

CELCIS Participation Network Event August 2022 | Keep The Promise by bringing participation to life.

Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for coming along today to our latest participation network event. We've got a really great day ahead full of lots of different speakers and presentations about different projects that we've got going across Scotland at the minute from very early projects that are just beginning to think about what they want to do right through to projects that have been running for years and really well established. So hopefully you will learn a lot and we'll enjoy the presentations as much as we do.

So, Hi everyone, now that you have had a bit of an introduction to the day, I thought it might be helpful just to give you a bit of information about the Network itself and a little bit of history of how it came about. The reason we set up this network close to four or five years ago now, is because while we recognise and love the fact that participation can be the most positive, life affirming, energy-giving work that we can do, and whilst it brings huge weight and power and legitimacy to have lived experience as part of and central to the work that we do, it can also come with challenges as well. And when it's not done well, it can feel quite isolating and lonely. So we wanted to create a space that allows people to share practice, come together, learn from each other, and really inform and give insight to participation practice in Scotland. A couple of examples of how we've done that in the past, we've focused on topics like UNCRC, The promise, which again, we're focusing on today, Corporate Parenting, participation within policy development, creative participation and trauma informed practice as well, and it really is about your space – it's wherever you want to get from it. We're happy to hear from you - please if you want to get involved just drop us an email at celcis.participation@strath.ac.uk. Today's event like all our other events, is informed by a steering group of members who help create day what's in front of you today. So if you'd like to be involved in that, you can let us know as well. We will be enjoying the day, and hope to hear from you soon.

So hi, I'm Chris and I am part of the National Leadership Network.

I'm Gary Brown. I'm the National Leadership Network Development Coordinator. And Chris, and I'm here today to kind of talk about five questions around participation that we have been asked to consider so Chris and I are both going to do that from our own perspectives.

Gary: Okay, can everybody hear okay? Yeah. My name is Gary Brown. I'm the National Leadership Network coordinator. This is Chris Marshall. Chris has been working with the National Leadership Network, as a consultant initially, and also as a member of our interim oversight board, which has been an important part of our journey so far. So what we're going to try and do is both just talk a bit about the National Leadership Network with these five questions, which we were asked to consider so that's what we're going to do. But if any of you know me and Chris, a couple of enthusiastic blethers doing this in 10 minutes, we'll do our best. So The National Leadership Network is a Life Changes Trust legacy project. So that's really important. It's, it's one of a few legacy projects, there's Care in Creativity, The Learning Channel, and Digital Skills. The National Leadership Network is the main legacy project from Life Changes Trust. So hopefully everybody knows about Life Changes Trust and what they what they did over the last 10 years. What the was identified, one of the main themes moving forward from all the work that was it, there needs to be a focus on leadership. And there needs to be a focus on leadership in a way that people define leadership themselves. So the National Leadership Network was born out of the legacy. So what were the original aims of the project. So there's quite a few aims, there are some up here: to build on Life Changes Trust funded work, and to make sure people were cared experience, were involved in all aspects of what we're doing that we have an inclusive approach. So by that we mean - it depends what kind of words or language you're using, but seldom heard voices or quiet voices. I suppose what we're trying to do in the National Leadership Network is just try and go out and speak to people and get to know people in places that everybody should be going to speak to people. And it's all about personal and professional development, amongst many other things in a leadership context. I suppose the main thing that we're trying to do is go out and see what people want to do in a leadership context all over Scotland. So we're in the process of doing that just know there is myself, Lisa, can you give away Lisa? So Lisa and me, we are the staff attached the full time to the national network, but the the most important thing is we've got lots of young people working for the network, we've got lived experience. So, we're trying to go find out what people want to see happen in Scotland. And then hopefully provide that with the aid of our host organisations who if you can see our banner there, they are all mentioned: The Resilience Learning Partnership, Columba 1400, CYCJ, Staf and Who Cares? Scotland. So with those organisations, we find what people are wanting and we bring the information back, share that with all our partner hosting the young people will work with, and projects will hopefully be identified and be funded within the money that we got from Life Changes Trust.

So the second question we got asked, how did it start? Basically, we're given a blank sheet of paper, when Lisa and me started from day one we asked, "So where is the National Leadership network?", and we were told by Life Changes Trust, "it doesn't exist yet." So we were like, Oh, right. But then that was really good that Lisa and I had so then just I suppose we were want to make sure was that young people were care experience would be involved. So every process that we'll have to go through like we need to get young people in paid roles, that's what we've done, the decision making process in the

National Leadership Network, whatever the decision making processes are, people with care experience will do that.

Chris: With a lot of this it has been us doing it – Gary and Lisa have been just sitting back with their feet up. So we have done all of the hard work and you guys have typed it up and made it look nicer.

Gary: It's like Chris says, he's like, I'm your and Lisa's boss. Aye you are.

Chris: The whole group is and that is what has been good about this whole process, and it's working out good. We have been through two rounds of it, we had a chat and if you guys and we decided that we want more people, and we've got the funding and we got quite a lot of people, some who have been consultants in the past and but that's not about the money, but the experience that is behind it. So instead of me having a degree in care experience, I have come with that experience, but that's not a label, that's just my experience throughout life. And I think that's what's missing in quite a lot of places at times, is the fact of people with experience have more experience than people with degrees. And that's what needs to be recognised and that's what the Life Changes Trust recognised and The National Leadership Network.

Gary: Definitely. And there's a whole thing there about power imbalance and stuff like that, I was talking to John about that earlier and often when Lisa and I and other people in spaces, we need to be talking about power, power imbalance. And just exactly what Chris said there, you know, and I suppose it's like what Chris was saying, as well. Yeah, Life Changes Trust said, when we were getting a group of people together to decide who will be the hosts and be the main kind of partners on this project. We say that, you know, if you maybe get three young people on board. We got 10. And then we asked two people to be consultants, and we were like, it's got to be young people's voice. It's not about our voices, it's not. So I suppose one of the things that Lisa and I've been keen to do is kind of challenge Life Changes Trust, initially if we think it's the right thing.

