

Camden Children's Fund Consultation & Participation Annual Report 2004-2005



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Summary

Consultation is a key part element of Camden Children's Fund. Consultations took place to inform the commissioning and development of projects. Since then consultation and participation activities have been developed to give children, young people, their parents and carers a voice and a real say in Camden Children's Fund. Camden Children's Fund has a part-time (0.6) Consultation and Participation Officer who co-ordinates this work.

During 2004-2005, **517 children and young people** and **300 parents** were in contact with the consultation and participation service. A total of **70** children and young people were regularly supported. The total budget for the year was **£26,000.00**. Nearly three-quarters of this was spent on staffing. Almost £4,000 (15%) was spent on direct consultation and participation activities.

Key activities during 2004-2005 were:

- Young Evaluators
- Camden Children's Fund Newsletter and Camden Fever
- Children's Advisory Groups
- Bullying Prevention Project Training
- Somali Supplementary School Project Survey 2004

The key achievements were in these core areas of work, in particular the Young Evaluators and Camden Fever news team.

The role of the Consultation and Participation Officer was evaluated during 2004-2005. The report found the role was valuable and being conducted to a high standard. Key recommendations are being addressed.

Key areas for future development are:

- Develop consultation and participation strategy
- Develop parent/carer participation
- Mainstreaming activities/post
- Capacity building (supporting projects, providing training)
- Supporting children, young people and families to be involved in participation activities.

Introduction

Consultation and participation is a key element of the Children's Fund. Camden Children's Fund (CCF) is committed to giving children aged 5 to 13 years old across Camden a real say in the development of children's fund projects, to ensure that the services we provide are responsive and meet the real needs of children living in Camden.

The philosophy underpinning the Fund is that children and their families need to be fully involved in service design, delivery and evaluation in order to achieve a genuinely inclusive programme which is attractive and accessible to hard to reach groups.

Camden Children's Fund Consultation took three stages:

1. Initial consultation

As detailed in the original submission to The Children's and Young Person's Unit. These consultations were integral to the commissioning process and mapped out six broad project areas based on the needs of specific groups in Camden.

2. Development consultation

Delivery agencies contracted to provide services in the six project areas were required to undertake further consultations within the first three months of their contracts. The aim of these consultations was to identify the requirements of clients/potential clients.

3. Delivery consultation

Delivery agencies developed continuous improvement strategies, involving children and parents in the ongoing development and evaluation of projects.

Since these consultation stages CCF has been working with projects to develop participation activities. There are three levels to this participation for parents, children and young people:

Levels of Influence	Involvement in Decision-making
Strategic	CCF partnership Commissioning, planning and reviewing
Project	The project delivery
Individual	The service individuals and families receive directly

Currently the most impact is being made at the project level.

Consultation and Participation Officer

The Consultation and Participation officer post started in January 2002. The post is line managed by the CCF programme manager. There has been an increase in the hours of this post (from 0.4 to 0.6) and currently the post is part-time for 3 days per week (21hours).

The purpose of this post is to lead on and co-ordinate consultation with children and young people to ensure that they are actively involved in the design and delivery of services which impact on their lives.

The post provides:

- Support and advice
- Training
- Guidance and support materials
- Developing new and innovative methods
- Central resource of consultation materials
- Details of other consultations

Client Profile

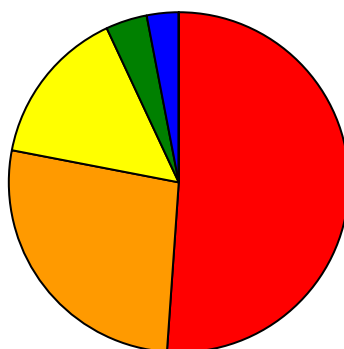
During 2004-2005, 517 children and young people had initial contact with the consultation and participation service. 300 Parents also had initial contact.

A total of 70 children and young people were regularly supported. Of these 64% were female and 36% male. Most of the children and young people who receive regular support are those that volunteer to get involved in participation activities (CAG's, Camden Fever, Young Evaluators).

Children and young people are recruited for consultation and participation activities through the project managers of the Children's Fund projects. Where required support is provided to projects to enable recruitment.

