

The Impact of Children and Young People's Participation on Policy Making



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1. Key findings

Children in Scotland was commissioned by the Scottish Government to explore the nature and type of impact children and young people's participation has had on national and local policy making in Scotland. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people (CYP) have a say in all matters that affect them, in accordance with their rights as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over recent years we have worked with diverse Scottish Government directorates and teams to support children and young people's engagement in policy making.

The research conducted for this project identified that children and young people are engaged in policy making in Scotland in a variety of areas. By using a case study approach, we were able to look in depth at children and young people's engagement in six different policy areas: police powers; child rights; domestic violence; children's hearings; sex education; and human rights.

We found that organisations delivering engagement work use a variety of methods to support the involvement of children and young people. These include utilising creative methods such as drama and art to support young people to participate and be heard, roundtables bringing decision makers and young people together and young people leading on research.

The six case studies revealed that children and young people have influenced policy across the country. Their input contributed to policy decisions relating to police powers. They have been instrumental in the creation of a new health improvement post. And they have ensured that children's hearings better meet the needs of those in Renfrewshire.

However, the impact of the case studies could still have been greater. More meaningful ongoing engagement would have supported children and young people to talk directly to decision makers about the issues that mattered to them. More funding would have allowed for more preparation and greater depth of participation – this could have supported the involvement of younger children and other seldom heard groups.

There also must be far better feedback from policy makers to children and young people, so they know how their contributions have made a difference.

2. Introduction

Background to this study

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children have a right to be listened to and to be taken seriously. This right should extend to all aspects of their lives, from family settings, schools and communities to society as a whole. However, we know that *how* children's voices, needs, ideas and recommendations are gathered and used varies considerably. Shier (2001) outlines five different levels of engagement:

1. Children are listened to
2. Children are supported in expressing their views
3. Children's views are taken into account
4. Children are involved in decision-making processes
5. Children share power and responsibility for decision making.

There are many reasons why good quality engagement with children and young people within policy making is worthwhile, alongside ensuring that their rights are upheld. Hudson (2012) states these include:

- The development of better policy that more clearly reflects children's views and understanding
- The development of skills, knowledge and understanding of civic rights and responsibilities amongst participants
- Increased confidence and self-esteem amongst participants.

Participation in Scotland

There has been clear progression within Scotland over recent years in terms of involving children and young people in policy making. The development of the previous Child Poverty Strategy and peer led approaches to substance misuse education are two good examples¹. More recently the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014² introduces provision to take account of the views of children in decisions that affect them and has resulted in the introduction of the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)³. Alongside this, various organisations have developed considerable levels of knowledge, skills and experience in engagement work to support policy development and implementation.

However, we also know that there is still much progress to be made. Together's report on the State of Children's Rights in Scotland (2016) recognises that engaging children and young people in policy making is still "ad hoc" and leaves some groups

¹ Hudson K (2012) 'Evidence Briefing: Participation of children and young people in policy development and implementation' in *The Conversations Project: A Report to the Steering Group of the National Review of Services for Disabled Children and Young People*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00395693.pdf>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

³ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/families/rights/child-rights-wellbeing-impact-assessment>

underrepresented (particularly younger children and children with additional support needs)⁴. Furthermore, while more children and young people may be involved in consultations, the extent to which their input has resulted in direct changes to policy making or implementation is unclear.

About this study

Children in Scotland was commissioned by the Scottish Government to explore and evidence the nature and type of impact children and young people's participation has had on national and local policy making in Scotland. The study utilises six qualitative case studies, illustrating a range of participation and engagement work across Scotland. Case studies were selected from responses to a national survey seeking examples of where children and young people had been involved in policy making. Data collection included qualitative interviews from policy makers, organisations supporting engagement activity, and where possible, children and young people themselves. Key findings from across the case studies are discussed and conclusions and recommendations for future action are made to support future policy making. A detailed methodology is available in Appendix A.

Key questions the research addresses are:

- In what ways do organisations involve children and young people in national and local policy making in Scotland? (including which methods they use; at which stages of the policy making process children and young people are involved, and the extent; on which types of questions children and young people are involved)
- What types of impact does children and young people's participation have on organisations' decision-making process and the decision reached?
- What lessons can organisations share on what is working well and what could be improved in involving children and young people in national and local decision making?

The first two research questions are addressed in the results section of this paper, while the third is answered in the discussion section.

Limitations of this study

The study relied on 6 case studies. It was not within the scope of the study to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the entire extent of children and young people's participation and engagement work within Scotland, or to be able to fully identify and quantify the impact this activity has had on policy making. Rather the intention was to describe and illustrate different ways in which participation work has developed in Scotland and to identify some key success factors and limitations to support effective child and young people-orientated policy making in the future.

⁴ Together (2016) State of Children's Rights in Scotland. Edinburgh: Together
<http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/TogetherReport2016.pdf>

3. Overview of case studies

Case study 1: Equally Safe

Young adults lead a consultation event to inform the Equally Safe delivery plan

Overview

The Equally Safe strategy aims to eradicate violence against women and girls. The Scottish Government's initial strategy was published in 2014 and has since been refreshed in 2016. A public consultation on the draft delivery plan to support the strategy's implementation has recently closed.

The project sought to engage children and young people with experience of domestic violence to work with key decision makers to co-produce an approach that would support those children and young people who had experienced domestic abuse. There were various stages of engagement with children and young people throughout the Equally Safe project. The initial policy work stemmed from the Scottish Government but Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) subsequently took a key role. CRFR worked with a group of eight young people, all aged 18+.

The project received funding from the Scottish Government, with CRFR also receiving matched funds from The Economic and Social Research Council (ERSC) impact acceleration fund.

Case Study 2: Perth and Kinross SNAP Innovation

Young people discuss their human rights

Overview

The Scottish National Action Plan (SNAP) Innovation project was a mechanism for informing citizens about human rights and to gain an understanding of their knowledge in the area. The Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) had a key role in this work, with the support of the Scottish Government.

The 2015 Perth and Kinross engagement event engaged with approximately 10 young people through the Perth and Kinross YMCA, alongside other members of the community and members of staff from the Scottish Human Rights Council and Perth and Kinross Council.

Perth and Kinross Council accessed funding for the SNAP Innovation pilot scheme through the Scottish Government and the SHRC to deliver the engagement events.

