

Hearing the Child's Voice

Regulation 44 . Session 3

Focus points:

 Review of current issues in relation to hearing children's voices- ALL children

Links to safeguarding

• Small group review of practice



UN Convention:

- enshrined in law- UN Convention on human rights and UN Convention on the rights of disabled people to communicate
- to enable communication
- to listen and act on their voice
- to give their view
- what help would they like and from whom?

The issues.....

- We know that there are still issues in relation to the voices of children with difference or disability being heard (see Hesley phase 1 and 2)
- Why?
- ignorance / lack of knowledge
- fear
- paternalism
- medical model?
- time
- tokenism
- communication needs and rights not understood
- parents' and professional's voices dominate
- ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF?





Breadth of difference and disability.....

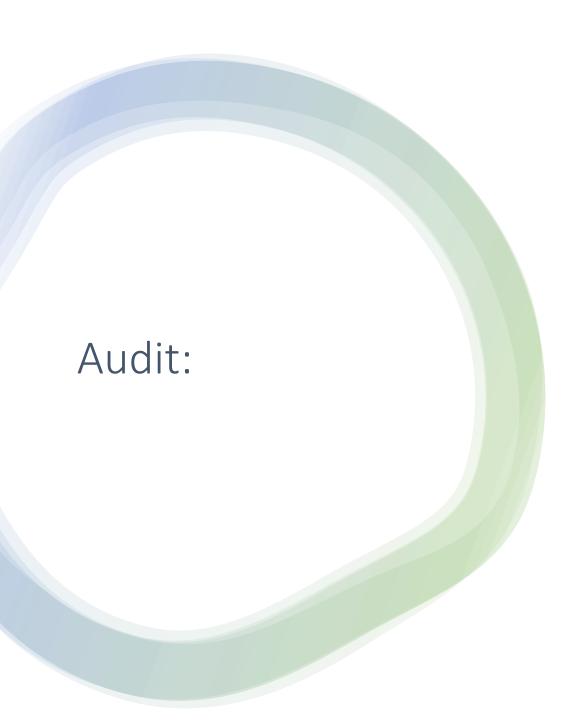
- The breadth is enormous and thus hearing the voices of children is highly individual with practice approaches tailored to fit the unique needs.
- Generic approaches run the risk of capturing only "broad brush "information or missing an individuals' viewpoint.
- Can include
- a range of additional needs
- special needs- primary and secondary
- hidden disabilities
- ANYTHING ELSE?



Principles of practice

- Giving disabled children a voice promotes self esteem and self worth
- By giving children a voice- choice, opinion, feelings and emotions can be expressed
- Children can develop and learn that they are important and valued.
- Feeling valued plays a large role in how a child develops and relates to others

ANY examples?



- L. Are all adults in the home aware of age / stage/difference / disability and what we expect in terms of development of communication for each of the young people?
- Are we setting the bar too high with assumptions? Particularly when some young people communicate in a way which makes them seem more cognitively able that they really are.
- 2. Is there internal challenge to assumptions?
- 3. Is the child's voice embedded in practice- with all staff?
- 4. Is training appropriate and up to date- link to SoP and WF Development plan. ?

Audit

Is the environment suitable

- Layout
- Lighting
- Space
- Noise levels- quiet area?
- Opportunities to communicate ?

Is the equipment diverse enough to meet need?

Is the equipment accessible?

Does the set up enable children to communicate independently?

Children's Guide-different formats, info re: advocates, Children's Rights etc

Audit

- Specific communication needs may be linked to:
- Processing
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Complex needs
- Alternative methods- Makaton, PECS, Grid, Pro Loquo to Go, Widget, Eye Gaze, photo cues, social stories, BSL, Big Mack, Braille, objects of reference
- Non verbal communication
- Mental health/trauma/PTSD
- Depression
- English as a second language
- ANYTHING ELSE?



What next?

- Staff training- essential...... and often overlooked unless a formal alternative method of communication is in place
- Ask the young person / involve them in how they express their views
- Work in partnership- young person and other professionals
- Value, respect, time
- Patience
- Positivity
- Active listening and hearing
- Alternative methods equipment working , available , charged ?
- Body language
- Reflection
- ANYTHING ELSE?

Small group work:

- Thinking of the services visited consider –
- the barriers you have encountered in the service and with other agencies and professionals?
- ease of access to SALT support if needed?
- staff confidence?
- staff advocacy?
- role of the EHCP?
- any other thoughts?

NOMINATE ONE PERSON TO TAKE NOTES AND FEEDBACK

Useful information

- Equality Act 2010-covers Disability Rights (Replaced DDA in 2010)
- Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings Parts 1 and 2 (Hesley)
- Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities
- Looked-after children and young people: NICE 2021
- SCCIF 2023
- Promoting the Wellbeing of Children in Care: NSPCC
- Positive Environments where children can flourish: Ofsted