**Why should we complete voice of child work?**

Voice of the Child reflects the reality of the child’s life. It empowers and respects children and their views, it supports and informs decision making in matters affecting their lives, improves children’s outcomes, helps early identification of worries/safeguarding, builds trust and relationships.

**It helps us get it right for our families!**

Local Authorities have a responsibility in asserting the voice of the child, ensuring children’s voices, opinions and feelings are considered in any support provided and offered.

Voice of Child is embedded in legislation and law. **Children and Families Act 2014** States that children should be allowed to express their views and have their views considered in the decision making around their welfare. The child also has a legal right to have their voice heard in any legal matters affecting them.

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018** provides guidance for organisations working with children highlighting the importance of listening to children is a key part of safeguarding

Voice of child must be included in all **Early Help Assessments** and Team Around the Family meetings. This should be shared during all meetings and not added to paperwork after the meeting is held.

Voice of Child work is an integral part of the **Ofsted Framework.** Ahead of and during an inspection pupil questionnaires are completed and considered. Ofsted inspectors talk to children during an inspection to gather their views.

.

[Voice of the Child Legislation UK: What It Is and Why It Matters](https://www.theaccessgroup.com/en-gb/blog/hsc-voice-of-the-child-legislation-uk-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters/#:~:text=Local%20authorities%20have%20a%20crucial%20responsibility%20in%20asserting,rooted%20in%20both%20legal%20mandates%20and%20ethical%20obligations.)

**Where will your unicorn take you?**

**How can we complete effective voice of child work?**

Here in North Tyneside, we use the **Signs of Safety** model to inform how voice of child should be gathered. What is working well, what are we worried about and what needs to happen should be translated into various engaging activities to help gather good quality voice of child ensuring the child’s views are heard and explored further

By understanding a child or young person’s identity. Those who are underrepresented, the LGBTQ community, those seeking asylum or refugee status, understanding diverse cultural and ethnic beliefs and customs, those with complex mental and physical health needs.

By understanding the different ways children communicate, each child will have a preferred way to communicate, this should be considered when planning voice of child work. It is not a one size fits all.

By gaining essential skills and knowledge to help us understand and reflect on the voice of the child

*“I’d want a unicorn!” Great, where will it take you? Where won’t it take you? Who can ride your unicorn with you and who can’t?*

*“I want a car!” Where will you drive it? Who can have a lift in your car? Who can’t, why?*

By building trusting, supportive relationships with children

**Useful links**

Voice of child resources can be found on North Tyneside Early Help

[www.my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/500/early-help](http://www.my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/500/early-help)