Case study 3: Proposed police powers to stop and search children and young people for alcohol

Young people influence Scottish Government decision not to introduce new police powers

Overview

In 2015, the Scottish Government consulted on proposed new police powers to stop and search young people for alcohol. Due to the impact of the potential new power on children and young people, consultation with those under 18 formed a significant part of the process. The engagement with children and young people in turn fed into the code of practice on stop and search, outlining how and when it should be used.

A variety of stakeholder organisations conducted engagement work with over 50 young people on behalf of the Scottish Government. This included commissioning Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament to host engagement events, with other organisations such as Children in Scotland organising additional engagement work with young people.

The Scottish Government actively commissioned engagement work from the third sector to feed into the consultation process. However, this was not always sufficient and organisations used core staff time to cover some costs.

Case study 4: Renfrewshire Champions' Board

Care experienced young people meet regularly with their corporate parents to discuss and influence council policy and practice

Overview

The Renfrewshire Champions' Board project is a partnership between Renfrewshire Council and WhoCares? Scotland and provides care-experienced young people within Renfrewshire the opportunity to interact with corporate parents and influence council policy.

The board has had a stable core of around eight young people and is currently going through some expansions to widen its reach and ensure the voices of more care-experienced young people are heard.

The Champions' Board has been in operation for over five years and has run continuously since its inception. It was influenced by a successful model from Dundee where a similar partnership had been formed between Dundee City Council and WhoCares? Scotland.

Renfrewshire Council has, until recently, been the sole funder of the Champions' Board. However, additional funding has been received from the Life Changes Trust to support its work. This is not expected to cause any issues of sustainability for the Champions' Board as it sits within the Council's Children's Services strategic plan.

Case study 5: UNCRC Reporting

Young people lead the UN engagement with children and young people as part of the periodic review of the UK's implementation of the UNCRC

Overview

Every state that has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is required to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on how it is fulfilling its obligations. These periodic reviews are expected to happen every five years.

As part of the fifth periodic review of the UK, the Vice-chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Amal Aldoseri, visited Scotland in 2015. The focus of this visit was to listen to the voices and experiences of children and young people on the implementation of child rights in Scotland.

The visit was hosted by the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP), with support from the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland (CYPCS) and Together, and involved touring various sites across Scotland. Certain priority areas in relation to children's rights had been identified prior to the arrival of the UN representative through a survey of Together's members that informed the decisions about these sites.

Two representatives from SYP then reported to the UN committee as part of the reporting stage. This case study takes into account both aspects of the engagement work.

This project was developed and taken forward independently of the Scottish Government. SYP, CYPCS and Together funded the engagement work entirely out of staff time. The organisations at individual sites also self-funded their involvement in the project.

Case study 6: Young Edinburgh Action

Young people worked with Edinburgh City Council and Centre for Research on Families and Relationships on improving young people's experience of Sex Education across the city

Overview

Young Edinburgh Action (YEA) is a wide-ranging project that engages children and young people in a variety of different action research groups. The Better Sex Education group focused on the delivery of sex education in Edinburgh schools and looked to give young people a voice on the issue. About 200 young people were involved in a topic prioritisation event from which 15 young people aged 14-17 were subsequently involved in the action research project.

The project started within Edinburgh City Council and had some input from Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR). For this case study a small focus group was conducted with the young people who were involved and their

quotes and views have been used alongside those of the organisations involved in the project.

Young Edinburgh Action sits within Edinburgh City Council and as such is a self-funded programme by the council.

4. Results

In what ways do organisations involve children and young people in national and local policy making in Scotland? (including which methods they use; at which stages of the policy-making process children and young people are involved, and the extent; on which types of questions children and young people are involved)

Survey responses

In March 2017 Children in Scotland circulated a call for examples of where children and young people had been involved in policy making. This survey collected 37 examples, from a diverse range of policy areas and local authorities⁵ (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Policy areas that young people were engaged with on (Respondents' Indicated Areas)

1. Safety/crime prevention	2. Child's voice/Justice
3. Community planning	4. Gender-based violence
5. Education, Curriculum for Excellence	6. Knife crime
7. Wellbeing	8. Early years
9. Technology/Glow	10. Communication/engagement
11. Sport	12. Children's rights
13. Future planning	14. Food
15. Digital learning	16. Mental health and wellbeing
17. Learning (attainment gap)	18. Strategy
19. Stop and search	20. Learning disability draft delivery plan
21. Crime	22. Education
23. Education	24. Health
25. UNCRC reporting	26. Policing
27. Human rights	28. Organisational policy
29. Austerity	30. CYP priorities for local policies
31. Children's services	32. Sex and relationship education

Table 2: Local authority area

Local authority area	Number of responses
Edinburgh (City of)	8
Fife	6
Glasgow	5
South Lanarkshire	4
Scottish Borders	4
Renfrewshire	3
Midlothian	3
Argyll & Bute	3
West Lothian	3
East Lothian	2

⁵ Some examples submitted worked in multiple local authority areas

North Ayrshire	1
Aberdeen (City of)	1
Stirling	1
East Ayrshire	1
Perth and Kinross	1
Dundee (City of)	1
South Ayrshire	1
Inverclyde	1
Shetland	1
Falkirk	1
Dumfries and Galloway	1
Across Scotland (Undefined)	2
No data provided	15
TOTAL	69

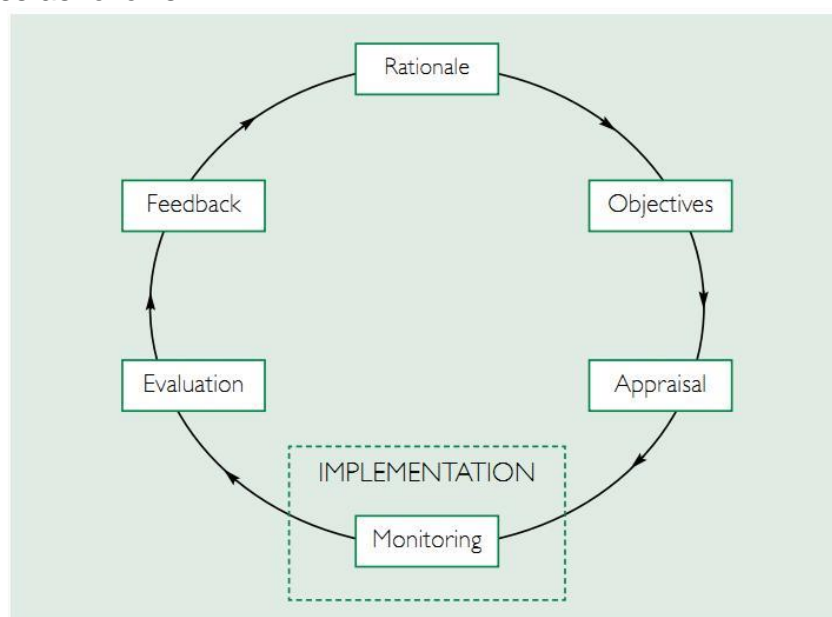
These results, while not comprehensive, illustrate the range of ways children and young people are supporting the development and implementation of policy making across a wide range of policy areas.