The basic ethnicity breakdown shown below highlights that children and young people from Asian and Chinese communities have not been represented in the service. This may be a reflection of the ethnicity breakdown for all Camden Children's Fund project. This needs to be explored further.

Ethnicity



- White (51%)
- Black (27%)
- Mixed ethnic background (15%)
- Refused/preferred not to say (4%)
- Other ethnic background (3%)
- Asian (0%)
- Chinese (0%)

Forty percent of those regularly supported had special educational needs.

As the service provides support to projects to enable them to effectively consult and involve children and young people the impact of the service reaches beyond these figures.

Children and young people from the Peace of Mind project are the only group not to have had direct contact with the service.

Budget

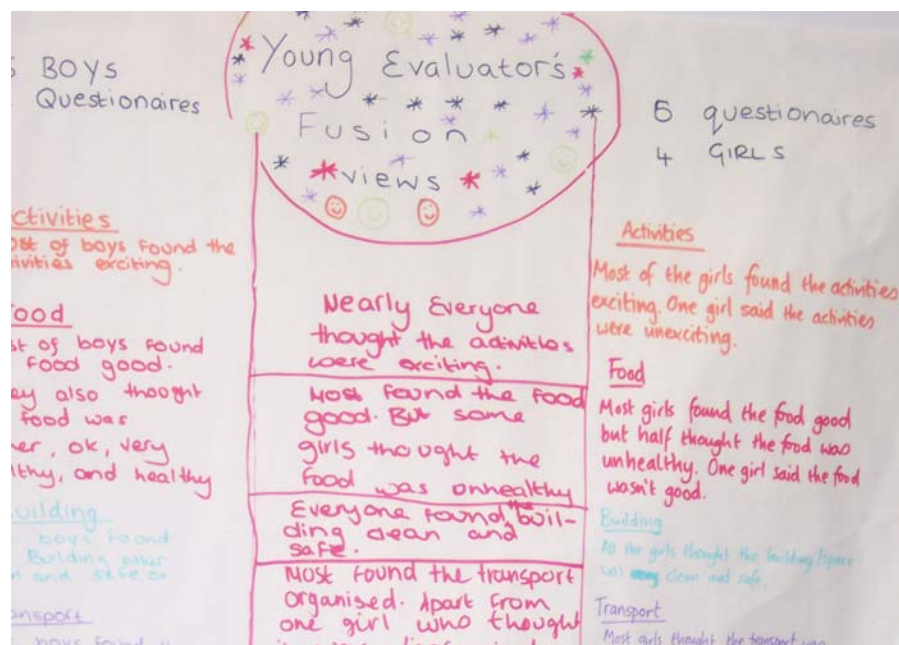
The total budget for 2004-2005 was £26,000.

Budget summary for 2004-2006	
Salary	£18,749.87
Newsletter printing	£1,842.00
Conferences	£714.00
IT equipment	£735.00
Consultation and Participation Activities <i>(Printing, transport, refreshments, stationary, events)</i>	£3,959.13
TOTAL	£26,000.00

The budget for 2005-2006 is utilising subjective codes to allow the amount spent under Consultation and Participation activities to be broken down by activity (e.g. Young Evaluators and Camden Fever).

Consultation and Participation Objectives 2004-2005

- To ensure that there is recorded evidence (verbal, written, observation) of the views of children, young people and their families influencing changes within and across all projects in relation to service planning, delivery and evaluation.
- To ensure that children and young people are involved in the local evaluation process to ensure that their views and experiences are included and considered as part of the overall Camden Children's Fund evaluation.
- To establish and promote Children's Advisory Group training for all project staff, children and young people.
- To develop and support the involvement of children, young people and their families in producing the Camden Children's Fund Newsletter.
- To develop and support Somali Supplementary Schools Project in producing a children's satisfaction survey and report.



Flipchart from Young Evaluators session

Consultation and Participation Activities

CCF has a wide range of consultation and participation activities. The commitment from the children and young people and the evaluations show that participants enjoy the activities. The benefits of consultation and participation for organisations and individuals are well recognised. Below are just some of the recognised benefits to the participants.

Personal development

- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Team building
- Decision-making skills
- Listening skills
- Respecting others views and opinions
- Negotiation skills
- Increasing Self-worth, Self-esteem and Confidence

Social and political education

- Children's rights
- Communities
- Decision making structures
- The ability to influence decisions
- Contributing to change
- Active participation in the community

The actual impact of our activities on children and young people has not been systematically evaluated. This is a key area for future work and a "speak out" survey has been designed to start this process.