Chris: We challenged the whole system. They've not made any decision making processes, that's been us as a group. So any decisions that have been made has had to come through us as the interim oversight board, and it's been the group of young people who have been steering this for the last year and a bit now, so these have not been Gary and Lisa's decisions, they're not allowed to make decisions. It has to be through our board meetings it has to be through us meeting every couple of weeks that meet and it has to be thought out. And if we don't agree with it. That's, that's it, it doesn't go through.

Gary: Yep. So where are we now. So we have an interim oversight board. So we've got four people with care experience, who are people who helped us and were paid to choose

the host organisations. And they are on board, steering us every stage and the way we've got our hosts who you can see there, but we've also met lots of people, me and Lisa in the first year, when we were trying to find our feet we've met lots of people from the care experience community and in the leadership community, and got a really good working relationship, with loads of people and ended up on the steering group for the Participation Network and things like that. And it's really good so we kind of feel we've got quite a positive reputation so far. And I think maybe that's primarily just because we have those young people or people with care experience, front and centre. And the way we've done that people seem to be liking that. We kind of feel but just at the start and line now. We've got the hosts, we've got our money, we're going out to try and speak to people in the community, what do you want to see happen?

Chris: More importantly, how would you want to see it happen. It is not just about us just saying we have got money, It's about saying what do you want to do, and how are you going to make it happens? It is about giving young people and adults with care experience, the sort of opportunity to gain life experiences as well. It's about, what is your process? How is your idea? How are you thinking about it? How are you going to do it? And it's not us leading them to do it, it is how can we work with you to do it? How can you work with our partners to do it. It's about making sure everyone's working together and not just like, here's some money, go do it.

Gary: Yeah, the people who picked these organisations, when they went through the process, I think maybe there was a thought that maybe one or two organisations would support the whole National Leadership Network, but the young people were like, "Resilience learning, that's all about trauma, so we need them. Columbia 1400, leadership programmes, we need them, CYCJ..." It was about that things that these organization could do, and they were like, we want all of them. So we were like, alright, we need to go back to all these organisations and say, the young people were saying, You, like should work together for the next five years. And that's what we did. We just went back and said, This is what people are saying. And thankfully, all the host organisations got together. And I've started working with us.

Chris: It has not been easy. We've had many challenges, especially ourselves, sitting on the consultants board or meeting with Lisa and Gary and trying to get everyone on track in the way that we wanted it to work and it was very challenging for the first couple of weeks. It was a couple of times when as a chair of the board I would have to bring them back and then go well, we're thinking about this, but we're not there yet. But we have to start from the very beginning. And I think that's something –a new concept for these organisations that are part of that Is the fact of we have not come in with any policies in place, procedures in place. We've just came in as ourselves, and went, this is how we want to do it. And that's been really difficult. But we're now at a stage or that's the norm and we are starting to move forward like that.

Gary: So we want the National Leadership Network to develop with the voice of care experience, but we also like partners and allies, people in this room we want it to be everybody's thing so that it can be shaped by everybody. So yeah, some of the learning so far. A lot of this stuff here is what people with care experience have been saying, not us. The care experience community is large and complex, there's lots going on lots of people doing lots of different stuff. Lots of people in this room, what does everybody do? You know, people are like there is almost too much going on. Are we speaking the same language? When we started talking about leadership, when me and Lisa were speaking to people we were very aware that people think leadership means lots of different things. So, we can define that, leadership has to be what people want it to be. Transformational change, you know, we use these words, is everybody talking the same way? Another thing that a group of young people I was speaking to, they were talking about the communication that goes on in the care experience community. There's loads going on, how this everybody gets to know about it? What's paid, what's not paid? If it's paid, how's that supported? Are people been supported properly, when they're working for local authorities? There's a lot of questions coming up. What's been really good is the big thing with Life Changes Trust was about relationship based practice, there's nothing more important than relationships, that came loud and clear from 10 years of Life Changes Trust, and I suppose, I think most people in the room will agree that that's super important.

Chris: So if you are on a project always make sure that you have a healthy relationship, always check in. It might not all be about work, but always check in with each other. And I think that that's what it's important right now as about doing work all the time on Zoom and MS Teams, we are bored of it, getting tired of it., . Or if they want to zoom in teams before developer getting tired of it. It's about having a check in to see where people are at, and just moving forward. Sometimes that's all we need. And that's what's right.

Gary: And I think the whole thing about partnerships, days like this are really important and when this event was getting put together, I was saying to Paul and Rosie what it feels like as a big care experience community team in Scotland talking openly, working together. And you know, not being about our own little places where we work it's about talking to each other, being open and honest and sharing the good and the bad. I think I think that's what we need to keep doing and 10 minutes isn't very long to talk about something that we're trying to do and build over five years but me Chris and Lisa are here all day. So if you want to come and talk to us want to get involved with anything want us to come in, you know just we're here we want to talk or want to listen, we want to learn.

Chris: So if you want to speak to us about coming along and hearing more about us, you can do that. We can come to you, you can come to us, let's get the conversations going.

Hello, my name is Amy Miskimmin-Logan and I am a Participation Development worker for Our Hearings, Our Voice, an independent board of children and young people with experience of the hearings system. I'm here today to talk about participation, what our experiences are and what we've learned about it. So a little bit about our organization. Our Hearings, Our Voice is a small board of hearings experienced young people from all over Scotland. At present, we've got 10 young people on our board and their age between 14 to 20, although it's open to children aged from eight years old. We come together about six times a year, to carry out work around improving and reforming the Children's Hearings System. And we do this by providing young people with opportunities to share their ideas about the hearing system and their experiences, we ensure these ideas are passed on to a relevant audience, people who are in a position to implement legislative change, often that involves co-design or co-delivery of these changes in between our six board meetings. So here are a few examples of ongoing improvement and influence work that our young people have been involved with. And I would like to draw your attention to two of these in particular, which is a peer mentoring programme within Our Hearings, Our Voice, and recruiting and reaching out to more children through our magazine. The reason I want to draw your attention to these is because these two ideas came from the young people ourselves and they have participation at the centre. The young people asked if you could set up a peer mentoring service, which would allow more experienced board members the opportunity to mentor newer members of the board for the primary purposes of encouraging participation, and ensuring that new members have a voice at board meetings. They were very passionate about that. They said we know what it's like to start something new and not be able to have a voice not be able to jump in, we want to help them. So we'd like to set up a peer mentoring service. So we're in the middle of doing that at the moment. The magazine is an idea that two young people came up with recently, and we're working on at the moment, it's quite an exciting time for us. We're co-producing a magazine with our board members, and it will be distributed through hearing service centres all around Scotland. The magazine is aimed at children and young people who are attending a hearing and it contains information and advice about the hearing itself, along with some fun and relaxing activities and information about how to get involved with the work that Our Hearings, Our Voice do. So it's run by the young people for young people, we don't want adults to be the ones writing the articles. We don't want adults to be deciding exactly who gets in it, it is the children and the young people themselves who have designed it and who are contributing to it. I'd like to draw your attention to this as well. It's our response to some of the issues that we've discussed in the Children's Hearing System, and we call it our 40 calls to action. The majority of organisations around the Children's Hearing System have taken these on board and they report back to the young people on what changes that they've made as a result. This includes most recent work on reform through the Hearing System Working Group and