Case studies

Our case studies have also provided a more in-depth look at some of the ways in which children and young people are involved.

4.1 Stage of policy making

Wherever possible children and young people should be engaged throughout the whole policy-making process⁶: setting the agenda; developing the policy; and involved in its implementation and evaluation. The ROAMEF⁷ cycle outlines the policy process as follows:



⁶ Lansdown, G, 2001, *Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision Making*, UNICEF, [online] Available at < <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf> >

⁷ <http://www.roamef.com/what-we-do/roamef-cycle>

The six case studies illustrated examples of engagement work taking place at all stages of the policy making cycle, although not all case studies involved children and young people throughout the whole process.

Developing a rationale / setting objectives

Young Edinburgh Action (YEA) and Renfrewshire Champions' Board utilised different models to involve children and young people at the early stages of policy development.

YEA's action research model utilises a co-design approach that allows young people to become involved at the earliest stage and decide what issues to focus on and then conduct the research on their chosen priority areas. Each year a gathering event is planned by young people, which gives them the opportunity to discuss issues of importance to them. This was the origin for the Better Sex Ed project. After gathering events, smaller action research groups are formed around the prioritised topics and young people are able to make autonomous decisions about which research group they wish to join. Following the research phase, young people then aim to directly influence policy decisions through meetings with representatives from City of Edinburgh Council and agree recommendations for action.

*"We were both involved with the planning of the gathering, the event where young people come along and vote on the issues that are most important."
(CYP involved in Youth Edinburgh Action)*

The Renfrewshire Champions' Board utilised regular meetings of the group to allow young people to drive the conversations and decide what issues to discuss. The regular meetings of the Board supported by WhoCares? Scotland have allowed the children and young people involved to identify the issues that affect them as care-experienced young people in Renfrewshire and take this to their corporate parents at six monthly meetings.

By enabling children and young people to set the agenda from the outset, policy makers improved their ability to make changes that reflect children and young people's needs and priorities.

Appraisal

Although children and young people were not involved in the development of the original Equally Safe strategy, they subsequently became involved in the strategy refresh and development of the Equally Safe Delivery Plan. Their involvement has allowed them to appraise the existing strategy, make suggestions for changes and improvements and inform the development of the delivery plan to support its implementation. This was undertaken through a series of meetings and events.

Similarly, the consultation on proposed new police powers to stop and search children and young people for alcohol also involved children and young people appraising a proposed new policy. Following feedback from a range of children and young people, the Scottish Government decided not to proceed with their proposal.

It was widely felt that this was a very positive example of where children and young people's voices have had a direct and immediate impact on policy making.

"Children and young people aren't a homogenous group, they had different perspectives on this, it was a very interesting and intricate and nuanced area for us, so that was really great." (Stop and Search case study)

When considering the impact of the consultation, it should be recognised however, that the result did not necessarily reflect the views or preferences of all young people who took part. Two different consultations found that there was some support for the new powers among young people, but that this was qualified by various other scenarios or outweighed by other feelings. It is important to remember that children and young people are not a homogenous group.

Monitoring and evaluation

As part of their fifth periodic review of the UK's implementation of the UNCRC, the UN engaged with children, young people and the organisations that worked with them to gather alternative, independent perspectives on how rights were being upheld in Scotland, and across the UK.

As a first step, some children and young people were surveyed through Together to gather views on their priorities. This shaped the visit of UN Rapporteur, Amal Aldoseri, who engaged with young people at various sites to understand their views on issues of children's rights. The delivery of engagement work was almost entirely led by young people, and as such offers a positive model for engagement that could be used in other circumstances. Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) took on the facilitation role and led discussions between the UN representative and the children and young people at different sites. Due to the time and financial constraints they were unable to be involved in the planning stages however.

"It's intrinsic within the UNCRC reporting system that there has to be alternative reports, and the only way you can do an alternative report is by involving children and young people." (UNCRC Reporting cycle)

There was recognition by some organisations involved in organising the visit that children and young people should have been involved in a more meaningful way in earlier stages of the review process and that this did limit its overall impact. As with other participation activity, engagement across the whole policy cycle is recommended.

Feedback

Feeding back to children and young participants is a crucial element of the engagement process, but unfortunately is an aspect that is often overlooked in the pressure to move on to other actions and priorities. Among our case studies, there were varying degrees of success in how well children and young people were fed

back to about how their input had influenced change. Some projects were successful in providing feedback at certain stages but not at each stage.

The Perth and Kinross SNAP innovation, for example, has struggled to provide the young people involved or the youth worker who supported them with any feedback on the impact of the engagement or how the project had progressed since the event.

Conversely, the young people involved in Young Edinburgh Action (YEA) received feedback directly from decision makers throughout the project, through regular meetings and discussions with council officials. They were also given informal opportunities to provide their feedback on the project throughout. However there was no formal accessible mechanism in place. The fluidity of the project was noted to make this slightly complicated.

Other young people who were involved in the YEA research were kept up to date through a child-friendly report that was shared with schools. However, it is unclear how widely this was disseminated among pupils. A film was also produced by the Better Sex Ed group to reflect on their involvement in the action research group and report on their findings, which was also shared with schools. This involved considerable consideration about confidentiality and anonymity.

However, there have been challenges of continuing the feedback loop to young people now that the better sex education project is finished. Due to the success of the project there are still impacts being felt, but as time passes since the completion of the project, it can be hard to ensure the young people receive word of this.

The Renfrewshire Champions' Board utilised fortnightly meetings to provide a mechanism for regular feedback on the progress of the work of the Champions' Board. Corporate parents also had the opportunity to feedback at the six-monthly reviews. On these occasions the Champions' Board are able to hear directly what has happened and to ask questions about progress. The young people are also given the opportunity to work with the corporate parents to co-design feedback methods to ensure that it was accessible and engaging for them. This is a positive development which could become more widespread practice in other engagement work.

