Involving Children in Decision-Making at the strategic level in A Million & Me

#AMillion&MeSquad

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1. Introduction

This Toolkit has been developed for those who are planning to involve children and young people in their initiatives and projects. It is informed by a children's rights-based model of child participation – The Lundy Model - and contains information on:

- Establishing a Children's Advisory Panel (CAP): safeguarding and ethical procedures for recruiting and working with participants.
- Creating a supportive environment: i) building rapport and fostering ownership; ii) using creative activities to engage with children on the main issues to co-create child friendly language.
- Incorporating Children's Views: giving children's views due weight and developing child-friendly outputs.

The Toolkit draws on our experience of establishing and managing a Children's Advisory Panel (CAP) for the BBC Children in Need (CiN) A Million & Me project. Feedback on the process was gathered from the children, partners and key CiN stakeholders, which is presented throughout, to share what worked well and highlight key learning points.

General information on A Million & Me

BBC Children in Need, in collaboration with its corporate partner Boots, has introduced a UK wide programme of support for children aged 8-13 years, to improve emotional wellbeing and mental health. The programme was launched in April 2019 and has been established to provide £10M of funding to CiN partner organisations across the UK. Funded projects will seek to develop effective children's mental health strategies and initiatives for younger children focused on early intervention. The programme aims to support children who are experiencing difficulties but are not yet receiving clinical interventions. It is envisaged that funded initiatives will create a positive ecosystem around the child, both locally and digitally, by involving children's family/carers, friends, peers and other trusted adults from their communities. A core element of A Million & Me is to ensure that children's views are central to the development and running of the initiative to reflect, advise and help steer and evaluate the programme.

2. A Children's Rights-Based Approach

The Centre for Children's Rights (CCR) at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) in Northern Ireland (www.qub.ac.uk/ccr), is internationally renowned for its innovative methodology for conducting rights-based participatory research and consultations with children and young people (CYP). Ms Paddy Sloan, Project Director of A Million & Me, commissioned Professor Laura Lundy and Dr Michelle Templeton from the Centre to develop and implement a model of children's participation, operating at a strategic level in A Million & Me, and to capture the process and learning for BBC CiN more generally.

The Lundy Model of Participation

The Lundy Model of Participation[1] guided the work at all stages of the project. This model provides a way of implementing Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which requires children's views be given weight in all matters affecting them. The model is based on four key, distinct but interrelated concepts - Space, Voice, Audience and Influence (see figure 1). The Lundy Model of Participation is a central feature in many national and international organisations' strategies to develop child-informed resources for CYP, focussed on what really matters to children. One of the ways to implement the model is through the establishment of Children's Advisory Groups or Panels. This is a practical way of ensuring that projects can draw directly on the experiences and views of children.

Figure 1. The Lundy Model of Participation

The structure of the toolkit that follows is based on the Lundy Model - SPACE, VOICE, AUDIENCE and INFLUENCE. At the end of each section is a set of Lundy Model Reflection Questions for each element. Facilitators can use these to assess their compliance with the Lundy Model and the quality of children's participation on their project. A flowchart of the model in action is also provided on page 31.

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[1] Lundy, L. (2007). "Voice" is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child", British Educational Research Journal, 33:6, 927-942, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033

3. SPACE: Establishing an Advisory Group

The SPACE element of the Lundy Model considers how to create meaningful opportunities for children's involvement, where they are encouraged to express their views. Aside from physical space, the concept also refers to safety, inclusivity and the ethical and practical issues to consider, before you gather and work with a children's advisory group. The format of advisory group meetings will depend on the group you are working with in terms of communication level and style. Please be aware of, and consider, the needs of children who may require additional supports to express their views, such as those with visual, hearing, physical and intellectual impairments.

A first step to consider is the establishment of a Children's Advisory Panel (CAP) to work with the adult facilitators. In this section, we focus on:

- project design;
- ethical conduct;
- recruitment and retention;
- selecting CAP members; and
- planning your meetings.

i) Project Design

When thinking about working with a CAP it is important to design your project in advance. It is crucial to set aside an appropriate amount of time and funding. For example, you may need to factor in staff time and costs for internal and external team members, and administrative and other practical support staff. In addition, you may need to budget for costs for travel expenses, activities and tasks materials, as well as food, refreshments and gifts.

You may need to enlist the support of other projects that work directly with children and young people to help you recruit children for the CAP. In this case, the project leads would be considered your 'gatekeepers' and can liaise with the children and their families/carers on your behalf. Their support may also be needed to organise a 'chaperone' to travel with the children, and to act as a 'supportive/trusted adult' to assist during meetings should this be required. This could be for communication or medical needs, or if a child wanted to withdraw, got upset, or needed referred if a safeguarding issue (disclosure of harm) were to arise.

It is essential to encourage gatekeeper 'buy-in' so that they are motivated to assist as required. The role and responsibilities assigned to them as chaperone and trusted adult must be clearly outlined in your communications. You may wish to formulate an initial email, information leaflets, consent forms and a formal invitation letter (see appendices i & ii for examples). From the feedback that we received in the A Million & Me project, it is very important that adults who accompany the children to CAP meetings are fully informed and aware of the purpose of the project and their role within it.

ii) Ethical Conduct

Your organisation, or those you will be working with, may have a requirement that you obtain an ethical review and/or the necessary governance approvals before you begin working with children and young people. In the A Million & Me project we obtained ethical permission to recruit a group of 10 children aged 8-13 years from the Ethics Committee at Queen's University Belfast, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work. Whether or not this is required for you, it is important and good practice, that you think about all of these issues and address them before you begin.

Ethical considerations include identifying and detailing procedures on child protection and safeguarding; informed consent and withdrawal; and developing protocols on distress, confidentiality (and its limits) and secure storage of personal and other data. It is imperative that participation in the process will not cause a child any harm. While some external agencies may not have ethical reviews boards in place and may not require formal permissions, an important feature of child's rights-based participation and good practice is to ensure that any activities undertaken with children are ethical. This means taking steps to make sure that children (and, where relevant, their parents) are aware of the intentions of the project, that host organisations have safeguarding procedures in place, and that polices and processes are General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant. This means that they must adhere to an enforceable EU directive on how to handle, store and use personal data.

The involvement of a funder can be an issue in terms of ensuring that participation is voluntary. It is important to reassure partners and the children and their families that they will not be disadvantaged if they choose not to get involved. In the A Million & Me project, since CiN provided funding to the participating projects, it was emphasised that there would be no impact on their relationship regarding current or future funding if they chose not to take part in the project.

To summarise, all partners and participants involved (gatekeepers, parents and children) should give their fully informed consent to take part by understanding and agreeing to:

- the purpose of the project and what it is they are being asked to do.
- The procedures to safeguard and protect their data, anonymity and confidentiality.
- What will happen to their contribution, data and personal information.

It is also very important to explain issues related to the use of photographs and videos during sessions and in the broader context of the project, should these be made public.

We have included examples of the type of documents you may need to develop to recruit children to an advisory panel and run the workshops. Please see appendix (i) for sample Information Leaflets and Consent Forms for Gatekeepers, Children and their Parents, which give details of how we addressed these ethical considerations. These samples are based on the actual forms used for the A Million & Me project. You may adapt these to your own context and can include your own organisation's and project logos.

The ethical and practical issues particular to your project, and how you intend to navigate and resolve these, must be communicated to the gatekeeping and/or partner organisations involved. In A Million & me, the information we circulated during the initial stages of the project recommended that a staff member and/or a parent might accompany a child to attend meetings as a trusted adult/chaperone, and indeed some parents did come along to meeting 1. However, this may have caused an issue for some partner organisations, particularly those who felt that a parent might not always be a reliable choice to chaperone the children. This meant that in some cases staff members gave up their free time at weekends to accompany children to the meetings, or projects struggled with staffing issues if they needed to send two staff members to meetings.

"The stipulation to comply with a BBC risk assessment to have two staff to bring two children puts a strain on staff resources and we would need to think about future involvement if this is still the case." (Gatekeeper).

Key Learning: Lead organisations should consult with partners to assess the impact of their internal policies and procedures on resources and frontline staff.

Ethical guidelines and requirements must be discussed with partner organisations in advance to ensure all parties are aligned and not put under unnecessary resource pressure.

As long as the child is willing, a decision should be reached by considering the best interest of the child and involving parents in decision-making.

When considering funding for projects best practice would be to allocate costs for partner organisations to 'buy-out' or cover staff time if required.

*NB: Remember, when you recruit a CAP and have your first introductory meeting, it is important to:

- Take the children through the Information Leaflet and Consent Form.
- Repeat the voluntary nature of their involvement by making them aware of the process in place should they wish to withdraw, without any disadvantage to them or their project.
- Give them lots of opportunity to ask questions and answer these honestly and clearly.
- Obtain their consent again verbally before proceeding.

iii) Recruitment & Retention Strategy

It is important to come up with a recruitment plan that thinks through each stage of this process, from first contact, to obtaining the children's (and where relevant parents') consent, and addresses how project specific documents and data will be processed and stored. You may need to identify a person who will recruit the children. That could be someone from your own organisation or institution and/or community gatekeepers, as we did in the A Million & Me project. Recruiters/gatekeepers must understand the type of participants required, in relation to socio-demographic characteristics and/or particular experiences, so you can work with a group of children who have the required expertise for your project. For the A Million & Me project we developed the following step-by-step process to identify and set-up the recruitment of children to the CAP. You may adapt this for your own context.