other examples of organisations who have taken the 40 calls to action on board at the Children's reporter, Children's Hearings Scotland, The Children's Hearing Improvement Partnership and The Promise Scotland. Some of the calls to action are about rights around participation. As you can see here, I'll just zoom in so you can have a good look at them. 13 of the 40 calls are about participation which just shows exactly how important it is to our young people. They cover themes like language, using feedback, respect, involvement, support, choice and flexibility. Participation is so important to our young people. And I would like to share with you how we at Our Hearings, Our Voice plan for effective, inclusive and meaningful participation.

Our Hearings, Our Voice uses Professor Laura Lundy's model of participation for the basis of its practice, which gives us a solid rights based and ethical framework for our work. The model is founded on the belief that children and young people must have agency over their own lives and have their rights promoted, protected and respected. They should be full and active participants in all decision making that affects their lives. The frameworks and evolving model of practice as the children and young people will be supported to explore, develop, test and evaluate their ideas and thinking around their priorities, what they want to see changed, the permission's that they want to be involved in or they're interested in, and the broader development of the board. And there will be times when the board try something and it doesn't work. That's okay, that's all part of the learning process and allows the young people to develop key life and learning development skills. The Lundy model, as you can see, creates four distinct factors for consideration the right to space, the right to voice, audience and influence. And what I'd like to do now is go through each of these factors in turn, in relation to our practice at Our Hearings, Our Voice and I'm going to intersperse this for things that we've learned the good and the not so good as we've been going along with that. So the first factor is space and we strive to create inclusive spaces and an environment that makes involvement as easy is possible for everyone, regardless of barriers like age, gender, disability, sexuality, or ethnicity. We do that by ensuring the places that Our Hearings, Our Voice meet are comfortable, they're safe, they're warm, they're welcoming. And we let the board members know ahead of time where we'll be meeting and what it looks like. So we'll send pictures and videos like the ones that I've got up here, I'll send those out in a video link on WhatsApp, or in a few photographs to let them know what to expect. And we aim to create practices that ensure Our Hearings, Our Voice is a space that enables children, young people to explore, learn, thrive and develop within a safe environment. We've always got drinks and snacks and let them choose themselves available to the children and young people throughout all our work. We create fun opportunities for the group to get to know each other, to build relationships, which is at the heart of our practice, to learn and work together. And there's a trusted support worker on hand to provide support and encouragement throughout our board meetings. We also ensure that venues we use for meetings have got suitable space and support available so members can actually opt out of activities if needed. And something that we've learned – this is something that's maybe not so good is that even if

we put these things in place, we remove every conceivable barrier, and we think really carefully about why they might not get involved, we can't just assume that people will participate, we cannot make the assumption of participation. And I've learned personally that a large part of participation is choice. Sometimes with the best will in the world, some of our young people will choose not to engage with activities and work with plan. And that's okay. And I try to get to the forefront of my mind that the young people we work with have got their own busy lives and priorities. But if they do choose to participate, we do all we can to ensure that they are supported. At Our Hearings, Our Voice, we uphold the right to participate through making an informed choice ensuring our young people have all the information and support that they need to make a freewill choice whether they'd like to be involved or not. Something that I've learned is that nobody can participate fully if they don't have all the information that they need in order to do so. And it can be challenging to establish what information our young people need, or what they already have. An example of this that I'd like to share with you was during a recent consultation for the Children's Care and Justice Bill, so what we did was me and my boss Gordon, travelled around Scotland and we met up with each of our board members individually, we took them for lunch, we had a chat with them. We went through the consultation. There's like 30 questions. And we asked her opinions on them. What happened was these questions are about things like the regulatory landscape around secure care, cross border placements, whether there's a requirement for local strategic needs assessments prior to approval of new residential childcare provision. That's just a few examples. Even with support, it was really clear that our board members did not possess the requisite information and background knowledge to participate fully in the consultation in an informed way. I didn't even know what some of the questions were about. So I found it really difficult to explain that to our young people. It's something we absolutely have to be mindful of when we plan participation, the presumption of informed choice, we need to make sure these young people have got all the information that they need.

We're continually supporting our young people to develop the skills and confidence to speak for themselves and others. An example of this being through the peer mentoring programme that I mentioned previously at the beginning of the presentation. Through the mentoring programme, and through all our work children, young people and adults demonstrate respect for each other's views and we respect the children and young people are the experts in their own lives. We think really carefully about having inclusive and creative ways for young people to communicate their ideas. I've got a picture up here to kind of demonstrate that from you. The board members can present their ideas and thinking through discussion through writing through drawing through games, and arts crafts, post it notes, all different ways. Pretty much like what we've done today with this hybrid model that we've got here. We recently carried out some work with two people from the Office of the Chief Designer and they facilitated an amazing opportunity for our young people. And they were creating prototypes of ideas that they had for improving the