“We would generally ask the corporate parents to feed back to the children and young people at their formal meeting.... young people had raised employability as an issue and Fire and Rescue have taken on a number of young people in very tailored work experience placements...at the meetings following they would then feedback to the young people about what they had done.” (Renfrewshire Champions' Board)

As part of Equally Safe there were various methods of feedback to young people throughout the process. However, due to changes in personnel at the Scottish Government it was not entirely clear how far reaching this had been. Ongoing mechanisms for feedback between Scottish Government and young people were similarly unclear.

The Centre For Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) utilised an online message board to update the young people who were involved in the Equally Safe work. This was seen to be an accessible way for them to be involved. This was also seen as a potential method for allowing continued interaction and feedback between the young people and Scottish Government, with appropriate measures in place to ensure safety. CRFR will also be using an evaluation session to allow the young people to feedback on the overall process.

The feedback as part of the Stop and Search project is still ongoing. Organisations that were involved were informed that an announcement had been made. More detailed and tailored feedback is currently being developed for specific organisations involved in the consultation process. Additionally, a guide for young people is being created that will outline 10 key points from the code of practice to increase their knowledge of stop and search.

However, a number of issues around feedback were also expressed in relation to the Stop and Search project, particularly around a lack of ongoing dialogue with those children and young people who took part.

Feedback in the UNCRC Reporting project took a variety of different forms throughout. The groups involved in the visit received copies of the draft report that was to be sent to the UN to agree the outcomes. The report to the UN was designed to be accessible for children and young people and copies of the UN report were then passed on to organisations so that they could see the concluding observations, and pass this on to the children and young people who were involved. However capacity and resource meant that opportunities for young people to evaluate the process were limited. The Scottish Government updated on actions following from the Concluding Observations at a stakeholder event in January 2017, which was attended by representatives from SYP and the Children's Parliament.

4.2 Participation methods

Young people who are engaged in policy making should be given the opportunity to influence the methods of their engagement with the policy-making process⁸. This can include everything from: deciding on the structure and style of engagement opportunities; taking part in peer-led research; influencing how their views are reported on; agreeing how they would like to stay informed and involved with the work and how they receive feedback. Partnership working can be a useful method to facilitate engagement where policy makers do not feel they have the skills themselves. Adequate preparation time is vital to ensure that methods are appropriate, accessible and offer meaningful opportunities for children and young people.

Our research identified that a variety of methods have been utilised to involve children and young people in policy making in Scotland.

⁸ Lansdown, G, 2001, *Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision Making*, UNICEF, [online] Available at < <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf> >

Co-design approaches

Young Edinburgh Action (YEA) use co-design approaches to identify young people's priorities and agree the methods for pursuing their research questions. As outlined below, this initially involves an engagement day developed by young people for young people. In the case of the Sex Ed project, the young people involved in the project then developed surveys with YEA staff to gather the views of young people across Edinburgh. The results of the research were then taken to a 'Conversation for Action' meeting with decision makers at Edinburgh City Council to agree how to progress the research recommendations.

Co-design approaches like that developed by YEA offer substantive and meaningful opportunities for children and young people to get involved in policy making, while still offering support and expertise from professionals. This can at times be a balancing act for the professionals involved:

"We have a lot of debates within Young Edinburgh Action about whether it's youth led or not, and my personal view is it's a partnership between young people and adults...we all bring our own views and experiences to the table." (Young Edinburgh Action, organisation lead)

"As a researcher and a youth worker I'm constantly treading this tightrope between wanting to support young people to do the best research that they can but also wanting to respect their agency and their ideas and what they want to do." (YEA, organisation lead)

Positively, YEA appear to be very alive to these tensions and work them through with the young people involved.

Children and young people-led research and facilitation

A key feature of the Equally Safe project was an engagement event with decision makers which was designed and facilitated by a group of young people. This was felt to be quite a challenging role for the young people to take on, particularly as the event proved to be bigger than originally anticipated. It was, however, successful and rewarding for all. One key success factor identified was that the young people had previous involvement in the Voices Against Violence project and therefore had some experience of working with professionals on a similar topic area.

"Basically the young people ran it, they chose the methods of engagement, they devised the whole programme, and I gave information (about the scope) because they weren't fully involved [in that aspect]." (Equally Safe organisation lead)

In the case of the UNCRC Reporting project, the UN rapporteur's visit was almost entirely led by young people. MSYPs took on the facilitation role and led discussions between Amal Aldoseri and the children and young people at different sites. It was

felt that this created a more positive, inclusive atmosphere where children and young people were more able to participate and share their views:

“So the great thing about this was the fact that it wasn’t “ta da, it’s the UN!” – it’s about Amal being in a place where they felt comfortable, where they felt safe, where they felt able to talk about their lives.” (UNCRC Reporting organisational lead)

This opinion aligns with wider evidence which indicates that peer research and facilitation enables participants to feel more comfortable and able to share their views and perspectives.⁹

Creative methodologies

The case studies offered many examples of where creative methodologies, including fun activities, games and visual arts had been utilised to increase the accessibility of events and evidence gathering sessions.

The SNAP innovation pilot project utilised creative methods to facilitate the involvement of children and young people and support them to contribute in a way that made them comfortable. This involved various elements of group work and then drama-based methods to allow them to provide feedback to the group at large. The facilitation at the event was viewed very positively in terms of making the young people in attendance feel comfortable enough to participate openly and honestly on the subject of human rights, even when they had negative opinions to raise.

“There were very creative ways of doing feedback, almost like the news reports, where they had this cardboard cut-out TV and young people stand behind that and feed back what they had done in small groups to the bigger group.” (SNAP Innovation, organisation lead)

The consultation on police powers to stop and search also involved different methods of engagement for different groups of young people due to the variety of organisations delivering this work. Children’s Parliament utilised creative arts-based participative approaches that are their standard for such projects, and these were helpful, particularly in enabling younger children to approach the complex issue. Children in Scotland utilised a round table approach to bring young people together with adults to discuss the proposed legislation.

As with peer research, creative methodologies are another supportive and effective mechanism to enable children and young people take part in policy making, and are likewise recommended for future activity.

⁹ Burns, S., Schubotz, D. (2009) ‘Demonstrating the Merits of the Peer Research Process: A Northern Ireland case study’, *Field Methods* 21, no. 3, (August) 309-326.