> **1. CiN will scope suitable children's projects in Scotland from their existing portfolio that fulfil the inclusion criteria and compile contact details.**
>
> **2. CiN lead will communicate via email with potential organisations alerting them to the opportunity and gauge their interest in becoming involved.**
>
> **3. On obtaining ethical approval, a formal invitation letter will be emailed to interested organisations informing them of the specifics of the project and their role in it. They will be asked to nominate 2-4 children, who could work well in a group, to represent their organisation on the CAP.**
>
> **4. Gatekeepers will receive all relevant information leaflets and consent forms, and pass these on to parents and children informing them of the opportunity.**
>
> **5. Each partner will nominate 2-4 children to join the CAP so that children could become involved as a buddy-pair, where this is considered appropriate.**
>
> **6. A reserve list will be established to provide the opportunity to others in the event that someone wishes to withdraw or drops out from the original group.**
>
> **7. CiN will set-up advisory group meetings and gatekeepers will liaise with parents to decide who will chaperone the children during face-to-face and online meetings.**
>
> **8. Partner, parent and child consent will be obtained by gatekeeping organisations and forwarded to the CiN team for processing and storage.**
>
> **9. After discussion with parents and children, gatekeepers will feedback to the CiN team and provide, with permission, some relevant information about their organisations and the children nominated.**
>
> **10. Partner organisations will continue to liaise with parents and children on the team's behalf to let us know if they, or the children, change their minds about participation, and to plan meetings dates and travel etc.**

Figure 2. Recruitment Plan

Long-term commitment: Gatekeepers/recruiters are critical links between the team and the children. Their ability to facilitate meetings and complete tasks both off and online may be crucial to the success of the project. As CAP participation usually requires long-term commitment, you might like to generate a retention strategy so that,

- gatekeepers can continue to provide long term access to the children;
- children are comfortable to remain involved over the long term; and
- you can replenish membership of the group should some CYP opt out over time.

> **Key Learning: Gatekeepers thought they would have been more involved in the A Milion & Me project activities and suggested reasons to do this.**
>
> *"Involve project staff so that they can share the experience with the participants and this would make it easier to keep them engaged between sessions."*
> *"There were a lot of youth work skills within the staff that came along and perhaps you could have utilised these more."*
> *"When I dropped them at home after the first day and the parents asked me what they had done and how it went I wasn't able to tell them anything much because the kids hadn't said too much about what they had been doing." (Gatekeeper).*
>
> **Depending on the type of project - you may need to involve partners as assistant facilitators to help manage the group and assist with communication needs.**
> **However, if gatekeepers are to be involved as recruiters and chaperones, this needs to be made clear verbally to avoid confusion and feeling devalued.**

In A Million & Me, we opted to recruit children as 'buddy-pairs' in the hope that having another person whom they knew would make the children more comfortable and confident to take part. However, the buddy-pairing strategy did not always work as the purpose of this may have not been made clear to partners.

> **Buddy-Pair recruitment strategy:**
> *"If I did it again I would get two friends to participate as these two knew each other but weren't particularly interested in each other. They were much more reserved than I thought they would be." (Gatekeeper).*
>
> **Key Learning: Recruitment strategies, and their purpose, should be clearly communicated with partners.**

You may wish to set a target age range of children so that the children nominated and selected will not 'age-out' over the course of the project. A plan B was devised in A Million & Me to ensure all children nominated and not selected were placed on a reserve list, with their (and their parents') permission, to replace any children who withdrew from the group. If you do have a clear age split in the group, you can always divide participants into smaller age-related groupings, or group by individuals who work well together.

iv) Selecting CAP members

You may wish to give the recruitment process some time to allow gatekeepers to contact children and their parents and share the opportunity. Projects, parents and children will need time to read the information sheets and discuss the opportunity and their ability to participate. You may need to give gatekeepers up to two weeks (or more) to spread the word through their organisations, and with their clients.

When recruitment information is gathered you will need to meet as a team and discuss the information provided in the nominations. Potential participants can be narrowed down by considering the inclusion criteria, for example, geographical location, diversity and representation within the group in relation to gender, ability/disability, age, ethnicity etc. In a Million & Me when the final group was selected, the CiN lead reported back to the gatekeepers, thanked them, informed them of our selections, and checked to make sure that the remaining children were happy to be placed on a reserve list. The children and their parents/guardians were informed and arrangements began to set-up the first meeting.

For more information about the A Million & Me recruitment and selection process please see appendix iii.

> **From the systematic recruitment and screening process**
> **the A Million & Me project secured the participation of 10 children aged 9-13 years**
> **(5 Male & 5 Female) from 6 CiN funded projects throughout Scotland.**
> **They were;**
> **Aiden; Ayanna; Craigy; Fatima; Kanyarat; Lewis; Lewis L; Mylie; Rafe; Sophie.**

Figure 3. The A Million & Me CAP

v) Planning Meetings (face-to-face & online)

If possible, use a child-friendly space (bright, spacious & comfortable) for meetings and one that is free from interruptions and distractions. Cap meetings should be planned in advance, have a clear purpose and be informed by the role of the CAP, which in A Million & Me was to,

- review and provide recommendations on the organisation's principles, structures, and systems for involving children and evaluating their participation, and
- contribute to the content and design of child-friendly materials, reports and merchandise related to the programme.

> **The project -** *"Offered new experiences and engagement with young people who may never have had an opportunity to be part of a CAP. The young person really enjoyed the opportunity and was so excited and engaged." (Gatekeeper)*

CAP meetings must be structured to allow for project related activities, comfort breaks and free play, and informal chat. The core team should draw up an agenda and choose the focus and objectives for each session. These will be related to the tasks set for the CAP. While you will have ideas about these, you need to confirm with the CAP that they wish to be involved in these tasks and also open a discussion about other things to which they might contribute.

> *"we made new friends, we worked sometimes in groups and sometimes as individuals, we would do little tasks at a time and them maybe have a snack or a break." (CAP)*

Attending CAP meetings may require travel. The age and personal requirements of participants will determine if they will be chaperoned by a parent or trusted adult from their supporting organisation (as per safeguarding guidelines and processes, which should be clearly detailed before any travel occurs). You might like to draw chaperones' attention to the information leaflets again to familiarise them with their role and responsibilities. It is important to get their mobile phone number in case you need to contact them during meetings.

> **To gather a representative group A Million & Me recruited from areas all over Scotland. That meant the children had to travel (with a chaperone) for the first meeting in Glasgow. Our assumption was that an initial face-to-face meeting was required and once everyone had met, it might be easier to engage online for subsequent meetings.**

Listening to feedback: While it is admirable, and indeed essential, to plan your project and engagement activities with children, it is important to be flexible and understand that even the best-laid plans are never guaranteed. Listening to feedback from the gatekeepers, chaperones and the children after the first meeting is a good way to check that everything is going smoothly and all needs are being met. Please see appendix iv for an example feedback sheet for adults who accompanied the children to A Million & Me meeting 1. A project completion Evaluation Sheet for children and adults is also supplied. All evaluations should be anonymised and forwarded to the team for consideration. Most importantly, feedback should be acted upon to help improve the experience for the children involved.

Even though the feedback from our first meeting was that it was extremely long and everyone was tired, the children remained engaged and excited to be involved. A measure of their 'buy-in' was evident when some turned up at the second meeting dressed in Pudsey clothes and colours.

Figure 4. Dressed for the Occasion

You may wish to opt for face-to-face or online meetings or a blend of both, during a time that suits the children. In the A Million & Me project CiN administration staff liaised with gatekeepers, who liaised with parents and children, to arrange mutually convenient meeting dates and travel to and from meetings. However, given the number of people and organisations involved and the geographical spread, this was not always straightforward.

Face-to-face meetings:

In terms of comfort don't assume that everyone likes to sit on seats or on the floor!

As you will see in the photograph in figure 5, some of the children liked to sit on the floor, some on cushions, and some liked to walk about and explore while thinking. It is important to let children move about, as long as it is safe to do so, but keep checking in with them to see if they are still engaged, getting distracted or need a break.

Figure 5. The CAP at Work

Online meetings: If required, an appropriate online forum with a secure user-friendly platform to exchange ideas should be identified during the first meeting with the whole group. In the A Million & Me project, the children, all of whom were under 13 years, were too young for membership of Facebook and other social media platforms. Zoom was chosen as a suitable platform during our first face-to-face meeting because it is freely available and no specific equipment or software is required, other than a computer with audio and video capabilities, to which all of the projects had access. Since our project, the Covid-19 lockdown has shed some light on security issues and the importance of online companies' privacy and encryption policies, calling into question their GDPR compliance. It is therefore important to consider this and find out as much information you can about the various platforms available.

In addition to particular platform security issues, conducting online meetings with children raises other ethical issues. There is a concern about who can overhear the children's discussions if they are connecting from home. For A Million & Me we conducted online meetings with the support of the gatekeepers on their premises, using their private password protected computers and invitation only access to the secure online meeting space. A nominated youth support worker from each organisation was present during these meetings to support the children and manage the process according to their safeguarding procedures. Any other adult, for example an additional staff member, involved during the meetings with the group was required to sign a confidentiality agreement (appendix v) which seeks to highlight and ensure the children's confidentiality in the group situation. One challenge is that it may be difficult to arrange mutually convenient times to hold online meetings that suit the majority and so meetings may need to take place asynchronously.

Online meetings

"I think they really struggled doing this and (name) said she felt really on the spot because no one else was taking part. They were probably a bit tired, as they had to wait for 40mins from the end of the school day until the start of the session. I asked them whether or not they had found this too difficult and they said no despite not speaking much and would want to do it again." (Gatekeeper).

Completion of tasks: To include the views of non-attending CAP members at meetings you may wish to arrange for the tasks to be completed offline with project staff. We chose to do this when we had poor attendance at the online meeting. Tasks involved a review of the 'Own It' app and the CAP Checklist (see appendix ix for further details). We emailed a set of instructions and questions to each project gatekeeper and gained the views of four additional CAP members on the tasks by return email, which included feedback from the gatekeepers.

> *"The kids were great at chatting away and getting involved with the app."*
> *"We spent a good while discussing all of the above, and they really loved getting their hands on the app. I think they enjoyed looking through it (Checklist.)"*
> *'This is an excellent tool (Checklist) for us as an organisation to use with our 12 years and younger membership for evaluating project delivery." (Gatekeepers).*

*NB It is important to provide feedback in later meetings and provide the group with a recap and overview from the work of the previous sessions. Large photographs of work carried out and print outs of their suggestions can be shown by way of reminder.

You can find more information about the A Million & Me project in appendix iii in relation to:

- Recruitment/retention processes and considerations.
- The meeting location and space.
- The CAP meeting schedule and associated activities.
- The impact of COVID-19 (2020) on our intended plans.
- Some difficulties we had with the online meeting format.