Children's Hearing System. I'd like to show you some ideas of what they came up with. So here's one of them here. This was a prototype that one of our young boys came up with. As an idea for an app where the young children attending a hearing can access and manipulate a diagram of the hearings room, they can move the furniture around, they can decide who sits where I want my mom here, I want my social worker there. I want my teacher here. I don't want my dad in the room for this reason or whatever. So that was his idea. He was trying to explain it we kind of got what he meant, but when he made it and was able to talk through it, he was able to become more involved, he was able to bring his ideas to life almost. Returning to Lundy's model of practice, the next factor that we take into consideration for participation is our audience. We support the children and young people to understand how decisions are made, who they need to communicate their messages to, who these people are and what they can or should do. So for example, CHIP, SCRA or CHS. We ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to communicate directly with decision makers who have the responsibility to listen and take action on their priorities. We also aim to facilitate opportunities and creative ways for children and young people and the adult decision makers to communicate and work together. Sheriff David Mackie and Christina Spicer, from The Promise have played active roles, in several of our board meetings, listening to the young people's ideas and experiences directly and actioning them. And it means so much to young people, instead of just saying what tell me what is you want to do, I'm gonna feed that back to all the VIPs all the important people, all the bigwigs, they are actually they're listening to them, they're actually saying to the young people, what is it you want to change, I'm going to listen to that this is what I'm going to do about it. Audience is a huge part of participation. I've included this little picture down here of Kirsty, our research officer at SCRA. So this is an example of something that she sent to me that I was able to share with young people before a board meeting. So let them know this is someone who's going to be in attendance. This is a little bit of information about her. This is what she looks like. And this is what to expect. And there's a quote here that we've got as well, "Something I've learned about participations that our young people have actually felt in the past and have said this, that they're given a platform to speak, that ideas are listened to, but nothing gets done." And this quote from Bennie, one of our board members sums it up perfectly. He said, "I think using our own experiences can help us influence adults, and will help us achieve our calls to action for change in the Children's Hearing System. I want to see the adults putting what we're seeing into actions. This is not just about saying, Oh, that's great, well done. We want to see action."

And that's something that I've heard time and again at other events that I've been to where young people have been. They say people say, Oh, what do you think about this? What do you think about that, and we share our ideas. But we never actually hear what's done with that information we never get to hear because of what you said, this legislative change took place because of what you shared with me. But you don't experiences which was quite a difficult thing for you to share. This is the huge impact it's had. It's so important that they see that

We ensure that children's and young people's views and rights are taken seriously, and that their voices are acted upon. And part of this is about contributing towards culture change. A recent example, this was a presentation that two of our young people deliver to SCRA, where they shared examples of children's hearings and described how intimidating it can feel, to speak to panel members. That wasn't an easy thing for them to do. They described exactly what that feeling is when they walk into a hearing and they speak to a panel member that they've never seen before. That left them kind of exposed emotionally and quite vulnerable. But it was very powerful. Many people attending the presentation fed back to our young people that their words really affected them. And had given them a lot to think about in relation to their own practice. And we shared that feedback, I copied and pasted it all from the team's chat and shared it to them. We routinely offer feedback to children and young people to ensure accountability and evidence of change. So for example, we recently received and shared a letter from Clare Haughey, the Minister for children and young people. It was thanking the board members for taking part in the consultation I mentioned earlier, the Children's Care and Justice Bill, so we shared that with them to say thank you. We also share regular updates with the board about how their ideas and suggestions have been actioned and changes to the law that have been made as a result of their work. And there's three ideas up here that I'd like to share from our last board meeting. The one before this was a one on the left was a leaflet that some of our young people designed and they said we'd like this to be taken into our hearings with us. The one in the middle was the magazine that they came up with that I spoke about earlier on that they've designed themselves. And the last one was something that one of our young people designed and it's something that actually used to exist in hearings centres, but for some reason, I think it might be COVID, they did away with it, it was just a little profile picture of the panel members and a bit of information about them. And they said it really puts them at ease. But it's something that had kind of fallen away with COVID. And they've never quite reinstated it. Maybe that's been overlooked. But it really does mean a lot to young people. So she was able to share that and see what that would look like for her and how that would help her in hearings. So that brings us to the end of the presentation on how we address participation at Our Hearings, Our Voice and what we've learned. If you'd like to get in touch, you can follow us on Twitter, or you can contact us through Instagram, Facebook, or by email. You can visit our website as well to learn a little bit more about Our Hearings, Our Voice and our ongoing mission to improve the Children's Hearings System. We've got a constant recruitment going on. So if you think of any young people that like to get involved as well, please just give me a shout. We're always looking to welcome more people. And thanks very much for listening.

Hi, I'm Ruth Kerracher, Youth Justice Participation Lead at Staf and CYCJ, I lead on Youth Justice Voices, which is a national participation project for care and justice experience

young people. Today I'm going to talk about Inside Out, which is our steering group for care experienced boys and young men in HMPYOI Polmont, and we run that in collaboration with Barnardo's Youthwork Team. Before I go on to talk about Inside Out in more detail, I'll just give you an overview of Youth Justice Voices.

So we are a national participation project for young people aged 16, to 25, of experience of the care and justice systems in Scotland. And we've been going since 2019. And we were formally funded by the Life Changes Trust. And now we're in the fourth year of our project funded by the National Lottery. All the work that we do at Youth Justice Voices is completely led by young people. So that means they set the agenda, they help shape the projects that we work on. And ultimately, we work on the creative ways to help them amplify their voice. The groups are led by Youth Just Us, which you've maybe heard me talk about before in the community. And we've got a wee bit of our portfolio going on over there. So I can catch up with people about that afterwards. But we've also got Inside Out, which is a group in Polmont for care experienced boys and young men, which I'm going to focus on today. And within the projects, our aim as I said is the creatively amplify voice. But it's also about having that sort of national presence. So yeah, we might take part in some sort of consultations and national discussions. But ultimately, what we're wanting to do is get the right people around the table and create opportunities where young people can directly influence change. Also, what we like to do, as I suppose provide the platform and share our learning through National Implementation groups, like youth justice, implementation groups, and practice and policy groups that CYCJ are often oversees. So at Youth Justice Voice, as within all our projects, we take a youth work approach. So that means we basically we start where young people at and the main focus is really about building positive relationships with young people, working alongside them to develop projects, which meet their aspirations and needs, and also about working in creative and fun ways. So as much as it's important about young people having that platform and space to talk about the issues that are important to them, our young people have also talked about it being really important that it's a safe space for them to get together with people with similar and different experiences, and gain skills and rewards to the process. For us, it's been really important that young people need to know that their views do matter. And we're not just less than we're actually going to act upon that. They need to know as well, that taking part is going to make a difference. And I think that's particularly been important for our group - boys within Polmont. Because often unfortunately, they've been through the care system at a very young age, been in and out of secure maybe been in and out of Polmont, many time. And they've often been asked the same questions, seen little action and don't see any feedback, or they're involved in things which seem really outwith their daily life. So they want to feel that they impact and change what they're going to feel and their peers are going to feel in the future. So I have put "Engage on their own terms" there with a question mark, I would say that people do engage on their own terms, but that are more challenges when you're going into a locked environment. So we've got to think about barriers around just being in a prison environment, the systems which are in place, checks, procedures, people not being

