Care experienced young people can influence social care services by joining the Care Leavers Council or Children in Care Council. Young people can also take part in city wide events and opportunities to participate in decision making processes.

There are also voice and influence groups and forums established by organisations supporting different communities such as LGBTQ, young carers, refugees and asylum seekers and young people involved in youth justice. Young people can join forums based on specific issues, for example health or the arts. Find out more [here](#).

Who are the key contacts?

For further information about the work of the Voice, Influence and Change team, you can visit their [webpage](#), or contact them via email at VIC@leeds.gov.uk. The team also have a presence on [Instagram](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#).