Figure 6. A CAP Gift

Facilitator Reflection Questions (SPACE):

SPACE

Were children involved from the start?

Were children who are affected by the issues involved?

Were children who are interested in the issues involved?

Did children feel safe to express themselves freely in the space?

Were steps taken to ensure that the process was inclusive?

Did the process allow children to identify issues they wanted to discuss?

4. VOICE: Creating a Conducive Environment

The VOICE element of the Lundy Model is about making sure that all children who are capable of expressing a view on a matter are facilitated to do so. This may involve supporting the children to form their views by providing them with information and opportunities to reflect and discuss the issue. Children may need help to participate and form their opinions, and have a right to receive information and guidance from adults in order to do so. Furthermore, children should be given the opportunity to express their views in various formats, for example, orally or in writing, or in the form of art, or any other graphic or moving media forms of communication they choose (Art. 13, UNCRC), as far as is possible and subject to available resources. Children may appreciate different ways to communicate their views and they may not always involve speaking. The point here is to provide for options for communication and to make sure that children feel comfortable. This involves: i) set up and tone; ii) building trust and rapport with the CAP; and, iii) fostering ownership in the project.

a.i) Set up and tone

It is useful to have at least two facilitators at all meetings. One can take notes while the other is talking and explaining tasks etc. As already noted, chaperones should be fully briefed on their role and on stand-by during meetings in case their assistance is needed, e.g., younger children or children with disabilities may need additional supports to participate fully such as help with reading, translation, sign language etc. The first A Million and Me project meeting was held at BBC HQ in Glasgow and for the second meeting, we were invited to the child friendly offices of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS) in Edinburgh (www.cypcs.org.uk). Based on feedback from the first meeting that the day was too long and tiring, we shortened the next meeting to a half-day.

> *"The panel is a bit like a business meeting – room had panels and looked like what a business would have. Sometimes the way we chatted was like a business chat." (CAP)*

Figure 7. Meeting 1 – BBC HQ Glasgow

a.ii) Building Rapport & Facilitation Tips

Rapport and the relationship you develop with the CAP is crucial for building trust, motivation, and engagement. In this section, you will find some suggestions that might help you to build a relationship with and hold the interest of the group. Some children may be very uncomfortable speaking out in a group so that should never be compulsory.

One of the first things that you can do to get to know the group, and get them to know each other, is to use ice-breakers and introduce games and energisers into the work agenda. Most children enjoy ice-breakers, games and energisers - although some do not or may not be able to participate fully. For example, when using physical activities, it is worth checking whether there are children with restricted mobility who cannot take part. When used appropriately, these can create a positive atmosphere among a group, particularly in groups were participants do not know each other well, to help relax and motivate them, and to break down social barriers (see appendix vi for some examples).

As the work unfolds and children are involved in the associated tasks, be alert for signs that energy levels are dropping and their engagement is waning, e.g., yawning, taking longer to respond, looking tired, disinterested or getting distracted. Stop what you are doing, and allow the group to move about and take breaks and have snacks as the need arises. This will also help to foster an atmosphere of trust as the children will see that you are responding to their needs, rather than your own.

> *"The Children enjoyed the experience and felt special that they had been selected and I think it made them feel valued. From what I saw, staff running the CAP were good with the children, and therefore the kids were excited and motivated to take part." (Gatekeeper).*

Please see below for more facilitation tips on how to build rapport, close down a session and discuss sensitive topics.

Facilitation Tips

- Arrive early to prepare the space. Arrange the chairs, set up equipment if required, have the materials to hand, check IT is working, and organise refreshments.

- Welcome the participants (and their parents/chaperones) as they arrive and go through the information and consent procedures outlined to check everyone has consented. Get mobile phone numbers from chaperones in case needed.

- Place yourself in the group, at the same level as the participants.

- During refreshments and food breaks, spend some informal time with the group chatting about their lives and getting to know them.

- Give an overview of the project and reiterate the information on the consent form to check that the children understand what they will be doing, what will happen to their data, and importantly, reiterate the voluntary nature and tell them what to do if they wish to withdraw.

- Make sure the group know that what they say will be kept anonymous and confidential unless a safeguarding issue arises. Explain that this may be difficult in the group context and encourage all members to hold this confidence too.

- If one participant dominates and others are quiet, ask *'does anyone else have anything to say'*, or *'I'm interested to hear what other members would like to add'*.

- Ask for clarification rather than assume you understand what the participants mean, by asking questions such as *'when you say.....what do you mean by that?'*

Tips for closing sessions

- **End discussions** on a positive note by thanking the participants for their time and contributions, commenting on how helpful their contributions will be.

- **Reflect:** Summarise the important and relevant takeaway messages from the work.

- **Debrief:** Leave time to debrief and chat about how the group went. This will allow quieter participants an opportunity to respond and allow everyone a chance to unwind and think calmly about his or her views on the issues and to ensure everyone leaves the meeting in good spirits.

- **Next steps:** Tell them what you will do with their information, what will happen next time and arrange the next meeting date.

Tips for discussing sensitive issues

- **Set the stage:** Participants need to be intellectually and emotionally prepared, and to feel safe and not fear retaliation for comments they make during discussions. Establish a supportive atmosphere by drawing up ground rules or a group contract for discussions.

- **Active facilitator:** Your role is to neither dominate nor passively observe. You should initiate and become involved in discussions and re-word questions, correct misinformation, ask for clarification, challenge assumptions and review main points.

- **Be developmentally and age appropriate** - this involves an understanding of how to be responsive to, and sensitive of, all children in the group.

- **Depersonalise the issues**: Keep focused on the topics under discussion and depersonalize the issues. This means asking children about what it might be like for other children their age – rather than focusing on their own lives and experiences.

- **Foster respect:** Give participants the opportunity to express their views while feeling valued and respected contributors. Discussions about sensitive issues and/or controversial topics may be difficult at times. Provide reminders about respecting the rights of others to have differing opinions. Make sure they understand that it is okay to disagree, but keep comments focused on the ideas and not the people who shared them.

- **Recognise the diversity within the group:** Provide participants with opportunities to consider opposing points of view and to be respectful to sensitivities, and cultural similarities and differences. Encourage others in the group to do this too.

- **Be prepared to deal with tense, emotional, uncomfortable moments.** It is very possible that some participants may become confused, angry or upset. If this happens, remain calm, do not avoid the issue, have a plan and distress protocols in place for dealing with it. If things get too much you can seek the assistance of the chaperone.

Figure 8. Facilitation Tips

a.iii) Fostering Ownership

An important foundation for any project is that participants have a sense of ownership and feel that together they are part of a shared vision. In the first meeting for A Million & Me, after the necessary introductions and consent procedures, the discussion focused on *'What do you know about CiN?'* The group knew a lot about the organisation with regard to its work on disabilities, for those that need help, charity and donations, the annual TV campaign, and the long standing brand character - Pudsey Bear (and his friend Blush).

The team introduced the A Million & Me programme and explained why we needed the group's help as advisors. We explained that the focus was on children's mental well-being and we began by exploring their understanding of this.

To introduce a bit of fun towards the end the meeting, we focussed on team identity. One way to do this with children in an advisory group is to encourage them to come up with a team name, logo, and a colour design palette for project materials and outputs. Please see appendix vii for details of how the A Million & Me CAP created the team name - #AMillion&MeSquad, project logo and design palette. This may give you some ideas as to how you might go about this. This type of activity can be completed towards the end of the first meeting to allow the group to bond.

Figure 9. A Million & Me Logo

The CAP were happy to be involved to help with a prestigious organisation and to work as a team making decisions. They enjoyed discussing and debating the pros and cons of various options and voting on final decisions.

> *"I got to learn new things about the children in need organisation and it really helped me to look at the other perspective of things. I made awesome new friends like xxxx and it helped me to not be so shy in groups." (CAP)*

The CAP should also be involved in planning further meetings and events related to the project. In A Million & Me, the group had ideas for future meetings and extending the scope of the project to include, giving advice to children on where to go to get help, and starting a new campaign, posters and app to advise projects.

Ideas for wrap up meeting:
"Pizza Party & Ice Cream!" (CAP)

a.iv) Capacity Building

Capacity building on the issues may be needed to help children develop their thoughts and express their opinions in a safe and supportive atmosphere. If done well, it foregrounds their knowledge and sense of empowerment and can develop their confidence and team working skills. The challenge is how best to do this in a short time period while keeping it fun and not 'leading' the children to particular views.

In the A Million & Me project we reflected on the information that we needed to get from the CAP and designed a series of activities and creative methods for each meeting to help them engage around the issues. For the most part our sessions were based on brainstorming and discussion within the group encouraging them to ask questions and listen to others' experiences, and allowing them to respond verbally and creatively through drawing and art. Please see appendix viii for some examples.

> *"As a group we also talked about children's rights and what we would change and keep all together. It was a team decision and it was super fun. We even got pizza. After that we did a bit more work then we had to say goodbye. Even though there was hard work it has been an amazing experience and super fun. I would totally recommend doing something like this and helping other children, it feels so good. Overall it has been fantastic and I feel super proud to be a part of it." (CAP)*

b.i) Co-creating Child Friendly Language

The purpose of co-creating child friendly language is so that other children and young people can understand the issues in language that they can understand. In the A Million & Me project this was around mental health. We conducted a number of activites across our meetings to establish how we could talk about mental health with other children.

We spoke to mental health professionals beforehand to check with them on the language they might currently use with children. This formed the basis of one of our activities, the 'Coping', 'Struggling' and 'Not Coping' task.

See figure 10 and appendix viii for more information on how we did this with the A Million & Me CAP.

> *"We made little people and wrote stuff that we liked and stuff about emotions." (CAP)*

Word Clouds: These are a good way to visually represent children's views and ideas and can be used to feed back to the CAP to recap on work already carried out. In A Million & Me we developed word clouds from the CAP descriptions of '*Coping, Struggling to cope and Not Coping*', in the first meeting, and revisited these in the next meeting (see figure 11). These visual representations show the words that appeared more frequently. No category headings were visible to the group and we played a game to see if they could guess the category to which each word cloud belonged. The group liked this game and immediately got each correct.