booked people being in demand and booked for different things, challenges between what people have got going on in their daily life, whether that's court cases, mental health issues, substance use, and as well the organisational protocols and systems and staff shortages and COVID. So we've had a lot to battle with, it's not been an easy process. But what I would say is, the young people do choose to take part and there's no sanctions if they don't come to the project. So the young people we've had involved, have all expressed an interest in wanting to be a part of this and wanting really to drive change. So we've made it really important that that's actually what we do. I think as well, another thing, I talked about when I said that change is led by young people through meaningful participation processes. Having sort of hierarchical and traditional type participation opportunities can all serve their purpose, but for our young people, they want to feel like things they do relate to their everyday life. So the activities that we're doing have got to be relatable. And we've also got to be upfront and honest about what's achievable as well. But what we're really trying to change as well is for participation to become the norm within the justice system, because there seems to be a sort of belief that a fear about bringing young people together for one aspect, but also attaching responsibilities to rights and attaching responsibilities to participation, so for us, regardless of a young person's behaviour, they must have a right to participate in opportunities and activities in which are important to them.

So I said we took the youth like approach, we wanted to take the same approach as we took with Youth Just Us in the sort of locked environment and the set up of effectively a prison. So in order to do that, with all our projects, what was really important was to build really good partnership. And so that was with Barnardo's Youthwork Team. We were really lucky because they actually do a phenomenal amount of work within Polmont in terms of how they support young people. They believed in our project, I think we were lucky that we've had good reputation between Staf and CYCJ, and the work that Youth Just Us had done before. But also, which was really important to us as they took a youth work approach. So they worked in the same ways as we would. And they also valued the real importance of relationships and knew what young people would be interested in and how they might engage. So once we got Barnardo's, on board, it was their sort of role I suppose is gatekeeper so we ultimately were looking to see if they had knowledge of who was care experienced within Polmont, what young people might be interested in taking part and what barriers and things they might face. So the group was established in 2019. And we've had memberships change throughout, because that's the nature of the participation, but also within Polmont it's quite a challenge because young people can be on short sentences that are in demand might dip in and out and different things going on. So I was really key to keep an art who's on board with us, and I suppose get the word out about the project. And when we first started as well, we were keen, I suppose to provide opportunity to some of the boys and young men who might have been perceived as having more challenging behaviour. So they had to do quite a lot of work behind the scenes to get things okayed and in terms of sort of policies and procedures. But what we

did find is, the boys got up got involved in this space, and they were just totally into it. So I the early stages of the project was about taking that youth back approach, doing really sort of fun and creative activities, making sure that the boys could build trust, and knew that we were going to act on what they said. But also they were going to have control over that because there is concern for young people sharing what they're sharing within the environment of a prison, how's that going to impact on them? So it's really important to work alongside them to think about how we would do that. The way that we've worked as well as I would base myself there the whole Friday morning, so as well as doing focused activities and like I said, early stages could all be about team building, we then work towards boys actually designing the sessions that they want to take part and the activities they want to take part in, and the issues which are important to them. But also what's just as important is it's a safe space where we might, because it's in just work activities, we're really lucky as a good space, we can have access to things like table tennis, pool, board games, all that sort of stuff, which has been really important. And I think making sure that we work in really creative ways for people to express themselves has also been key. So as a group, we started off very sorry, earlier stages, like I said, doing lots of fun stuff, team building, looking at different things were important to the groups. What became really clear was that the boys wanted to focus on rights. So this came about for a number of reasons. You'll see here in the bottom right hand corner. This is the prison rule book, which has hundreds of pages and which is really difficult to understand. A lot of the boys talked about how really challenging that was, particularly for children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties. They talked about needing a law degree to understand basic rules and entitlements. And similar things to what Amy was saying as well, about policy and things really affecting their lives, but they're not involved in it. And it doesn't seem relevant to them. So they decided that they wanted to focus on rights. And we did that and early stage again, in creative ways. So things like mapping out Polmont, where there might be rights issues, what different things are going on. And we had alien invasion landed on Polmont, where young people would talk through the process, through their experiences. And then we brought in different ways to educate and learn about rates and entitlements. But ultimately, it was me learning from the boys because they've had that firsthand experience, so they could tell us what other people need to know. So through that, they've been really keen that their focus would be about helping all young people in Polmont to understand their rights and entitlements, and look into work in creative ways to not rewrite the present rulebook. Yeah, maybe that might be in the future, where they can develop it with young people, but there's obviously going to be certain policies and things they have to stick with them. But what they want to do is create guidance that young people understand and I'll help them through the journey. The other things they've been really keen to do is they want to support other young people. They want to use your negative experiences to make things better for others. And they also want to highlight the importance of youth work and the different opportunities which are available, as well as it is a multitude of issues which they're currently facing.