Youth-led reporting

A key feature of the Renfrewshire Champions' Board model is regular meetings with strategic leaders in Renfrewshire Council. This offers Board members the opportunity to report directly to individuals with the power to make changes to local services. Through this route they had been able to achieve a range of changes including providing free leisure passes for care-experienced young people and altering the timing of children's hearings so they did not fall in exam periods. However, the group did recognise that ultimately they wished to move beyond helpful practical steps to more strategic change.

"I think sometimes you need your quick wins like your access to leisure, stuff like that...but there needs to be a change at the end of it. So I think that's the bit we are continually working with the council to make sure happens. And I think it is happening to be fair." (Renfrewshire Champions Board, Organisation Lead)

This is an important observation, and one we will return to in the discussion section below.

4.3 Challenges of participation

Planning

Several organisations involved in supporting children and young people's engagement indicated that they would have liked to have had the opportunity to involve children and young people earlier in the policy making process, where they could have had the opportunity to influence the scope of the policy work and shape the engagement methodology. This opportunity had not been made available, and they had been brought in later in the process with a specific task in mind – to run an engagement event for example.

Funding

Interviewees in three of the six case studies suggested that funding was inadequate to undertake the quality and depth of participation work that ultimately was desired. In some cases this limited the opportunities children and young people had to be involved, in others it meant organisations putting in their own resourcing, particularly for staff time to support children and young people's engagement. This is clearly an issue that needs serious consideration by policy makers wishing to involve children and young people in the process. Supporting children and young people in policy making is time intensive if it is to be done well, particularly if you are seeking to include the views of children and young people whose voices are seldom heard, and for whom large engagement events will not work.

"I think that to support the obvious commitment from the Scottish Government towards the rights of the child to participate in decisions that impact on their lives, that needs to be coupled with resourcing and adequate time to conduct meaningful participation and engagement work across Scotland." (Stop and Search, Policy Lead)

Timescales

Timescales were raised as a key challenge to engagement in a number of case studies, either because they were too short and did not offer enough opportunity to plan and engage meaningfully, or because the policy making process was too protracted, meaning that keeping participants involved and informed became problematic. As much as possible, clarity from the outset about timescales and processes, and regular feedback on progress will help children and young people understand the policy making-process and mitigate some of the problems associated with pace of change.

“The delays from government [meant] it was hard to keep their interest as well.”
(Equally Safe, Organisational Lead)

Inclusion

One consequence of lack of planning opportunities, short timescales and limited resources is that it limits the opportunity to engage with a diverse group of young people, particularly those whose voices are seldom heard. While some of the case studies had been able to engage with a wide variety of children and young people, such as the UNCRC reporting case study, or with specific groups such as care leavers, others had struggled to extend their reach: in terms of numbers able to engage, or with specific groups such as younger children or boys and young men. We also heard very little from the case studies about the involvement of children and young people with additional support needs, such as physical conditions and communication difficulties. Given that children and young people might have diverse needs and priorities, limited opportunities to engage may ultimately mean that policy making is not fully rounded or does not address some important concerns.

“They quite rightly thought that there should be younger children [involved]...which we agreed with.” (Equally Safe Policy Lead)

Feedback and follow up

We highlighted the importance of feedback in section 4.1 above, and it was clear that providing feedback to young participants was a challenge for all the six case studies in different ways. In four of the case studies this was because policy makers had not provided this to share with young people or the organisations supporting them. Interestingly, these were the four projects with a national remit, where the relationships between participants and policy makers and influencers were less well established. It is vital that all policy makers, whether locally-based or national, view feeding back to participants as an essential responsibility to see through, otherwise they risk disenfranchising those whom they have previously wished to engage with.

“The event happened and there was the usual ‘you’ll hear follow up’ and so on. But...we brought the young people to the event - we haven’t heard anything since 2015.” (SNAP Innovation, Organisational Lead)

4.4 What types of impact does children and young people’s participation have on organisations’ decision-making process and the decision reached?

The impact children and young people had over policy could broadly be split into two distinct sections: the influence they had over decisions reached in relation to policy, and the clear impact on organisational and individual practice. There were also marked differences in the overall impact that different projects had. The level of impact in many cases appears to have been influenced by how engaged the young people were throughout the whole process.

Policy/Decision making

The views of children and young people will inevitably be only one of a number of factors that influence the development of policy, as other factors including budgets, legal requirements, service priorities, wider public opinion, and existing systems and structures will also influence. Wherever possible, children and young people should be aware of both the potential for change and limiting factors at play at the start of any engagement work so they are clear how and where their views will fit into the decision-making process¹⁰. The role of organisations that support children and young people’s engagement is to encourage policy makers to give children and young people’s voices sufficient status and recognition amongst other evidence that may influence decision-making.

The quality of the engagement work, whilst vital in terms of ensuring that children and young people are able to fully express their opinions, will not alone be significant enough to influence change. It does require a commitment from policy makers to genuinely listen and respond to what children and young people have told them.

From the examples given in the case studies, it appears that children and young people tended to have more impact on policy making where they were engaged at an early stage in the process and had influence over the scope of the issue and engagement methods. Engagement should therefore be sought at this stage, wherever possible.

The Young Edinburgh Action (YEA), Renfrewshire Champions' Board, the consultation on police powers to stop and search and the UNCRC reporting case studies all identified examples where children and young people had a clear impact on policy making in Scotland.

Through the work of the young people involved in YEA a new health improvement post has been created between Edinburgh City Council and NHS Lothian. The young people’s voices are also feeding into the delivery of sex education in Edinburgh as a video they made is being shown during teacher training on the topic.

¹⁰ Lansdown, G, 2001, *Promoting Children’s Participation in Democratic Decision Making*, UNICEF, [online] Available at < <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf> >

The Renfrewshire Champions' Board has also had several tangible impacts on policy within the council region. Within the Children's Hearing system the layout of rooms was changed and information cards were also introduced. Care experienced young people will also be provided with leisure passes as a result of the Board's influence.

The young people involved in the stop and search consultation process were identified as having raised issues throughout the process that adults would not necessarily have thought of. Their involvement was felt to have clearly impacted on the decision to not give the police the new power to stop and search children and young people for alcohol. Beyond this the children and young people involved also influenced the development of a new code of practice on how to conduct stop and search with children and young people and also a young person's guide on the topic.

"As a result of the consultation engagement there's a new section in the code of practice specifically on searches of children and young people under 18, which is quite ground-breaking." (Stop and Search, organisation lead)

However, it was also highlighted that not all children and young people supported the decision to not grant the police the new powers. This raises an interesting question about how we balance the different views of children and young people. Ensuring that children and young people are well briefed and understand the nature of the policy area concerned is a vital part of this. But we must be open to how we approach differing views and not disregard opinions because, for example, they come from younger children or those with additional support needs.