Figure 11. Engaging the CAP with the Issues
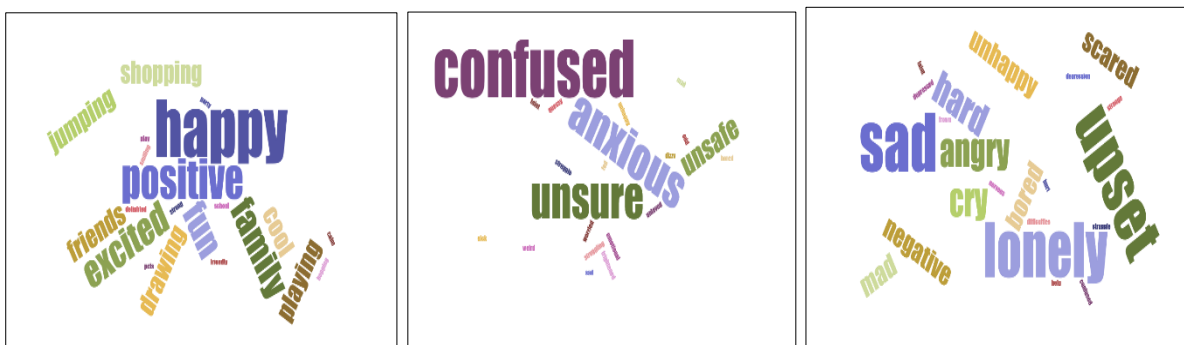
Figure 10. Accessing the CAP's Understanding

Key Learning: From this activity we learnt the terms, phrases and images to use when communicating with children aged 8-13 years about the mental health of those in the target age group.

b.ii) Developing Child-friendly Project Materials

One way children can influence a project is to review and develop project materials.

In the A Million & Me project, the CAP developed,

1. a set of 'Project Principles',
2. an evaluation 'Checklist'.

They also reviewed exsiting project materials, such as:

3. a pre-existing Children's Evaluation Tool, and
4. The BBC's 'Own It' App.

Activities 1 & 2 were new designs carried out in colloboration with the children during CAP meetings. Activities 3 & 4 involved materials that had been designed by adults for children previous to the set up of the CAP. The purpose of these tasks was for the CAP to review the pre existing materials, provide a 'child-friendly' critique and suggest improvements in relation

to accessibility and usability etc. Please see appendix ix for more information and step-by-step details on how 1 & 2 were developed, and the CAP feedback to 3 & 4 that was forwarded to the team.

Feedback is very important so that the children can see how their views are reflected in the final products. The Project Principles and Checklist went through a number of iterations before final 'sign off' by the CAP.

> *"They seemed really positive after taking part in the BBC sessions and couldn't wait to tell us everything that they had been getting up to. Similarly with the mobile application they made some very good observations and learned a lot about online safety and wellbeing."*
> *(Gatekeeper).*

The Children's Principles: During meetings 2 & 3, the CAP and the adults from the projects reviewed the wording and design for the CAPs value statements. A tension arose around the wording. The CAP wished to make the statements strong by using the word 'should' (see figure 13), but adults thought the wording was too 'strong'.
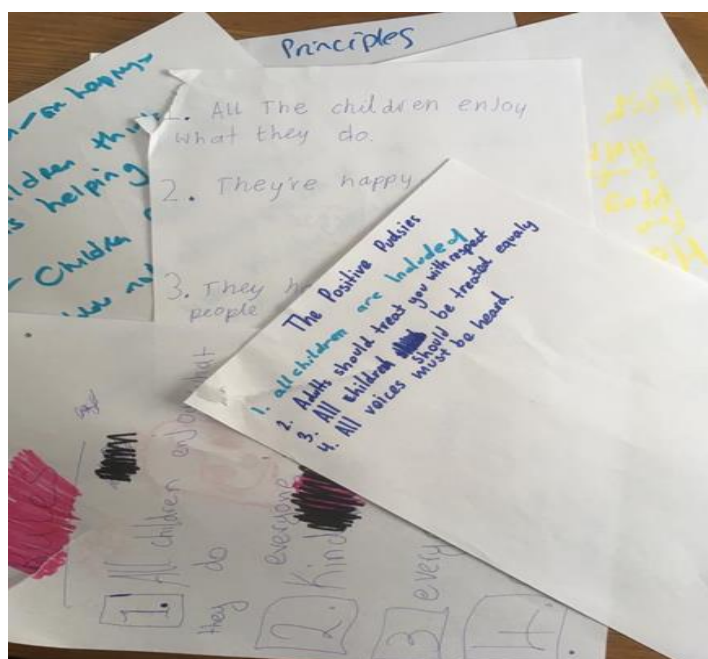
Figure 12. Devising the CAP Principles

1. All children should be included and everyone should get the support they need.
2. Adults should listen to children and all voices must be heard.
3. All children should be treated equally.
4. Everyone is kind and gets treated with respect.
5. All children should enjoy what they are doing.
6. Everyone should be happy and feel good about themselves.
7. Children should think, feel and know it is helping them.
8. Children should have lots of friendly people and helpers.
9. Children should feel safe and not afraid to do things.
10. Children should have fun and play games.
11. Adults need do what they say they are going to do.

Figure 13. The Wording of the CAP Principles

The projects that completed the review task offline also showed the children's principles to staff and other children and young people in their organisations. See appendix ix for more detailed information on this.

During the online meeting, we discussed how we could make this document and the wording suit both adults and children. Suggestions were, to change the word 'should' to 'all try to make sure/ensure that', or change the document name from 'Principles for Projects' to,

- 'Things that are important to children'
- 'How we should treat each other'
- 'In an ideal world'
- Our world would be better for us all if......

However, the children still liked the term 'should' and didn't fully understand why the adults found the word troublesome. We opted to keep the children's language but change the focus of the document so as adults might feel better able to implement the children's principles. This idea of developing a Checklist based around the children's principles was raised as a way to incorporate the children's values and this could be used as an evaluation tool to see if they were being implemented in projects.

While all feedback is welcome, as this can provide the team with a broader perspective, it may also create a dilemma in terms of including the original essence of the CAP's views and could thus limit their influence. The challenge here is to achieve a compromise and develop a workable solution for both adults and children. So, on the back page of 'The Checklist' we added the list of children's principles and changed the title to 'Things that are Important to Children'. It was intended that this shift of focus, away from what adults must do, to a set of overarching principles, was able to keep the children's strong wording, thus respecting their views, while easing the pressure felt by the adults in terms of what they can do in practice.

*Figure 14. A Million & Me Project Principles (leaflet & poster)*

Things that are important to children

1. All children should be included and everyone should get the support they need.

2. Adults should listen to children and all voices must be heard.

3. All children should be treated equally.

4. Everyone is kind and gets treated with respect.

5. All children should enjoy what they are doing.

6. Everyone should be happy and feel good about themselves.

7. Children should think, feel and know it is helping them.

8. Children should have lots of friendly people and helpers.

9. Children should feel safe and not afraid to do things.

10. Children should have fun and play games.

11. Adults need to do what they say they are going to do.

BBC Children in Need
A Million & Me
CHECKLIST for PROJECTS

Please answer each question by choosing YES, SOMETIMES or NO on the answer grid

1. Are all children included and get the support they need?   ① YES SOMETIMES NO

2. Do adults listen to children and make sure their voices are heard?   ② YES SOMETIMES NO

3. Are all children treated equally?   ③ YES SOMETIMES NO

4. Is everyone kind and treats each other with respect?   ④ YES SOMETIMES NO

5. Do all children enjoy what they are doing?   ⑤ YES SOMETIMES NO

6. Does everyone feel happy and good about themselves?   ⑥ YES SOMETIMES NO

7. Do children think, feel and know the project is helping them?   ⑦ YES SOMETIMES NO

8. Do children have lots of friendly people and helpers around them.   ⑧ YES SOMETIMES NO

9. Do children feel safe and not afraid to do things?   ⑨ YES SOMETIMES NO

10. Do children have fun and play games?   ⑩ YES SOMETIMES NO

11. Do the adults do what they say they are going to do?   ⑪ YES SOMETIMES NO

NOW count how many times you chose each answer
WHAT WAS YOUR SCORE?   YES ☐   SOMETIMES ☐   NO ☐

Figure 15. A Million & Me Project Checklist

VOICE

Were children given the information they need to form a view?

Did children know they had a choice about their participation?

Were children asked questions appropriate to making a difference to a service or policy?

Were children given a range of options on how to express themselves?

Did children know to whom their views were communicated?

5. AUDIENCE & INFLUENCE: Incorporating Children's Views

The AUDIENCE element of The Lundy Model requires giving children's views 'due weight', which means their views (verbal and non-verbal) must be communicated to those who have power to make decisions. Even when a child's perspective on some issues are known, there is no guarantee that this will be communicated to adults who will, or even can, act on this. Thus, there is a need to ensure that when working with your CAP that they have the right 'audience' – an opportunity to share their views to one or more individuals with the power to implement the children's ideas. Importantly, in relation to 'audience & influence' an influential person from the lead organisation should attend one or more meetings to listen to the children's views, commit to taking them seriously and report back on what has changed (or not) because of their input.

The INFLUENCE element in the Lundy Model is to make sure that the children's views have been taken seriously, and acted upon. This must include feedback as to why their views and suggestions may not have been taken on board. Feeding back to the CAP on how their views and suggestions are used can enhance 'meaningful participation' as children feel valued and understand how they have influenced decisions. Children, like adults, are willing to accept the limits of their influence if properly informed as to why their solutions and suggestions cannot be implemented.

In our project, the Director of the A Million & Me programme was the influential audience member from the lead organisation who attended every meeting with the CAP. She engaged with the group and listened to their views and suggestions. Importantly, she discussed with the group the limits of their influence and how their ideas and suggestions would be incorporated in to the A Million & Me programme.