So some of the work we've been involved in is during lockdown. Like I say, we had challenges, there was a period of time where I wasn't in Polmont at all, but we did look at different ways to engage. So whether that was through like email a prisoner, sharing information through workers and doing that over the phone. But ultimately I had to have a bit of a break, which was really unfortunate. But when we did get back in, one of our first opportunities that we had was obviously recognising that during the pandemic, lots of people's rights could be infringed upon, but particularly when you're in a locked setting where you might be locked up for 23 hours a day. So one of the first things we worked on was with the Children's Commissioner and CYCJ, to work with the young people involved in Inside Out to create some guidance for young people. So they knew what their rights were under the UNCRC when they were in custody. And we worked to, I suppose, review the language to put a few weeks making it more accessible. And also the boys really enjoyed that process too, because they could see something tangible that the end so eventually, the flyer was designed that went out to everybody in Polmont. But what was really important to them was they also looked, which I should have mentioned earlier obviously, their name is Inside Out, and they worked on designing a logo at distance with a designer, so that was quite a difficult challenge. But I would go back with pictures, take it in and out, in and out. And then they designed their own logo. So it was great for them to see this leaflet with their own words and their identity, they could actually see that up there in Polmont and they were starting to make a difference. I'm just going to talk through some of the things that I suppose we are involved in now and, and to give ideas, I suppose we still take that approach. So I think what's been really important for our young people as well is that they might be interested in taking part in a more national consultation. So one of the big things was Bail, Remand and Release, The Children's Care and Justice Bill, they've also fed back around lawyers and care experience. I'm also doing work just now with Clan Childlaw, and Claire Lightowler about designing child friendly and young person friendly legal service. What they want from that is to work and do it in creative ways. So things like Clan has worked well because we have worked with Youth Just Us to design the workshops and then go in. Whereas what we are facing is the same challenges that in consultations, it's taken workers so much time to actually make that accessible, and young people being able to participate in it. But they want to see feedback and changes. So as well as doing the external stuff, what we've been really keen focus on is internal things as well. So we've looked at different ways that the young people could express themselves. And I can remember, often, when you'll see ideas about what you're coming in my session plan, people have a sort of perception that the boys wouldn't be interested. But I had talked about the idea of poetry and I could see people sort of pooh poohing it. But what we used was poems, which adults had written in the justice system, written during COVID when they've been in prison. We'd ask them who their favourite rappers were. So we would bring in different lyrics and things like that. And that was a really good way to talk about the issues which were important to them, but in quite a safe way, and a way to express themselves. So then the boys wanted to combine that to

showcase some of their work, but also they thought of really clever things like, whilst the boys were most isolated during COVID, how could they interact with other boys? So they decided to create a newsletter. So that showcased their poems raps, we had daft workouts, interviews about different opportunities people had been involved in, and interviews about the project. And then that went out to everybody in Polmont. And again, for them, it was really important see the logo on it, but also that we could work with a comms team to make something that looked really good and packaged up well for that was really well received. And just now we're working on our second edition, which is a summer edition. And it might sound really basic, but it will actually make a difference because the boys are talking about again, just how hot it is when you are in Polmont. So they're given ideas about how you can keep cool as well as sort of fun things as well so we're looking at that. You can see there's some newsletters up there. I don't have the Polmont ones because that's obviously that's a boy's thing. But these are newsletters Youth Just Us community group wrote during lockdown, so you can have a look at them. There's things that we're working on next, I suppose as really, how do we influence things within Polmont? And I'm pleased to see what we're in 2019 we are into 2020,

we're slowly starting to get that route. So next thing we've got planned is we've got our first session with the governor and senior management and what the boys will work on is developing a range of different ideas which I won't share, because that's for them to share, but they will present that to the governor. They're also going to present the idea of producing their own guidance, which was support young people when they enter custody. And it's really things that I think are totally missed in the prison rulebook and other things unless you've been through that experience. So it could be like how you use the telephone, the first thing you've got to know is that the person you're going to phone's got to pick up because you're going to put money in, etc, etc. So we've got a few different things lined up. And I feel that we are starting to see our difference and our hope and I suppose develop a bit more of an internal structure with the boys can gather views from their peers and feed that and it's well. The other things just to point on, I suppose, which has been really great, and I think a huge step forward as well for acknowledging participation, and I suppose acknowledging and the talents and the skills of the boys within Polmont was that they made it through to be finalists at the Scottish charity awards for the Pioneering Project of the Year Award. So that's great and I was really excited, but also makes you feel really disheartened because well, staff might go to a shiny bash, but the boys are stuck in Polmont, and it's their work that needs to be celebrated. So we worked with the boys for them to create a sort of Twitter campaign and social media campaign that could go out to others. But also what was key for us, as well as how do we actually mark their achievements and celebrate that within Polmont? I think it is about thinking outside the box. So we looked to get some agreement with the youth work team, they've already got a good basis, and with the SPS, so what we did was we used other areas within Polmont, and that's something that we are doing more as a reward because externally for participation, you might be paid for things you might receive these rewards

for the boys they might receive food and some prizes, but they are not the same things. So what we did for this event was it we hired out life skills, and the boys decided that they wanted to cook up breakfast. And then they invited like the managers or youth work team along to showcase some of their work that we had our award ceremony. And then there's other ways I don't know if I maybe should be saying this, but we're getting creative about reward and so we are thinking, could, for example, we get an Amazon voucher for a young person, then youthwork staff might buy them essential items. So it's all these things, and that's the stuff but I'm trying to feedback as well to people who want to come in and meet with the young people. But also what we're trying to challenge to is gatekeeping, I think that is important. But we want to have young people direct and influence it. And it's not just to come and listen to as a group, it's about them influencing things within and outwith as well.

So some final thoughts, I just wanted to share, I suppose, what we've learned from the project or a more general is I think participation needs to be meaningful and relevant. It's got to be meaningful to their daily lives, it's got to feel like that's worth their time to come up for a morning and take part in activities. They've got to feel that it's making a difference. And I think it's really thinking about, regardless of behaviour, that's got to be everybody's right. So how do we work in different and creative ways to make sure people have a voice? So whilst we might have that steering group, what I'm keen to look in the future is how can the boys include other people who wouldn't be involved in the group, and how do we expand that as well. But other big things I want to focus on is, I suppose whilst we hear a lot in the press just know about under-18s and trying to remove them from Polmont. I think that is really important and of course, the boys want to support that. But we've got over 200 people aged 18 to 23, who would often care experienced - don't forget about them, and involve them as well. That's me, but I'll be around for this afternoon. If anyone wants to ask any questions or hear more about Youth Just Us thanks.