Young Evaluators

During the 2004 summer holidays, nine young people from four CCF Projects attended a four-day workshop in which they became Young Evaluators. The Consultation and Participation Officer and the Local Evaluator, aided by two colleagues, facilitated the workshop. The Young Evaluators learned about evaluation and designed a questionnaire, which they used when they interviewed twelve young people from Fusion and fourteen from Our House.



Young Evaluators during training

The Young Evaluators analysed the responses to the questionnaires and, for both Projects, found that nearly everyone was positive about the suitability of their Project activities and about the staff. They also thought that the Projects had helped to improve their lives.

Generally, there was a feeling that both Projects would benefit by having more and longer trips, more sporting activities, more arts and crafts, more dancing, drama and singing, and more or better meetings. Many young people also wanted more equipment for their Projects.

In February the group met again to receive further training and to redesign their questionnaire for the Somali Supplementary School Project.

Camden Children's Fund Newsletter and Camden Fever

The Consultation and Participation Officer co-ordinates the Children's Fund Newsletters. A key part of this work is co-ordinating the Camden Fever Young News Team.

Quote from News team member

"It's so great I wish I never had to leave".

During 2004-2005 the Camden Fever News Team produced two newsletters for children and young people in the borough.



Members of the News Team at work on Issue 1

Each newsletter involves after school sessions where the team are supported in making decisions about the content and design and producing articles. The team meet at the City Learning Centre ICT centre.

A Camden Fever News Team member said through the project they learnt how to encourage others to get involved in the journalism business and how to write their own newsletter.

They also learnt how to be constructive when interviewing someone. They felt they had developed skills and confidence in meeting famous people and other people who have a disability.

The news team member felt that their contribution was to show people what journalism is like, showing what fun it is to write a newsletter, and being considered part of the group.

As a result of their involvement in the project they felt more confident, valued and more accepted. They said it had been a great experience.

Children's Advisory Groups

Two established advisory groups received support in recruitment, planning and running children's advisory groups. Discussions were held with other projects around establishing groups.



Advisory Group

Tuesday 7th December 2004

Shanice, Gemma, Tom, Luke, Myles, Jay, Stephanie and Jane

What we said...

Environment Department Consultation

Jane came to talk about housing. We did a quiz in teams and told Jane what was in each of the pictures she showed us. The pictures showed things like fire, locks and overcrowding. Then we discussed the pictures and talked about how important we thought each was for a house. Jane said it was very useful and interesting to hear your views.

Fusion Club Night

The group thought we should ask: What is your name? Would you like to get up and dance? Would you like to get up and sing? What do you think of the lights? Everyone agreed to help with the video box and postcard surveys.

Next Holiday - February Half Term

Suggestions for next holiday: Go-karting, cinema, swimming, tattoos, karaoke, face painting, Connect 4, Guess Who, bowling, horse-riding, ice-skating, snowboarding.

Equipment suggestions

More games, new dance mat (with real songs), monkey games, tennis balls, outdoor equipment, video.

Other Comments: Bigger space and more staff

Any Other Business - Thank-you!

Jay and Stephanie thanked the group for all their work this year and said they really value what everyone has to say. They wished everyone a good Christmas break and gave out presents.

Our next advisory group meeting:

Day: Tuesday 1st March 2006

Place: Swiss Cottage Library

Time: 3:45pm - 5:00pm

Fusion CAG minutes, December 2004

In March training was delivered on children's advisory groups to representatives from Camden Children's Fund projects. The training covered background information on consultation and participation to practical activities for advisory groups.

Programme

- Welcome
- Your experiences and expectations
- Why consult children and young people?
- What is consultation and participation?
- Advisory groups:
 - Recruitment
 - What makes a successful group
 - What your advisory group can do & activities
- Making a difference
- Next steps



Programme from training presentation

Quotes from training participants:

"Really valuable with lots of useful handouts."

"Very good and informative."

"It was extremely useful!"

