

MY MEETING: YOUNG PEOPLE'S STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATION IN REVIEW MEETINGS



INTRODUCTION

All children and young people in care have rights. These rights are set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Article 25 (review of treatment in care)

If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Young people's meetings are an important part of being in care. It is where key decisions are made, progress is reviewed, and future plans are put in place. But too often young people feel excluded or unable to participate from these meetings. Meetings which are all about them.

These standards for young people's meetings have been designed by young people with lived experience of care. They provide a framework for ensuring that children and young people have more ownership of their meetings, are more actively involved in them, and are therefore better supported to more fully participate in the decisions being made. Decisions which are all about them.

As the project group, we started by asking young people about their care planning and review meetings. We asked them what was going well, what wasn't working, and what could be done to make their meetings better.

These standards have been written by us, with input from many young people with experience of care, right across the region. They show how young people want to be involved in their meetings, to really be part of the conversations, and to have a say in the decisions that are being made.

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STANDARD

The young person will meet with the Chair in advance of their meeting to agree the agenda. They will also agree who will be present for each agenda item.

WHO?

In partnership with the Chair I want to help decide who attends my meeting. Some people should be there for it all, and others just for a little while.

“Would you want to attend a meeting about YOU, yet you don't know half the people there?”

“Why should my teacher or my sister's support worker/ counsellor know my whole life story, if I wasn't in care, they wouldn't know anything. They should only attend the part of the meeting that they need to or even send a report”

UNCRC
Article 3
Article 12
Article 13
Article 16

UNCRC

Article 3
Article 12
Article 13

2

STANDARD

All children and young people, irrespective of their age, will be supported to participate in their meeting if they want to.

WHY?

I want to be involved in decisions about my life in care, no matter how young I am. Support me to be involved in my meeting as much or as little as I want to be.

“

I haven't been invited to my meeting yet but I would like to so I asked and was told I was too young

”



3

STANDARD

All children and young people will have access to an independent advocate.

WHO?

I want to have support in my meeting from someone who is independent and is there to help me express myself.

“

I know what I want might not be the best thing, but I should at least have my views and opinions heard and not ignored

”

UNCRC

Article 3
Article 12
Article 13

UNCRC

Article 3
Article 12
Article 13

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STANDARD

How the meeting is held (face-to-face, via video call, etc.) is decided in partnership with the young person.

Young people are supported to attend their meeting in a way that encourages their participation.

HOW?

How I attend my meeting should be what suits me and my circumstances best. That may be face-to-face or via video call.

“

I like having my meetings face to face

”

“

Because of COVID we had our meetings over zoom I preferred this because I could hear what was being said and give my input but not have everyone staring at me, because I was able to keep my camera off

”

5

STANDARD

The meeting will take place in a venue that meets the young person's needs.

WHERE?

Hold my meeting in a place where I feel comfortable, and not too far from where I live.

“

My social worker's office is really far from my house, why do I have to travel to them why can't it be somewhere else

”

UNCRC

Article 3
Article 12



UNCRC

Article 3
Article 12
Article 13
Article 28

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STANDARD

Meetings will take place at a time agreed in partnership with the young person.

WHEN?

Not all young people like to be taken out of class to attend meetings. Talk to me about when the best time is to hold my meeting.

“

It makes us feel different they make us leave class early so we can go to these meetings then they talk about how we need to work better at our education

”

7

STANDARD

Young people will have a preparation discussion with their Social Worker at least three days before their review meeting. Any questions that might arise will be discussed.

WHAT?

Talk to me before the meeting about the questions that will be asked and give me time to think about my answer.

“

It feels like you are being interrogated, and not just by one person

”

UNCRC

Article 3
Article 13
Article 17



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STANDARD

Young people will have a preparation discussion with their Social Worker at least three days before their review meeting. Any decisions to be taken at this meeting, and the impact of such decisions, will be discussed.

WHAT?

Take time with me before the meeting to help me understand the decisions that may be taken and be clear what this decision may mean for me.

“ I know these meetings happen, but I don't always understand why decisions have been made and who was involved in it ”



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STANDARD

All meetings will include check-ins with the young person to ensure they are comfortable. Refreshments will be provided.

WHAT?

Make the meeting less formal and more comfortable. Make sure the room isn't too hot or too cold, and give me something to drink and some snacks to help me relax.

“ It makes it feel less formal ”

“ It doesn't feel as if everyone is staring at you if there is food there or sweets ”

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STANDARD

The discussions at young people's meetings will be solution focused, aimed at supporting young people to develop and grow.

WHAT?

Instead of focusing on things I haven't done, or haven't done well, talk about how best to support me to make a change.

“

I don't attend because they always look at the bad and make me feel worse than I already do then I get angry and lash out

”



11

STANDARD

All meetings will end with a recap of the things that are going well, and a commitment to support the young person where there are challenges.

WHAT?

Sometimes we must talk about things that are uncomfortable, but I want the meeting to end positively, focusing on how we can all work together to change things.

“

You would think I do nothing good they always focus on the negatives, that's why I don't attend, it makes me so angry then I lash out, they never look how I attended school that whole week, or see how hard that was for me but I still did it

”

12

STANDARD

At the end of the meeting the Chair will spend time with the young person to make sure they fully understand the decisions made, answer any questions they may have, and book time in to prepare for the next meeting.

ENDINGS

Sometimes I am not comfortable saying that I don't understand something in front of lots of people. Please take time to make sure I understand.

“
someone just making sure I really did understand really made the difference for me
”

“
It makes me feel stupid having to say that I don't understand especially in front of all those people
”

THANK YOU!

“Thank you” to the young people of the project group, who gathered the views of their peers and used that information to create the standards.

- Naomi McGrady
- Rebecca Taggart
- Maddison Hill
- Destinee Ruddell
- Colm Concannon
- Matthew Doyle
- Martha Mc Callin

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