Hi, I'm Jane Miller and I work at The Health and Social Care Alliance, Scotland. And I'm going to talk about the Rights Right Now project, which I was seconded to work on last year. And so my name is Jane Miller. I work at the Alliance. Last year, I was seconded to work with Together on the Rights Right Now project. Rights Right Now was a project that was looking at UNCRC implementation, and how to make sure that children and young people were meaningfully involved in that process. So it was a national group of children and young people, there were 14 of them aged between 10 and 17. They came from different organisations. So we had Children in Scotland, Aberlour, Carers Trust Scotland, Scottish Commission for Learning Disability, Scottish Youth Parliament, and Who Cares? Scotland who all supported the young people to participate. They were working with the UNCRC strategic implementation boards, which is a board made up of key strategic decision makers looking at implementation. So they were represented from justice,

education, health, and the children's sector. And they were all looking at how implementation needs to take place in Scotland. It was really important actually, if we're talking about UNCRC implementation that children are being listened to inherit as part of that process. So the project was a pilot project. And it took place between August last year to March. And it really was looking at learning about how to take strategic participation and how to make it work. And really, it's about the learning of the model and what worked best and what actually was a bit of a challenge. So one of the biggest things about the project and the learning was about how do you create a safe space for adults and children and young people to come together? So rather than having this UNCRC implementation board, where children go along to the board, how do we create a completely different space, which is a shared space? And it's really important as part of those spaces that it's a safe space? And I think that's something that we've kind of talked about today about how does it feel safe, and the children, young people we worked with, they expressed how important it was for them to feel safe to participate, in those sorts of conversations and with adults. So at the very beginning of the process, we developed a group agreement, we thought about what does it feel like to be in a safe space, all of our sessions took place online because of COVID. So that was a bit of a an additional challenge to some things we thought about the way that you carry out your conversations, not using jargon, thinking about who's in the room having different ways of participating, doing things creatively, even things like the resources and information we sent out. So for some young people, they needed to be in a green background, because that was accessible. Thinking about the age range. So we had children that were 10, and we had children that were 17. So how do we make sure everyone feels included, also that there were support workers to make sure that young people have got people who have trusting and established relationships with that they can speak to before a session or go through information, and the after session, if there's anything that comes up for them. As part of those sessions, members of the UNCRC strategic implementation board came along, and members of the Empowering Children and Young People team in Scottish Government. And it was really, as I said, important for a safe space, but also that they could feel that they were able to talk to decision makers. So some young people said, actually, it was really important to do things together. So we did create some activities as part of our discussions. And we also talked a lot about foods. So I think one of the biggest things are learning I think we all know is food and how important it is. And it's difficult when you're online, and you can't, you can't actually have food and eat food together. So we did a lot of icebreakers around foods, one of the biggest ones was around you know, what you have in your chips, and Edinburgh / Glasgow divide came up around salt and sauce, salt and vinegar. I have to say salt and vinegar for me. So doing things like that actually helped relax adults and children together. But what I should say is that some of the adults that I'm sure they would say themselves, they were coming up with their own comfort zones, to come into those spaces and to do things, and to actually do things differently. So maybe even changing the way that they would participate or speak or even dress, even on those calls is something that was really important.

What I should say, in terms of learning is that some of the young people said that in previous kinds of engagement that they had with decision makers, they'd sometimes felt like they were being interrogated, or that they were, I think "grilling mode" is up there - that some of the decision makers would maybe question their experiences and make them feel quite uncomfortable. So one of the things as well that came up was around the ratio of adults to children and young people. Some young people also said that they've maybe been at an event and they'd been the only young person and there had been lots of adult decision makers. And then that's when they just felt completely uncomfortable and intimidated. So we were really conscious throughout the session to try and limit the adult numbers that were coming. But it was difficult because you need support workers there, as well. So it's a bit of a balancing act. That was the key learning point for us. And themes. So throughout the sessions, we were talking about strategic governance, which is quite dry. So we were thinking about how do you actually just take that away and take it back from children and people are what's important to them and start from obsession. So these are the sorts of issues that came up for children and young people: climate change, exam pressures, equality and equity. How do we take these issues that are important to children and young people and actually explore them through the lens of governance and UNCRC implementation? And it's really important, because when you're talking about implementation, you're talking about your rights awareness, you're talking about training, you're talking about accountability, you're talking about how do you redress things? How can you use that and take it from a position that children and young people understand and their everyday life experiences and the things that are important to them. So that's something that was a kind of key learning point for us from the projects. Some key recommendations. So as part of the project, they did some work to inform a national rights awareness campaign, they also did some work to inform the child rights action plan. And they also did some work looking at developing a survey to find out what children and young people's experiences of their rights and their awareness of their rights. But as I said, the project was really a pilot, to think about what the strategic governance and participation, what does that look like together? So some of the recommendations that came out were to create a shared vision. So what are adults' expectations of a project of work children and young people's? And how can we make sure at the very beginning, we're all on the same page about that, because I think that's something that's really important to establish together. Relationships have come up in all of the presentations and actually having enough time to do some of those fun bonding activities, where you're just getting to know each other, where you're feeling relaxed, creating that safe space, because the project is obviously thinking about how can children and young people hold adult decision makers to account? But actually, how do you create a safe space to begin with, from when children and people can then start to have more of those braver conversations and feel comfortable and be in the position to do those things? Provide training and children's rights governance? So what does children's rights governance look like for all of the adults? So for the support workers, for the people in the strategic

implementation board for children and young people? Do we all have the same understanding of what governance is? Governance is quite clunky term. What does that actually mean? And what does that mean? What's that feel like on a day to day level? Rewarding and remunerating. So it's really important that children and young people are acknowledged for their experience. So we worked with the partner organisations to look at how could we reward young people, and it was either through cash payments, direct payments, or through vouchers, whatever was most appropriate for the context that we were working in. Creating safe and supportive spaces. So making sure that children and young people feel relaxed, that they feel comfortable, that they are able to participate in the way that they would like or if they don't want to participate, that's fine as well. Being child led. So back to those issues that we talked about: climate change, stigma, how do you make sure that's coming from a point of view where children young people feel that they're setting the agenda rather than adults? Clear communication and feedback. So we always made sure we provided feedback loops about what we shared, what information we shared with the wider strategic implementation boards. But actually, what's the next step? How's that information being actioned? That was one really key quote from young people was, you know, people come and they hear our views. And they say, that's cool. That was great to hear your views. And thank you for sharing, but they don't know what's happening next. And they feel sometimes that it can make them feel disengaged. They don't want to take part because they don't know what's going to happen. So how can we make sure that we revisit the information that was shared? How do we revisit that feedback loop continually, not just a one off process? Resourcing appropriately. So how to make sure that there's enough staffing to resource participation? Is there enough resources to support any creative outputs that people want to do? And is there enough time as well, I think that's really important. Is there enough time allocated for staff to do that? And then the last point is around, children and young people having busy lives. I think that's also come up in another presentation, is that we sometimes think that children and young people will want to do everything, but actually, they might want to pick and choose what they want to do. They've got a lot on some young people we worked with had all these exams coming up. So making sure that there's space for things to be child led, but in a way that doesn't put too much pressure on the young people. And that was really important. So you can read the report for Rights Right Now. So there's the adult report with the recommendations and the learning. And then there's also one for showed young people with their key recommendations about what works best for them.