The children and young people involved in the UNCRC reporting cycle had made an impact on policy making, particularly in terms of influencing the rapporteur's report to the UN. Their involvement also contributed to the evidence session at the UN where the Scottish Government gave evidence, and Amal Aldoseri was able to use the evidence gathered from children and young people to directly question Scottish Government officials. Several MSYPs were also given the opportunity to attend the cross examination in Geneva and give evidence.

The Scottish Government's draft policy position paper in relation to the Concluding Observations was circulated to relevant organisations in December 2016 and discussed at an engagement event in January 2017. Ministers have indicated that they will include actions to address the Concluding Observations, as appropriate, in the report to Parliament in 2018, in line with Ministers' statutory duties under Part 1 of the 2014 Act. However, it remains unclear if and how the Scottish Government will involve children and young people in shaping this, or will feed back directly to them. Clarity from the Scottish Government in terms of how this will be taken forward would therefore be welcome.

There also appears to have been a similar lack of conversion about the evidence gathered through the engagement work from the SNAP Innovation project into policy outcomes. At present the work has been used to develop a report but it is not yet clear whether it influenced policy in Perth and Kinross, or more widely.

The ability of the young people involved in Equally Safe was limited due to the lack of resources to allow them to be involved. They were, however, felt to have had an impact on the development of the Delivery Plan, although it was noted that it was hard to quantify exactly where this change had occurred. They also appear to have influenced the development of a new Equally Safe participation project that will allow for more young people to be involved.

Organisational practice in participation and engagement with children and young people

High quality engagement work can also have a snowball effect in terms of promoting further high quality participation work, through influencing the practice of those involved. This can mean that children and young people are engaged with more meaningfully or simply that their views are considered with greater regularity by decision makers. There were several clear examples of this throughout the case studies and policy makers should be cognisant of these sorts of impacts as much as the impact on the final policy or decision taken.

The YEA, Renfrewshire Champions' Board and Equally Safe projects identified that the children and young people involved influenced organisational and individual practice in various ways. A member of staff involved in YEA identified that going forward they ensure that young people are participating in projects and have a key co-design role. YEA also appears to have influenced the practice of Edinburgh City Council with some of the young people involved now sitting on an advisory group looking at sex education.

The young people involved in Renfrewshire Champions' Board are believed to have had an impact on their corporate parents within Renfrewshire Council. It was felt that care-experienced young people are now considered with more regularity in policy making in Renfrewshire. The corporate parents have also fed back that on an individual level working with the Champions' Board has increased their knowledge of care-experienced young people and the issues that they can face.

“Whenever they're making decisions about policy that it's always in their head to think about how this particular policy might impact on care-experienced young people.” (Renfrewshire Champions' Board)

5. Lessons from the case studies for policy making

What lessons can organisations share on what is working well and what could be improved in involving children and young people in national and local decision making?

A key lesson that organisations can take from this research is that participation work must be exactly that, participative and not just tokenistic. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation suggests that participation is more meaningful when more power and control over decision-making is devolved to citizens and the findings from these case studies support this theory. Therefore organisations and policy makers should look to utilise engagement that gives children and young people the opportunity to plan, shape, lead, review and change policy wherever possible. Where this approach is taken, children and young people appear far more likely to be able to influence policy making.

Of the six case studies in our research, YEA appeared to have had the most success in involving children and young people at every stage of the process and their work led to clear, tangible policy developments. Similar results were seen in the work of the Renfrewshire Champions' Board, where the young people were setting the agenda.

Where children and young people cannot set the agenda and the issues, it is important that a blank slate is provided to allow them to have a meaningful impact on the policy. The Police Powers to Stop and Search project identified that where the government provided a genuinely open consultation, children and young people were able to have more of an influence over the outcome of the policy. While this process may not necessarily mean that their views alone will always inform the outcome of the policy, it does mean that they have the opportunity to shape it.

It is also vitally important to meet with children and young people in an environment where they feel comfortable and safe. This can mitigate other issues with participation work and allow children and young people to contribute their views in less than ideal conditions. However, this must not be taken as an excuse to skip steps, instead this should be seen as a vital part of the overall process that contributes to high quality participation. The positive impact of this was seen in the UNCRC reporting cycle where the clear choice by practitioners to support this allowed children and young people to engage meaningfully with the UN Rapporteur.

There also needs to be appropriate time built into policy making to ensure that children and young people's engagement and participation is an embedded part of the policy making process. Recruiting and preparing young people to engage on policy issues, particularly where they are sensitive, needs support and investment over time. Good planning by organisations and policy makers in advance of engagement can make it far easier to build preparation work into a project.

The Equally Safe project raised this exact issue. There were no younger children with lived experience able to participate due to the sensitivity of the issue, whilst the young people who were able to engage were able to do so due to their prior engagement with policy-making processes. Time and funding set aside for preparation work could clearly have mitigated some of these issues and indeed the

new participation project that has been funded should allow such preparation work to be built in and support more meaningful representative participation going forward.

Adequate resourcing for engagement is absolutely vital to meaningful engagement, and was highlighted as a challenge in nearly all the case studies. Where dedicated resource was given on an on-going basis, such as with Young Edinburgh Action and Renfrewshire Champions' Board the impact and value is clearly evident. This includes recognition and recompense for the staff time needed to recruit and support children and young people's engagement. Too often this fell to third sector organisations to shoulder these costs, or make up the shortfall. Policy makers wishing to engage with children and young people need to ensure that adequate resource is available in the budget.

Organisations should also focus on consistent long-term engagement. The types of engagement in the case studies varied considerably from one-off events to ongoing engagement over considerable lengths of time with the evidence showing that more successful projects tended to be those with longer term engagement with children and young people. Policy makers therefore need to think more creatively than one-off consultation events.

However, we appreciate that it may not always be possible to start with a blank sheet, and that certain single issue discussions will arise. Organisations and policy makers therefore need to be clear on what decisions and areas are open to direction and change. To support children and young people to be involved in such one off events or discussions, policy makers and organisations need to build adequate flexibility into their approaches to allow for young people to control other aspects of the engagement. They also need to consider the appropriate support to make it accessible for all to be involved, particularly younger children and those with additional support needs.

