

# Safeguarding 7-minute briefing: Voice of the Child

## Remember... VOICE

- Value the views and opinions of children
- Open, friendly and non-judgemental - develop trusting relationships
- Involve children in the planning, design and delivery of services
- Communicate through a wide range of methods
- Ensure that views are captured to shape future services

## What is the voice of the child?

This is a phrase used to describe the real involvement of children and young people. It does not only refer to what children say directly, although it is essential this is heard, but it refers to many other aspects of their presentation. It means seeing their experiences from their point of view and taking into account the child's daily lived experience. The phrase means more than simply seeking their views; is about enabling them to take as active a role as possible in decision making.

## What is good engagement?

- Strong relationships between children and workers
- Children are part of decisions made about them
- Children have an understanding of their situation
- There is good recording of children's views
- Children's views are reported, considered and recorded in reviews and plans are formulated to reflect them

## What else should I do?

- Create opportunities to see the child alone
- Present the true voice and avoid adapting language for adult purposes
- Consider non-verbal communication and observations of their behaviour
- Use the [Safer Cornwall - Channel Panel Escalation Policy](#) when partner agencies are challenging or negating my reports of the child's voice



## What is the legal context?

- A legal duty exists to listen to the wishes & feelings of all children, including children in care.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child states that it's a child's right to be heard & taken into account
- The Voice of the Child is part of Ofsted inspections

## What is the local context?

Reviews have found that opportunities were not always created to ensure that children's voices were heard and recorded; with one child saying, "why was I not asked what outcomes I wanted". Other reviews highlighted that practitioners have listened to the child, but their reports and concerns were challenged or negated by other agencies, sometimes bolstering parents denial of the concerns

## What should I consider?

- Consider what skills children may need to participate effectively
- Make sure you plan ahead
- Think about the best environment for the child
- Adapt your use of language to suit the child
- Use everyday interactions and natural encounters, alongside using specific tools to support direct work with children

[Click here to take the quiz](#)

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