Hello, I'm Ross Gibson, I'm from the Children's and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ). What a great morning here at the Participation Network talking about what The Promise means for participation and what participation means for The Promise. For me at CYCJ, what we're looking forward to is making sure that children who are in conflict with

the law have greater opportunities to shape the world around them and the organisations and services that are seeking to support them. For me, within the youth justice sector, that means a lot less gatekeeping a lot less of people shutting that door and saying the young people who are in conflict with the law in secure care or experiencing difficulties and vulnerabilities and traumas aren't ready to participate. What we've heard from the input so far is that children from all backgrounds are ready to do so, they just need the opportunity to do so. So that would be my urge to people working in the sector to help us achieve The Promise by creating these opportunities for children to engage in Youth Justice Voices, Our Hearings Our Voice and all the other projects that we've heard about this morning.

At our table, we were discussing what it means to ensure strategic impact. And some of the points that came up in discussion were, first of all, who's measuring and defining what impact is because it can mean different things to different people. Success and impact can mean something completely different to a young person, or staff worker like me, or a member of the government. And we need to be mindful as well, that not all impact is quantifiable, and relationships, experiences, providing a welcoming space, letting your young person be listened to and having their contributions valued, are all important things. And that's impactful as well. It's not always measurable, though. And that can be an issue with things like justifying budgets. When we're trying to ensure strategic impact, we need to have our vision at the forefront of our minds, and factor in regular opportunities for reflection. And for discussions around whether or not we're still on track to realising our vision. We need to talk to the young people about that and consider whether or not they think that we are on track to doing that as well. Sometimes success goes sideways rather than up the way. Sometimes it's about conversations, or it's about meeting a young person for lunch, building trust, we need to put the stepping stones in place and provide a foundation before we start building up the way and realising our broader use.

Hi, I'm Bethany from The Fostering Network. I work on a project called Moving On, which is looking to support transitions for young people through and out of foster care. And I've really enjoyed today because I think participation has been quite tricky for me. So it's a two year project. I'm halfway through and I haven't really done any participation yet. So today was actually a great sharing time, inspiring time, but also quite reassuring that these things do take time to think about and really deeply ensure that the participation that we're doing that the things that young people are telling us have a place they have somewhere to go, they have some changed impact. So yeah, I'm excited to go and reflect and plan how I can do that in the next year of my project.

Hi, I'm Ruth Forster, I have been facilitating a co-production initiative to improve transitions for children, young people who use Crossreach's residential services. And so this year my role has, I guess, incorporated a lot of participation. It's been like at the

heart of what I've been doing, listening and hearing to children's and young people's wants, desires and aspirations. And do you know what to do has been super useful, not just in terms of actually meeting people and making connections, but also just the learning from it as well. I think for me, there was some massive lightbulb moments just in terms of like my own practice, and things that I haven't done, which need to be done. And I think the biggest one for me was feedback. And I guess, obviously listening to children, young people is massive, but then also providing them with feedback with like, what you're actually going to do with their views. And I've just loved being with people, I think, being in a room with people who are, I guess, involved in a lot of similar work. It's just really great having that shared experience, having that safe space to kind of go, I think I'm doing it right, but I also think that there's probably aspects of my work that I'm probably not doing great either. Like what do you find? So yeah, so just being in that in the room in the same space has been super beneficial today as well.

So our table discussion was around some of the challenges and opportunities that come with partnership working. We had loads, loads of really interesting conversations. And it really came down to the challenges and the opportunities of everything to do with participation working was people. And we spoke about the real importance of having relationships, both as individuals with different members of internal teams having a really good understanding of what each of our organisations offer, so that we know who is best placed to support that person, that child that family, and when actually it's best to refer onto another organisation, or work alongside a family or a child with somebody else as well. And we spoke about the importance of just having that knowledge and having that awareness of what else is out there, locally, but also nationally, so that we can make sure that everything that we do puts the child and that family at the centre of the support we're offering. And that was the real ethos and value base that all of our conversations kind of boiled down to, was making sure that the people that we are supporting are at the centre of that, and working in partnership with others to make sure that that's what we achieve.

It's been a fantastic afternoon, at this Participation Network has been great to be back with everyone in the same space. And just having the chance to share learning, share practice sometimes share challenges and inspiration as well. So the topic that we were discussing in our group was around, rewarding and recognising impact from participants directly. So some of the ways we talked about doing that was to think about the real, immediate change that we can help people make. So if they're in residential care, what's the change that they can make to the children's home, for example? If they are working within a service, what's the changes we can make within that service? How can we measure that and show the impact of that to the each individual participant taking part? We also spoke about supporting skills development for people taking part as well. So we thought about Saltire Awards, Community Achievement Awards, Volunteering Awards, as well as shadowing opportunities that we could have for people as well, within an

organisation or thinking about signposting to other organisations who might be able to support people in their journey, in their career, or even just in their other participation interest as well. So we covered a lot in this small group, we didn't get the chance to talk about absolutely everything, but there were some good ideas from people as well and some people spoke about challenges as well of trying to get that immediate change within complex organisations as well. And I think that is where spaces like the network can really contribute to that as well because we're learning from each other. We're talking about what's worked and we're also talking about maybe opportunities where we can work and challenge existing power structures as well. So yeah, really points of discussion in some good ideas from everyone today.

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