Such flexibility was built into the UNCRC youth-led visits, the facilitation by young people as part of Equally Safe and the creative methods used in both the SNAP innovation project and Children's Parliament's consultation work on Stop and Search. This flexibility provided opportunities to support children and young people to have more control, whether through shaping the programme and the methods, get involved in facilitation or reporting and sharing findings creatively. This supported children and young people to have control over various other aspects of the work and led to successful points that may otherwise have been missed.

The case studies all identify that policy makers also need to be clear about how the views of children and young people have informed changes in policy, and be willing to share this. Feedback on the process and outcome of engagement work is essential. This must be undertaken on a timely basis at appropriate intervals, and using engaging and age appropriate approaches. Policy makers should recognise their responsibilities to ensure feedback is given, so that young people know what impact their input has had, and where change has happened or if their input has not affected any change. If particular time delays or blocks have arisen, it is also important that young people know that and the reasons behind them.

With examples such as Stop and Search it is quite clear where children and young people have made a difference, but it helps that this was a very specific issue being

consulted on. Broader topics, such as child rights may be more difficult to measure impact against, as they involve lots of different policy areas. However, this should not be seen as reason for inaction and all projects must ensure that feedback is forthcoming on the progress of their engagement work.

All case studies highlighted the importance of skilled professionals in supporting the delivery of successful participation and engagement work. The UNCRC reporting case showed that skilled professionals can ensure successful participation work even under time or resource pressures.

The case of Renfrewshire Champions' Board showed that relationships between policy makers and skilled engagement professionals can develop over time and highlights the value of partnership working.

Similar partnerships should be sought by organisations who want to engage with children and young people but do not have staff with the skills or confidence to facilitate this. The case studies give examples of several organisations in Scotland with the skills and expertise to support engagement including WhoCares? Scotland, Scottish Youth Parliament, YMCA, CYPCS, Children's Parliament, Children in Scotland, and many others.

Some case studies in this report purposefully focused on the needs and views of specific groups, such as care-experienced young people or those with experience of domestic violence. Others were looking to engage with a broader range of children and young people. Some described difficulties in reaching specific populations, such as young men or younger children, and this is not uncommon. For example, we know from our other work that less engagement work takes place with younger children and those with additional support needs for various reasons: because it is often seen as 'specialist'; because methods have not been adapted to support their engagement; or because the networks and connections are not there to enable recruitment.

Almost all of the case studies identified that policy makers need to improve on linking policies and procedures to participation and engagement work, knowledge of this was however far stronger in the organisations delivering the work. Understanding of child rights and the policies and procedures to support participation are a key tenant of the Council of Europe measuring tool, however, policy makers often felt that knowledge of training or policies was for other departments. Staff who are looking to work with children and young people directly or indirectly need to be far clearer about policies and processes like child protection, child rights, consent, confidentiality and the responsibility to provide accessible complaints procedures to support their practice and also to ensure the wellbeing of the children and young people involved.

Organisations and policy makers also need to ensure that expectations and timescales take account of the fact that engaging with policy making is only one aspect of children and young people's lives. As with professionals, young people find themselves pulled in different directions from various aspects of their lives including school, family, and personal interests. Timescales and expectations must reflect this. Children and young people have the right to drop out of engagement work and lose interest. Where policy making will be slow, such as in the case of Police Powers to Stop and Search, children and young people should be informed of this at the start.

6. Conclusion

The six case studies selected offer a range of insights into how children and young people's voices and experiences have influenced policy making in Scotland in recent years. Cumulatively they illustrate engagement with a variety of children and young people, including some of the more vulnerable children and young people in Scotland. This included care-experienced young people, those with lived experience of domestic violence and children and young people living in more deprived areas of the country.

Young participants in the case studies were involved in influencing a range of policy areas, including police powers, child rights, domestic violence, children's hearings, sex education and human rights. Our initial survey data identified they have also been involved in a far wider range of areas. Some of these policy areas the young people prioritised themselves, and others that were part of wider Scottish Government policy-making processes. Methods of engagement also varied, from one-off events and visits, to more detailed influencing work over longer time frames.

Evidence of impact included changes to local policies, such as Children's Hearings or sex education and changes to national policy. Young people's perspectives informed reports, guidance and codes of practice. However, none of the case studies highlighted was without its challenges and key themes have emerged that indicate a number of factors that appear to be crucial to ensuring that children and young people's participation is meaningful and impactful.

The evidence from our case studies identified that, at present, engagement work is heavily weighted towards the 'data collection' stage, whether this is an event, a visit, focus group, survey or interview. It is important to ensure that more emphasis is placed earlier in the process on planning, and later on evaluation and feedback.

Better planning is required in relation to timescales for participation work going forward. This is particularly important when the participation work is focusing on sensitive subjects as it is likely that preparation work will be required to support the children and young people to participate.

More money is required to support the involvement of children and young people in policy making. Where there were ongoing projects with long-term or permanent funding streams, participation work tended to be more meaningful. Secure funding streams would allow organisations to build in preparation work and ensure a wider range of views.

Partnerships, such as that between Renfrewshire Council and WhoCares? Scotland can facilitate meaningful engagement. Organisations and policy makers who lack the skills to conduct engagement work should seek out partnerships with organisations who can support them to work meaningfully with children and young people.

There has to be an effort to engage with a wider range of children and young people on a wider range of issues.

Feedback from both policy makers and organisations to children and young people also needs to improve. Ensuring that young people know about the success or lack

thereof is essential to closing the feedback loop. Missing out this final step creates an environment that will lead to disengagement.

The conclusions we have drawn from this short piece of research have identified several key recommendations that policy makers and organisations conducting engagement work should consider going forward.

7. Recommendations

- Young people's participation must be made more meaningful by building their engagement in from the start of the policy-making process at the planning stage. This includes prioritising topic areas, setting the agenda and designing the methods of engagement.
- Policy makers must be encouraged to think more creatively than one-off consultation events. If these do arise, there are still opportunities to involve children and young people and give them more control, whether through shaping the programme and the methods, getting involved in facilitation or reporting and sharing findings creatively.
- Scottish Government and local authorities should build in consistent funding streams to promote the participation of children and young people. Wherever possible this should support ongoing, child led engagement where children and young people are given a space to raise issues that they want to talk about.
- More must be done to support the participation of vulnerable groups, including those with additional support needs and younger children. Adequate time, resource, planning and partnerships can also support wider engagement and need to be factored in. This can support preparation prior to engagement work and the development of 'specialist' methods.
- All participation and engagement work should be supported by staff with the right skills and experience. Partnership working is often an effective option here.
- Participation and engagement activity should be underpinned by a child rights approach. Policy makers should be aware of their responsibilities under the UNCRC and understand their role in enabling children and young people to have their rights upheld.
- All participation and engagement work should be consolidated by ongoing and accessible feedback both throughout and at the end of the project, regardless of the success or impact of the engagement.
- Children and young people usually engage in policy making as volunteers, and have wider lives to consider. Timescales and expectations must reflect this. Organisations must consider how they can best thank or recompense children and young people for their contributions. They should also respect children and young people's right to drop out of engagement work at any point.
- The Scottish Government and partners need to find ways of measuring/quantifying the impact of young people's involvement. Wherever possible children and young people should be involved in evaluation of engagement activity.