Bullying Prevention Project Training

Bullying awareness and prevention training was developed and delivered in partnership with the Play Service Training and Development Officer. Five sessions were delivered to playworkers, and multi-agency groups. In total there were 122 participants from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Quotes from training participants:

"Good to hear the views and attitudes of young people."

"Views of young people surprising...positive and sophisticated."

Where's Your Head At?

In 2003 children and young people made the game "Where's Your Head At?". In 2004 visits were made to projects to play the game and to encourage participants to consider how to have a say and to get involved in making decisions.

Somali Supplementary School Project Students Satisfaction Survey 2004

During 2004 the Consultation and Participation Officer analysed and reported the findings of the Somali Supplementary School survey. A report was produced along with a child friendly summary of the results.

Evaluation

Evaluation, consultation and participation are closely linked. In addition to the Young Evaluators support is provided to projects in gaining service users views (children, young people, parents and carers). Some examples of this work are given below.

Fusion club night evaluation: supporting the advisory group to get surveys completed at the club nights, analysing and reporting the results. An new form was also devised to be used by projects to gather more in depth information.

Video diaries: at Fusion club night and our House Christmas party.

Parents Consultation and Participation

Parents' participation has been supported in a number of ways:

- Camden Children's Fund Newsletter
- Parents Events and groups (e.g. Fusion parents lunches)
- Parents evaluation forms (design, analysis, reporting)

Parents' consultation and participation is a key area for future development. Parents' evaluators training is currently being planned.

Wider consultations

Supporting children and young people to participation in consultation and participation activities beyond Camden Children's Fund:

- Three young people were involved in publicity and launch for Camden's Children and Young People's Strategy.
- Fusion advisory group took part in an Environment Department consultation on Housing.

Opportunities to get involved in wider consultations are also passed onto individual project managers.

Sharing good practice

A key part of the role involves sharing good practice within the council and externally. For example:

- National Children's Fund Seminars
- External participation networks
- Internal participation networks
- Member of communications and involvement group on multi-agency services for disabled children
- Provide advice and support to colleagues in the council and externally who are consulting with children

Evaluation of Consultation and Participation role

In February 2005 the local evaluators produced an evaluation report on the role of the consultation and participation officer. The report found that the role was a valuable one that was being conducted to a high standard. The report stated that indications were that all services offered would be in greater demand in the future. A number of key recommendations were made that are currently being addressed.

Mainstreaming

There are three elements to mainstreaming consultation and participation that the role is working towards:

1. Consultation and Participation activities in Children's Fund projects.
2. Consultation and Participation activities wider than Children's Fund projects.
3. Consultation and Participation Officer post

The extent to which projects have taken on board consultation and participation activities varies from project to project. Promoting participation activities wider than the Children's Fund has been ongoing and will is also being developed.

Training and Conferences

The following training, conferences and network events were attended:

- Children's Fund London Consultation Officers Network
- Swings and Roundabouts: Involving stakeholders in the evaluation of children's services (*National Children's Bureau*)
- Child Participation: Improving services through consultation (*Policy Review Magazine*)
- Website Training (*Camden Children's Fund*)
- Participation Workers Network England
- Total Respect Training (*Camden Social Services*)
- The listening to Young Children conference (*Coram Family*)
- Microsoft Project (*Education training*)
- Interactive whiteboard (*personal tuition at CLC*)

Achievements

During 2004-2005 a wide range of projects were developed and successfully conducted. The two key pieces of work that have been developed in this time have been the Young Evaluators and the Production of Camden Children's Fund Newsletters, in particular the young news team. The positive evaluations from these projects and the training delivered have been the key achievements.

Areas for Development

1. Finalising consultation and participation strategy
2. Mainstreaming consultation and participation
3. Increasing consultation and participation of parents and carers
4. Ensuring outcomes of involvement are better identified

Future

Key work outline for the future for Consultation and Participation is:

1. Develop consultation and participation strategy
2. Develop parent/carer participation
3. Mainstreaming activities/post
4. Capacity building (supporting projects, providing training)
5. Supporting children, young people and families to participate in activities

Reports on consultation and participation in CCF

Consultation & Participation Report. Stephanie Allison (2002)

Consultation and Participation in Camden Children's Fund. Emma Davenport (2004)

CCF Evaluation report: The role of the Consultation and Participation Officer. Barbara Wyvill and Richard Ives (2005).

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