External engagement with other influential adults is important too and should be encouraged, if appropriate and ethical to do so. This introduces another positive influential expert link to the team. The Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland – Mr Bruce Adamson, was a positive external link we made during the A Million & Me project. At the time of writing, we also intended to work with Scotland's mental health lead but Covid-19 disrupted our plans. Post Covid, the CAP will restart and continue to work on the project. By engaging with influential experts, the projects and the children involved were able to pick up additional capacity building information and learn more about the significance of the CAP role in the project. Feedback received from the children and gatekeepers showed that they liked being in both of the chosen meeting environments as it made them feel valued. They also enjoyed the travel, the gift packs, and the food and refreshments they received at both meetings.

> *"When we met in Edinburgh the children received a lovely pack, including information on Rights of the Child etc – this would be something that could even be implemented in our clubs in the future, so that other kids can benefit from these resources as well." (Gatekeeper).*

During meeting 2, the children were permitted to write messages on a transparent class surface that encased the Commissioner's office. Some signed their name, others wrote messages of thanks for a lovely day (See figure 16).

Figure 16. Meeting 2 - CYPCS Offices, Edinburgh

i) Actioning the CAP suggestions

The CAP's project specific designs and reviews of the pre existing Evaluation Tool and the online App were collated and passed on to the designers and programme leads (influential adults). You can see appendix ix for indepth details of the CAP responses for each. The influential adults from the A Million & Me project responded to the CAP suggestions and forwarded the following feedback.

> *"Reflections from #amillion&mesquad were discussed at the programme Advisory Group, comprised of sector experts and senior staff from BBC Children in Need. The principles were considered and some issues with language were fed back to the children for further resolution. It was instructive to hear the group's views, and at some points challenging to the adults' approach.*
>
> *The work that went into the design and illustration of the programme was welcomed and as a process helped the 'squad to appreciate the focus of A Million & Me and to represent it in a way that is meaningful to the target age group. The checklist produced will be shared with the grant making teams in BBC Children in Need and the idea of producing a stress ball as part of this year's Appeal merchandise has been fed into the commercial team's plans.*
>
> *BBC Children's has received some feedback on their Own It App, and when there is an opportunity to re-group and reflect on the work of #amillion&me further ideas and comments will be considered."* (CiN Feedback)

Key Learning:
- **Children can provide critical content and design information for developers to ensure products designed for children are accessible, useable and engaging.**
- **Children can develop tools and materials that projects can use to assess what is important to children when evaluating their work.**

The importance of being involved: During the A Million & Me online meeting the children were informed that the CiN lead had an upcoming presentation (20th Feb 2020) that would benefit from the inclusion of some of their ideas/thoughts on the following question,

"Do you think it's important to include children your age in discussions around children's mental health and wellbeing. If so, why?"

Their responses included:

- *"children have a voice and have a right to speak out and give their opinion"*
- *"not too young to talk about it"*
- *"they (adults) can get ideas about what children want and think"*
- *"some stuff can be difficult to talk about, like your emotions, but it's better to be included and talk about difficult things than not be included"*
- *"children can know what things need changed and can make good changes"*
- *"they (children) need to be listened to more"*

Facilitators Reflection Questions (AUDIENCE & INFLUENCE)

AUDIENCE

Were the right decision-makers involved (those responsible for decision-making on the issue)?

Did decision-makers commit to taking the views of children seriously?

How were decision-makers held to account for giving due weight to children's views?

Were children enabled to play a role in representing their own view?

INFLUENCE

Were children informed about the scope of their influence (opportunities & limitations)?

Was a report of children's views compiled?

Were children given a child friendly summary?

Were children given feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

Did children's involvement impact on policy, practice, service delivery and/or organisational culture?

Figure 17. The Lundy Model in Action

SPACE
Establishing an advisory group

Ethical Conduct
Identify the participants you need and draw up project specific information to obtain consent (partner organisations, parents & children).
Are chaperones or assistants required?

Recruitment
Think about whom and how many participants you need to recruit.
Leave opportunity open for at least 2 weeks for partners to share and gather interest from potential participants.

Selecting Members & Retention
Devise a screening tool to assess inclusion criteria.
Numbers permitting, have a back-up or waiting/reserve list to replenish the group if people withdraw or drop out.

Plan Meetings
Will meetings be Face-to-face, online or a blend of both?
Set up an introductory meeting for those who are interested to inform them what they will be doing, so everyone knows their role.
For each meeting - have a focus, agenda & timeframe (2-3hrs). Source materials, toys/games for activities.
Arrange mutually convenient times, refreshments & travel.

VOICE
Creating a Conducive Environment

Set up and Tone
Physical space - comfort, facilitators x2.
Have you thought about accessibility and provided options for communication - written, orally, through art etc.

Building Rapport
Use icebreakers/energizers. Describe the project and let the children ask questions and answer honestly. Be alert for signs of fatigue - lots of comfort breaks, informal chats & snacks.

Fostering Ownership
Develop a sense of ownership. Use activities such as a project specific team name, colour palette for materials and outputs, logos etc.

Capacity Building: develop ways to engage children with the issues. Discuss words and concepts with the children and learn about how they understand and describe issues.

Co-creating Child Friendly Language: Speak to professionals working in the field to check how they currently use language, symbols etc. Use activities such as discussion, brainstorming, voting, word clouds, ranking, hierarchies - diamond 9 etc. to understand how children understand the concepts.

Developing child friendly materials: Co-create project specific, or review existing, documents & materials to include information relevant to children.

AUDIENCE & INFLUENCE

Incorporating Children's Views

Invite to the meetings - A supportive and influential person, in a position of power within the organisation, who can make decisions.

Feedback to the children on the success or limit of their influence to show how their views have been acted on.

Multiple rounds of feedback may be required to gather further suggestions and clarification from the children to ensure they see their views reflected in project outputs.

Reflections

The Lundy Model Reflections Questions below can be used by facilitators to assess compliance with the model and the quality of children's participation in the project.

SPACE

Were children involved from the start?

Were children who are affected by the issues involved?

Were children who are interested in the issues involved?

Did children feel safe to express themselves freely in the space?

Were steps taken to ensure that the process was inclusive?

Did the process allow children to identify issues they wanted to discuss?

VOICE

Were children given the information they need to form a view?

Did children know they had a choice about their participation?

Were children asked questions appropriate to making a difference to a service or policy?

Were children given a range of options on how to express themselves?

Did children know to whom their views were communicated?

AUDIENCE

Were the right decision-makers involved (those responsible for decision-making on the issue)?

Did decision-makers commit to taking the views of children seriously?

How were decision-makers held to account for giving due weight children's views?

Were children enabled to play a role in representing their own view?

INFLUENCE

Were children informed about the scope of their influence (opportunities & limitations)?
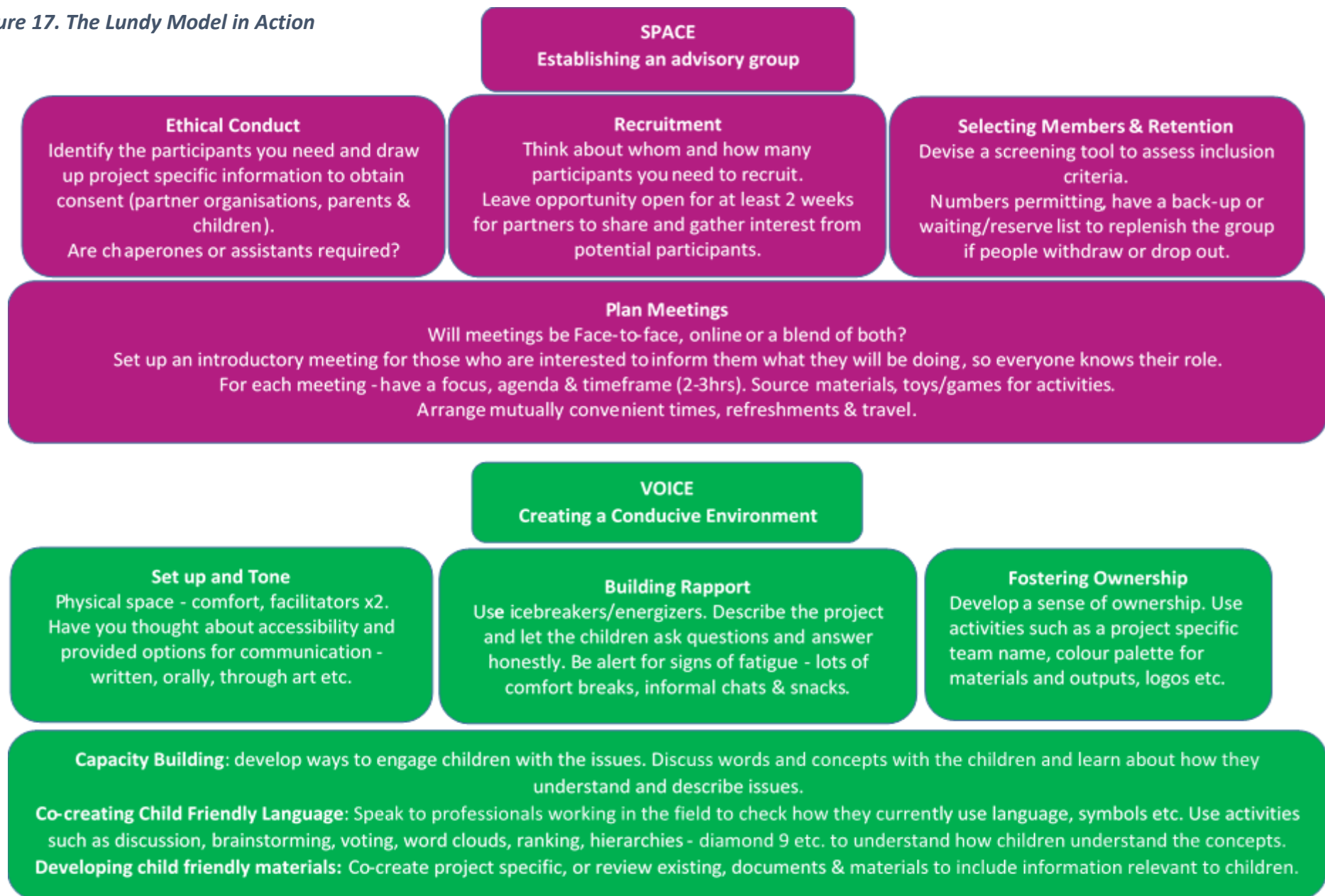
Was a report of children's views compiled?