Appendix A: Methodology

It was not within the scope of this study to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the entire extent of children and young people's participation and engagement work within Scotland, or to be able to fully identify and quantify the impact this activity has had on policy making. Rather the intention was to describe and illustrate different ways in which participation work has developed in Scotland and to identify some key success factors and limitations to support effective child and young people orientated policy-making in the future.

A case study approach therefore was selected for this study, as it offers a good means to understand complex situations and explore relationships between actions and outcomes¹¹.

There were several steps to this study: a survey to identify potential cases; a prioritisation exercise to select the cases; qualitative research with multiple stakeholders to gather data to inform the cases; and analysis and synthesis of qualitative data to develop 6 cases studies.

Initial survey

Organisations across Scotland were invited to submit examples of work where they had developed and delivered participation and engagement work with children and young people to influence policy development or implementation. In order to capture this information, we developed a brief online survey, which focused on the following information:

- Name and brief outline of the participation activity
- Demographic information about participants
- Geography
- Policy area and stage of policy making (development, implementation)
- Whether children and young people involved in the activity are contactable
- Contact information

The survey had a mixture of open and closed questions. Closed questions allowed us to identify particular demographics and timeframes for each project. Open questions allowed us to capture the stories of our participants in more detail.

The survey was launched on 6 March 2017 and closed on 16 March 2017. Information about the survey was distributed via the Children in Scotland membership list (6300 contacts), via social media, and directly to organisations we know have undertaken participation and engagement work with children and young people to inform policy making in Scotland.

¹¹ George, A. L. and Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Science*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

The survey received 37 responses to be considered for case study from a range of voluntary and statutory organisations across Scotland, influencing diverse policy areas.

Case studies selection

Exclusion criteria

In order to select the most relevant, up to date cases, we identified the following exclusion criteria, which were agreed with the commissioners:

- Engagement work that had been reported on more than three years ago
- Participation and engagement work undertaken for reasons other than policy making / implementation
- Organisational policy development

Three responses were excluded as a result of this criteria, resulting in 34 responses that were discussed for case study selection.

Selection process

All 34 included survey responses were plotted according to the following criteria:

- Stage of policy making / implementation as outlined in the ROAMEF policy cycle¹²
- The policy area
- Geography - national and local activity, rural and urban engagement
- Demographics
- Dates of work - we asked for recent examples, reported on within the past 3 years
- Whether participants were contactable

Children in Scotland, together with the commissioners, then discussed the responses collectively and prioritised 6 responses (and 2 reserves) to focus on as cases. These were selected to give a good range of examples according to our criteria outlined above. It is important to state that many additional examples could have been selected in addition to these eight and the selection is no reflection on either the quality or impact of the responses received.

The responses selected to form case studies were as follows:

1. Equally Safe
2. Perth and Kinross SNAP Innovation
3. Police Powers to Stop and Search Children and Young People for Alcohol
4. Renfrewshire Champions' Board
5. UNCRC Reporting Cycle
6. Young Edinburgh Action

¹² <http://www.roamef.com/what-we-do/roamef-cycle>

Case study data collection

The case studies allowed for collection of qualitative data; this was gathered from a minimum of two perspectives:

- The policy maker
- The organisation developing and delivering the participation work

The initial remit for the project had been to interview one organisation but certain case studies utilised interviews with more than one organisation to give a more rounded view of the engagement work. We also conducted a focus group for one project with some of the young people who were involved in the engagement work to gather their views on the process. Ideally we would have included interviews with children and young people for all the case studies. This was, however, not possible within the scope and timescale of the study.

Interviews with professionals

Six policy makers and six representatives from organisations were interviewed for the project. Because of the short timescale and limited budget for this work, interviews with all professionals were undertaken by telephone. It was anticipated that interviews would take roughly half an hour, however this was varied and depended on the project and respondent.

Semi-structured interview schedules were developed to guide the interviews, focusing on the following topic areas:

- About the policy/legislation area
- Views on the purpose of the engagement – why they did it
- Methods - what they did, who with, when and how
- How evidence was used
- Perspectives on what went well and what didn't go so well. Anything they would have done differently in retrospect and why?
- Perspectives on impact of participation – what did it change/affect?

The questions for interviews and focus groups was informed by the Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool¹³. The tool has been designed as a method for evaluating national governments' performances in implementing children's rights. This allowed some assessment about whether certain key factors that promote meaningful participation are being met and provided the basis for recommendations.

Focus groups with young people

Recruitment of children and young people took place through the organisations responsible for their participation. All participants were given an (age appropriate) information sheet about the research, and were asked to complete and return a consent form (with parental consent requested for those aged under 16).

¹³ Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/16806482d9>

A focus group was utilised to gather information from the young people involved on the Young Edinburgh Action project.

All interviews and focus groups with professionals and young people were recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions were coded thematically and the data from the policy maker, organisation and children and young people's perspectives was synthesised and written into short, accessible case studies. It was agreed with the commissioners that the structure of the case studies would follow the interview topic guide and include a short discussion section.

Limitations of methodology

As discussed above, the six case studies form a small sample of all the participation and engagement work with children and young people in Scotland to inform policy making, and as a consequence they should not be viewed as representative of the whole. The short timescales involved may have restricted the number of responses received, for example. Furthermore the qualitative research methods did not allow for interviewing all those involved in the cases and perspectives and insights may have been missed. This is particularly the case for those cases where we were unable to include the perspectives of children and young people involved.

Nevertheless, we believe that that the evidence produced in these case studies provides valuable evidence of the types of participation and engagement work that has taken place in Scotland in recent years, and has allowed us to draw observations about the success factors and limitations of current approaches, thus adding to the existing evidence base in a meaningful way.



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