Were children given a child friendly summary?

Were children given feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

Did children's involvement impact on policy, practice, service delivery and/or organisational culture?

Appendices

Headed Paper or logo

Partner Organisation Information Sheet & Consent Form

Children's Advisory Group

YOUR ORGANISATION NAME HERE

- **The (NAME OF ORGANISATION) would like to invite your organisation to work with our team on a new project.**
- **Before you make a decision, it is important for you to know why this project is being done and what it will involve.**
- **If you are happy to take part, we would like you to read and sign the enclosed consent form and return it to us.**
- **This work has received ethical approval from……………………………….(IF APPROPRIATE)**

Why are we doing this study?
The…………., is based in………….. We are working together with …………………..and their partners to make sure that children's views are at the heart of the work they do. ………… have just launched a new programme…………………, which seeks to …………………. that will develop services to support children's mental well-being. We are keen to involve children's voices in an Advisory Group for this project and to help us develop the programme and create child-friendly materials about …………… to share with other children.

Who will I be working with?
The team from…………………….. consists of experienced…………………., (NAMES). They have lots of experience working with children and young people in Advisory Groups, and other groups have said they really enjoyed working with them. We would like to invite you to nominate 2-4 children aged 8-13 years from your organisation to take part. They will join a group of 10-12 of their peers aged 8-13 years from other organisations and adults from …….for 3 day-long workshops and then up to 5 online consultations with the team. We will all work together to plan the materials and other activities.

What will my involvement in this process mean?
As a host organisation you will help bring this opportunity to parents and children and nominate 2-4 children to take part. You will supply an experienced youth worker to support the researchers and children every step of the way. A trusted/accompanying adult/ youth worker from the supporting organisation should be on hand to support the children and help with communication issues, if needed. Their attendance at face-to-face meetings may require travel and maybe an overnight stay. They will also be required to support the children in their organisations premises to participate in the online meetings. ………..will cover all expenses.

You will gather the names of children and their parents/guardians who show an interest in taking part in this opportunity, share the information leaflets, consent forms and screening tool with them. You will gauge their interest, gather signed consent forms, and pass their contact details on to………. They will screen all the entries and select children based on criteria such as gender and location to create as representative a group as possible for the project. We will let you know as soon as possible, who has been selected. For those who have not been selected at the initial stage, their name will be placed on a reserve list and they may be contacted during the project to participate in further opportunities if required. The children involved in the advisory group will be one of our expert advisors who will help us to include children's views in ……………..activities, particularly around the ………..programme. All meetings will be held between ….DATES….

- During meetings we will discuss and generate ideas about what information we need to know and how best to share this with other children.
- X face-to-face meetings will be held at…….. Depending on your location, these may require some travel and an overnight stay but we will be in touch with you about this separately. Other meetings will be held online on a secured well monitored platform so we can catch up and plan further activities.
- Online meetings may last up to 2 hours and face-to-face meetings will be for a full day but we will include lots of comfort breaks, food and refreshments.
- We may use materials and photographs from the session, such as art work, etc, in reports and future training activities.
- You will support the children from your organisation to work with……………… from QUB. The children will learn all about ………. project which seeks to………for children throughout the UK.
- A representative from ………..may also be present at face to face meetings to help us plan events and devleop materials.
- This will all be funded by …………..

If I decide to join can I change my mind later?

- Taking part is entirely voluntary. You do not have to participate in any activity.
- You and the children from your organisation can change your mind at any time and decide not to take part without providing a reason.
- If you or the children feel uncomfortable for any reason, please tell………. as soon as possible.
- We will deal with your concerns confidentially and in a sensitive, professional and supportive manner.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

- All information that is collected will be kept **strictly confidential** and we will ask others who are in the group to respect this as well.
- No comment from a child or your organisation representative will be connected to their name. Instead we will talk about what the group discussed in general.
- But, if we hear information that suggests a child or someone else could be harmed, we will pass this information on to your supporting organisation and ……staff who will do what they can to keep the child person safe.
- All information we will hold about will be stored on a locked password protected computer and paper copies kept in a locked office. This will be destroyed 5 years after the project.
- We would like to acknowledge your organisation and the child's input by **naming them** (first name only) and have a picture of them working in the team on future publications provided the child and their parent(s) or guardian (s) give consent to this.

- This means your organisation name would appear alongside the team as being part of the project, but nothing said during the process will be connected to your organistion personally. This will only happen if you agree you would like to do this.

What will happen to the results of the process?
- The work we all do on our project will be written up and presented in a variety of formats, for example, in a report, journal articles or other academic presentations to tell others about our work.
- We may chose to use the materials we produce to develop/improve our work.
- We may also present the work at academic conferences, seminars and training events about children's rights and young people's participation.

Right to complain
……………………….is the Data Controller and is committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with EU General Data Protection Regulation. If you have any complaint about the study or the conduct of the ……………… please bring this to the attention of the Principal Investigator (contact details at bottom of page) in the first instance and your concerns will be addressed. If you have a complaint, you should contact us FIRST at:

Details of Information Compliance contact - at your organisaton

If you remain unhappy, you have the right to complain about how we treat your personal data and sensitive personal data to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted at:

Overarching Information Commissioner's Office at regional/country level

How to contact us to find out more about the study
If you would like to find out more about the study (even if you decide not to take part), please contact:

Name:
Telephone:
E-mail:

Thank you.

ORGANISATION NAME

Partner Organisation: Children's Advisory Group Support

- I have read the attached information letter, which explains what it means for the organisation to be part of the project and support a child/ren to be part of the Advisory Group. I am aware that they will be helping ………….to include children's views in their work and helping them to launch and manage the …………programme in a child-friendly way, focusing on children's mental well-being initiatives.

- I understand that any data or personal information held about the organisation will only be available to the ………. and held on their password protected computer and will be destroyed five years after the study.

- I understand that everything said in the group will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential (unless information needs to be passed on as a child protection matter). However, while the team will not match any comment to a particular child/organisation, we cannot guarantee confidentiality in a group situation. We will of course stress the importance of this to the group but the other participants may not maintain this confidentiality.

- I understand that if the organisation name is identified as part of the Advisory Group it will not be connected to any particular comments or views but only used in the list of names of team members.

- I understand that this work will be published in the form of a report and potentially in academic journals and at seminars, training event and conferences etc.

- I understand that the organisation name and image will not be used without my specific permission on any reports and other materials published or shared from the project.

- I understand that if I give ………. permission to use an image that it can be used in other contexts associated with the research, e.g., reports, academic presentations and training materials etc.

- I understand that I can stop my involvement in the group for any reason and at any time. I also understand that I can take away my consent at any time and for any reason.

- If you decide you can take part, please tick the box below to give your consent. You will also need to tick the other box to let us know you agree that we can use your image/media in the report and other events like training, seminars and academic conferences, if they also give their permission for this.

☐   I **AGREE** that the organisation will support a child/ren, as stipulated in the information leaflet, **to** take part in the …….. Children's Advisory Group.

☐   I **AGREE** that the organisation name and image can be used in reports and any other materials that are published from this project.

☐   I **AGREE** to support the Advisory Group, but **I DO NOT** want the organisation to be named or image used in the reports and any other materials that are published from this project.

Representative Signature:_____   **Date:**_____

Name:_____

Project Lead Signature_____

Information Sheet & Consent Form – Children's Easy Read Version

Information Sheet for Children

Hello! Our names are ……... & ……….

Add photo	Add photo

We work at a place called …………………….

Add photo

…..ORGANISATION NAME…...

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO……….e.g., A university is a place where some people go to learn when they grow up.

We have been asked by…………….. to help them with their work.

They want to make sure children are involved in their work.

They have asked us to work with children to see if they can advise them on a new programme called………….

This programme will ………………..to help them work with children who might need help with……….

We would like you to

- join a small group made up
- of other children your age
- meet with us during X one day workshops in ……….
- Meet with us online up to X
- times to talk about this work.
- Help us to design information leaflets
- and provide advice to the staff who work on the...….programme.

You don't have to take part and, if you do, you can stop talking to us at any time - that is totally okay.

Do you want to take part?

My Name is

_____

Please put your name or an
'X' in the box

Yes I would like to take part
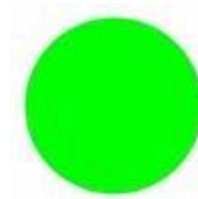
No I don't want to take part
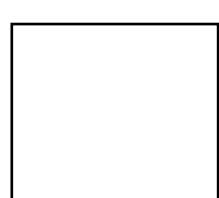
Thank you!

Welcome to our team!

Do you want us to use your name and picture?

Now we want to know if you want others to know that you took part and helped with this work.

If so, we can put your name and picture on our reports next to ours.

It is okay if you don't want to!

Please talk about it with your parent or guardian and the researchers, and then put your name or an 'X' in the box below that matches your decision.

My Name is _____

Yes I want you to put my name and picture on reports

No I do not want you to put my name and picture on reports

Thank you

Children's Advisory Group

ORGANISATION NAME

- **………….would like to invite your child to work with our team on a new project.**
- **Before you make a decision, it is important for you to know why this project is being done and what it will involve.**
- **If you are happy to take part, we would like you to read and sign the enclosed consent form and return it the organisation.**
- **This work has received ethical approval from the ethics committee at …………….**

Why are we doing this study?

………………………………, is based in ………………. We are working together with ………………….. and their partners to make sure that children's views are at the heart of the work they do. …… have just launched a new programme …………., which seeks to ………………. to support children's ……….. We would like to invite your child to participate in an Advisory Group for this project. We are keen to hear what your child has to say about how this could be done and to help us create child-friendly materials about ………………to share with other children.

Who will I be working with?

The team from ………..consists of experienced ………., NAMES. They have lots of experience working with children and young people in Advisory Groups, and other groups have said they really enjoyed working with them. If you would like your child to take part, they will join a group of 10-12 of their peers aged 8-10 years from other organisations and adults from …… for X day-long workshops and then X online consultations with the team. We will all work together to plan the materials and other activities. They will receive training on how to do this from their host organisation and will be supported by the youth workers every step of the way. A trusted/accompanying adult/ youth worker from the supporting organisation will be on hand to support your child and help with communication issues, if needed. Alternatively, you may accompany the child to face-to-meetings in ……. This may require travel and possible an overnight stay, depending on travel arrangements, …..will pick up all costs associated with this.

What will my involvement in this process mean?

Children and their parents/guardians who show an interest in taking part in this opportunity will have their details passed on to ……….. They will screen all the entries and select children based on criteria such as gender and location to create as representative a group as possible for the project. We will let you know as soon as possible if your child has been selected. For those who have not been selected at the initial stage, their name will be placed on a reserve list and they may be contacted during the project to participate in further opportunities if required. If your child is involved in the advisory group, they will be one of our expert advisors who will help us to include children's views in …NAME… activities, particularly around the ………programme. All meetings will be held between June 2019 - May 2020.

- During meetings we will discuss and generate ideas about what information we need to know and how best to share this with other children.
- The organisation your child currently works with will support them to take part by arranging meetings, travel and accompanying them to meetings.
- Three face-to-face meetings will be held a………. Depending on your location, this may require some travel and possibly an overnight stay. Other monthly meetings will be held online on a secured well monitored platform so we can catch up and plan further activities.
- You may accompany your child as their chaperone or trusted adult to meetings in……. The organisation can also nominate a trusted adult to accompany children. You can discuss this further with the organisation. …… will pick up the costs.
- All adults who will attend meetings will have to sign a confidentiality agreement that we will forward that states that you should uphold everyone's confidentiality in the group situation and will not divulge anything said within the group.
- Online meetings may last up to 2 hours and face-to-face meetings will be for a full day but we will include comfort breaks, food and refreshments.
- We may use materials and photographs from the session, such as art work, etc, in reports and future training activities.
- During face-to-face meetings with ………… your child will learn all about …… and the ……… project which seeks to ………for children throughout the UK. Your child will be supported by ……, trusted worker from your host organisation and a representative from …. may also be there to support them and help us further plan the events and materials for the day. This will all be funded by …..

If I decide to join can I change my mind later?

- Taking part is entirely voluntary.
- Your child does not have to participate in any activity.
- You and your child can change your mind at any time and decide not to take part without providing a reason.
- If you or your child feels uncomfortable for any reason, please tell …….. or your organisation representative as soon as possible.
- We will deal with your concerns confidentially and in a sensitive, professional and supportive manner.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

- All information that is collected will be kept **strictly confidential** and we will ask others who are in the group to respect this as well.
- No comment from your child will be connected to their name. Instead we will talk about what the group discussed in general.
- But, if we hear information that suggests your child or someone else could be harmed, we will pass this information on to your supporting organisation representative who will do what they can to keep the child person safe.
- All information we will hold about your child will be stored on a locked password protected computer and paper copies kept in a locked office. This will be destroyed 5 years after the project.
- We would like to acknowledge your child's input by **naming them** (first name only) and have a picture of them working in the team on future publications.

- This means their name would appear alongside the adults' names, as being part of the project, but nothing they say during the process will be connected to them or you personally.
- This will only happen after you discuss this with your child, the researchers and youth workers and you and your child both agree you would like to do this.

What will happen to the results of the process?
- The work we all do on our project will be written up and presented in a variety of formats, for example, in a report, journal articles or other academic presentations to tell others about our work.
- We may chose to use the materials we produce to develop/improve our work.
- We may also present the work at academic conferences, seminars and training events about children's rights and young people's participation.

Should an opportunity arise for the children to become involved in additional ….. media representation, we will discuss this in depth during group meetings and with partner organisations and contact you separately to decide if it is appropriate. We will then supply you with an additional consent form to seek your permission for this.

Right to complain
………….. is the Data Controller and is committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with EU General Data Protection Regulation. If you have any complaint about the study or the conduct of the researchers please bring this to the attention of the Principal Investigator (contact details at bottom of page) in the first instance and your concerns will be addressed. If you have a complaint, you should contact us FIRST at:

Information Compliance at organisation

If you remain unhappy, you have the right to complain about how we treat your personal data and sensitive personal data to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted at:
Information Commissioner's Office at regional/country level

How to contact us to find out more about the study
If you would like to find out more about the study (even if you decide not to take part), please contact:

Name:
Telephone:
Email:

Thank you.

ORGANISATIONS NAME AND PROJECT

Parent/Guardian Consent Form: Children's Advisory Group

I have read the attached information letter, which explains what it means for my child to be part of the Advisory Group. I am aware that they will be helping …….. to include children's views in their work and helping them to launch and manage the …….. programme in a child-friendly way, focusing on children's mental well-being initiatives.

- I understand that any data or personal information held about me and my child will only be available to ……. and held on their password protected computer and will be destroyed five years after the study.
- I understand that everything said in the group will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential (unless information needs to be passed on as a child protection matter). However, while the team will not match any comment to a particular child, we cannot guarantee confidentiality in a group situation. We will of course stress the importance of this to the group but the other participants may not maintain this confidentiality.

- I understand that if my child's first name is identified as part of the Advisory Group it will not be connected to any particular comments or views but only used in the list of names of team members.

- I understand that this work will be published in the form of a report and potentially in academic journals and at seminars, training event and conferences etc.
- I understand that my child's name and image will not be used without me and my child's specific permission on any reports and other materials published or shared from the project. I understand that if I give the researchers permission to use my child's picture that images can be used in other contexts associated with the research, e.g., reports, academic presentations and training materials etc.
- I understand that participation may require travel and a possible overnight stay in ….. I am aware that my child will be supported by a host organisation who will accompany them to all meetings. I can accompany my child to …… meetings instead of the organisation representative. I am aware I will need to sign a confidentiality agreement for this activity.

- I understand that I can stop my child's involvement in the group for any reason and at any time. I also understand that I can take away my consent at any time and for any reason.
- If you decide your child can take part, please tick the box below to give your consent. You will also need to tick the other box to let us know you agree that we can use your image/media in the report and other events like training, seminars and academic conferences, if they also give their permission for this.

☐   I **AGREE** that my child can take part in the Children's Advisory Group supported by the host organisation

☐   I **AGREE** that my child can be named and their image used in reports and any other materials that are published from this project.

☐   I **AGREE** that my child can take part in the Advisory Group, but **I DO NOT** want to my child to be named or their image used in the reports and any other materials that are published from this project.

☐   I **AGREE** that my child's name can be added to the reserve list to take part in the Advisory Group at a later date if a space becomes available.

Parent/Guardian's Signature:_____   **Date:**_____

Child's Name:_____

Project Lead Signature_____

Headed Paper or logo

Dear………………

My name is ……………I am Director of……………I am writing to you because you share our belief that children's voices can play a more prominent role in the work that we do and you have already shown an interest in taking part in the…………….. child advisory group project. Please read on to find out more information about your role within the project before you decide if this is something you can support at this time. Please also note that if you decide to not become involved, for whatever reason, your current and future funding from ……….. will in no way be penalised or jeopardised because of this. In this project, we seek to embed children's participation at the heart of everything we do and this is our first step towards achieving this goal at the strategic level. We have been working closely with ……….from ………….. who will continue to work with us throughout the project. To help us do this we seek to establish a collaborative network with six of our partner organisations who will work closely with us and two child representatives from their respective organisations. Your role, should you chose to become involved, would be to,

- Bring the opportunity to, and liaise with, parents and children attached to your organisation and help recruit 2 children to the advisory group. We will supply example information letters and consent leaflets for the project for you to use.
- Complete a screening tool to be completed by parents or yourself which will provide more details about potential participants to help us during our selection procedure.
- Support and accompany the children to three face-to-face meetings with the whole team. This could include travel to Glasgow, and maybe an overnight stay, which parents and children will be made aware of before they agree to take part. All reasonable expenses will be covered by ……….; your organisation and the children involved should not be out of pocket.
- Support and accompany the children, as a trusted adult, to attend up to 5 further meetings online by providing your premises and equipment for them to use in privacy and safety, and signing up to an online platform which will be agreed by the group.
- Ask for consent from parents/guardians for their children to be recorded or have their photos taken for ………, if asked.

We invite you to nominate 2-4 children aged 8-13 years to become involved. Please consider those who you think would benefit from the opportunity, be comfortable to participate and engage in a group situation and work well in a team and with other children and adults. We will work with the children in accordance with your Safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct, so if there is anything specific you want us to be aware of, please let us know in advance. Please also let us know if there is anything else you think it would be helpful for us to know during the selection process, e.g. any religious or cultural considerations we should observe, specific behaviours we should avoid etc.

If you wish to discuss this proposal further or have any questions or queries about the project or your role within it please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and for considering this. Yours sincerely xxxxx

iii. Additional Set-up & Meeting Information

Recruitment and Retention Process & Considerations.

- The projects that were approached to help us recruit participants for the A Million & Me CAP were very experienced working with diverse groups of marginalised CYP.
- It was assumed that they would all be committed to and engaged with the project.
- Projects were all community based and provided sessions for primary school age children (and older) living in areas with many challenges and disadvantages.
- The services they offered ranged from drop-in youth club sessions with social activities, arts and crafts, to therapeutic interventions for children with additional support needs.
- Eight partner organisations from across Scotland responded to the call and nominated one or more children for consideration.
- The team used the information they returned to select children based on the inclusion criteria, which was to have a spread of age, sex, disability and geographical location.
- The information received from the projects that nominated children for the advisory panel were collated by CiN staff and shared with the team.
- The information included the project name, location and remit, lead gatekeeper name, nominations of at least one child and descriptions as to why they would benefit from the opportunity along with some background information on the child's demographics and family life.
- We also tried to ensure, where possible, that there were two children from the same project so that they would have a friend to travel with and rely on in the group setting. This was not always possible and a reserve list was compiled.
- During the screening process, one project contacted the team to say they that were having difficulties maintaining contact with potential participants due to their personal and changing circumstances and so their names were removed from the database.
- We had the necessary resources at our disposal in relation to knowledge, experience, shared purpose, support & funding, administrative, merchandise, travel and refreshments etc. For the partners and children this helped to garner a sense of prestige and pride to be associated with the initiative.

Meeting location and space

In A Million & Me, the space allocated for meeting 1 was two separate rooms in BBC HQ in Glasgow. One for the CAP which was an impressive professional style boardroom and one for the accompanying chaperones, which was bright comfortable, with a river view, and stocked with food and magazines.

List of A Million & Me CAP Activities

- **Meeting 1: daylong, face-to-face, BBCHQ Glasgow (Sept19).**
  - Icebreaker & Introduction

- o Understanding the term - mental health – Figures
- o Evaluation Tool Review
- o Review Project Principles
- o Project Specifics – team name, logo, design template & colour palette

- **Meeting 2: half-day, face-to-face, office of the Children's and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS), Edinburgh (Nov19).**
  - o Icebreaker & Catch up
  - o Mr Bruce Adamson (CYPCS) - Q&A on children's rights and his role as commissioner
  - o Reviewing the wording & design – logo, Principles
  - o Supports - Trusted Adults
  - o Future plans & advertising – Developing the brand A Million & Me

- **Meeting 3: 2 hours, online (Feb20).**
  - o Review 'Own It' app
  - o Importance of being involved
  - o The Principles – updated wording and design
  - o Child Friendly Checklist – review wording and design

Impact of COVID-19 on our future plans

A fourth face-to-face meeting was planned for March 2020 at Boots HQ in Glasgow (Corporate Partner for A Million & Me) and a fifth wrap-up and celebration meeting for April 2020 was planned to be held back at BBC Pacific Quay in Glasgow. Unfortunately, both were cancelled due to lockdown and travel restrictions put in place during the COVID19 pandemic (March 2020) and have yet (at the time of writing) to be re-scheduled.

Our aspirations for these meetings were to review a CBT curated story telling chatbot a funded project was trialling, and to invite the CiN Children's Mental Health lead (evaluator of A Million & Me) to the April meeting, to discuss with the children:

   a) how the CAP worked and how it could be improved;
   b) their ideas on what makes a good project (to fund), and
   c) how children's views can be included in decision-making processes.

This was unfortunate as the Mental Health lead and Boots representatives would have enhanced our external engagement with influential adults to link with the team. During the April wrap-up meeting we also intended to discuss with the children their views on Children's Representation in charity funding and promotional videos, advertisements, films etc. This was also to be a time to reflect on our achievements and learning, to have a 'thank-you' party for all involved, and present the children with their participation certificates and Queen's University Centre for Children's Rights branded hoodies (these will be posted to CiN for distribution once the lockdown restrictions are eased).

Difficulties with the Online Meetings

The first online meeting did not go as well as we had hoped. It was difficult to arrange a time to suit the majority, and when we did (early evening 4-6pm) most projects were unable to attend at the scheduled time. This meant that only 1 project (2 children & 1 adult) was able to attend at this time. Both children contributed and seemed to enjoy what they were doing although may have felt exposed or under pressure at times because it was only them in attendance. We assumed that ethically it might be best if the project gatekeeper assisted and supported the children online to ensure safety and privacy, which meant working from their premises on their equipment. However, they had to sit in close proximity to view the screen, which affected the dynamics of the group. The children felt self-conscious by this and seeing themselves reflected on their computer screen too. The timing (after school 4-6pm) of the meeting was not ideal, they had not yet been home after a long day at school and both children were tired, hungry and wanted to get home for their tea.

Put your logo here

Accompanying Adult feedback on
1st meeting of the A Million & Me Squad
Saturday 07th September 2019 at BBC Pacific Quay, Glasgow

Dear accompanying adult,

We would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to complete and return your thoughts to us on how you think the first meeting of the group went. Please base your responses on any feed back you received from the child/children in your care. The information you provide will be really useful to us to help us adjust to the needs of the group and improve how we work with them in the future.

1) What do you think the child/children especially liked about the day?

………
………
………
………

2) What do you think they did not like so much about the day?

………
………
………
………

3) What do you think we should change?

………
………
………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4) Have you anything else you think we should consider?

………
………
………
………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Thank You

Children's Advisory Panel Feedback

Dear child adviser, We would like to know your thoughts about the (……project name…..) children's advisory panel.

This will help us to work better with you in the future.

1) What do you think was good?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

2) What do you think was not so good?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

3) How would you describe the panel to your friends?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

4) What do you think we should change?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

5) What do you think we should do at the last meeting (celebration)

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

6) Is there anything else you would like us to know?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

Thank You

Adult Feedback

Dear project co-ordinator/support worker, we would like to know your thoughts about the (….Project name….) children's advisory panel (CAP) that you helped us to facilitate.

We would appreciate this information to help us to include children of this age group in future initiatives.

1) How did the CAP work from your organisations point of view?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

2) What was good about it?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

3) What was not so good about it?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

4) What do you think we should change?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

5) Do you think the experience impacted on the children?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

6) Had you any particular issues with selection of children to take part?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

7) Had you any particular issues with the on/offline meetings?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

8) Have you been able to share any part of the experience more widely within your project?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

9) Have you any advice for us for future engagement or initiatives?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

10) Is there anything else you would like us to know?

……………………………………………………………………………………

Thank You

Headed Paper or Logo

Confidentiality Agreement for External Partners who will attend a Group Meeting

This confidentiality agreement is used for individuals who will conduct specific tasks during focus/advisory group meetings that meet the objectives of the research and will therefore have access to participants' data.

Project title – ------…………………………………. - Children's Advisory Panel--------------

I……………………………………………………will be attending group meetings as agreed with………. I will therefore have access to the children's views.

I agree to -

1. Keep all the information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any form or format (e.g., verbally, disks, tapes, transcripts, other materials produced via group work) with anyone other than members of the team.

2. Keep all information in any form or format (e.g., paper, digital, disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.

3. Return all information in any form or format (e.g., disks, digital, tapes, transcripts) to the …………..when the required task is completed.

4. After consulting with ……………., erase or destroy all information in any form or format regarding this project that is not returnable to ……….. (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

5. Respect the views of all participants in the advisory groups and, if there are any concerns about information that was shared, I will speak to ………………. immediately.

_____   _____   _____
            (Print Name)   (Signature)   (Date)

Project Lead

_____   _____   _____
            (Print Name)   (Signature)   (Date)

This agreement has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved……………..
For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research please contact;
email – telephone.

1. Getting to know you

Materials Needed: Flipchart with Q's, Music, Ball
Description: Ask the CYP to stand (or sit) in a circle and start by holding a large ball (football /beachball). Put up on flipchart a few questions such as:
- My favourite food
- Ideal job and why
- Favourite film star or TV character
- 1 interesting fact about me

Tell them that you are going to throw the ball to someone in the room and they are to throw it to someone else and so one. The second facilitator will start the music and when they stop it randomly, the person left holding the ball must **State their Name and answer one of the Q's on the Flipchart.** This continues until everyone has had at least 1 chance to participate.

2. Snowball Fight

Materials needed: Pens and paper.
Description: Ask the CYP to write on a piece of paper their favourite food or animal etc. Then tell them to crumple the paper up into a ball (snowball) and for all to throw the snowballs in a snowball fight. Keep this going to energise the group each person picking up others' snowballs and continue to throw, so no one knows where their snowball has ended up. You may wish to give more than one piece of paper to increase the amount of snowballs if you are working with a smaller group. Each member of the group must pick up a snowball or two and find the original owner. This requires them to go round the group asking questions from the other participants. The aim is for the owner of each snowball to get their snowball back.

vii. Fostering Ownership

Once the CAP had gained a much better understanding of their role and the substantive issues of the project in meeting 1, they were asked to come up with a name for the team and a logo and design palette for the project. The group focussed on things related to the overarching programme and with the BBC.

A few suggestions were made such as, *'The Positive Pudseys', M&M and 'A Million & Me from the BBC'.* The facilitators suggested that the group might like to think about the language children and young people use today to decsribe friendship groups, cliques and teams with a shared purpose or goal. 'Squad goals' was raised, which one adult thought sounded more like a football team.

However, the children explained that the term 'squad goals' is modern preteen talk which refers to a group of friends and something to which they aspire. The group thought that *'A Million & Me Squad'* was also ideal and would work well as a social media hashtag as other children and youth would understand the intention behind the name.

Figure 18. Fostering Ownership

Team Name: #AMillion&MeSquad

Logo & Design Palette

- They liked the existing 'A Million & Me' font and wanted to keep Pudsey as a central feature.

- They thought that one of the ideas from the above activity (based on three hearts - full heart/coping, crackedheart/struggling, broken heart/not coping) would be a great way to capture the nature of the project.

- They also also wanted to include rainnbows and bright colours as a sign of hope.

Figure 19. 3 Hearts Design

Signing off on the project logo

In meeting 2, the group were provided with a recap and overview from the work of the previous session. Large photographs were shown by way of reminder. In relation to the logo, the group's suggestions from the last meeting were used to make up a set of 3 potential logos. Each included the main elements that the children had wanted to include:

- BBC A Million and Me font
- hearts - plain hearts – full, cracked, broken
- hearts - sad, confused, happy faces/emotions
- Pudsey's - sitting, closed arms, open arms,
- rainbow – full/half circle, with/without clouds

Figure 20. Logo Options

After careful inspection and comparing all characteristics, the group voted on an open-armed Pudsey and hearts with faces encased in a rainbow circle (no. 3 above). A further suggestion was that the clouds could be darker in colour and maybe contain words associated with the project, such as, "for those 'who are not yet sad".

After discussion, it was agreed that this phrase might be confusing without knowing more about the programme. Another suggestion was to produce A Million & Me merchandise to distribute to children, using our logo, examples included stickers, pens, t-shirts and stress balls. They had received stress balls in the CYPCS gift pack and felt these were a particularly relevant piece of merchandise 'totally perfect' given the projects focus.

1) "Do you understand the term mental health?": Some of the children had heard about the importance of having a 'Positive Mindset'. Others discribed it as *"a not tired brain or being sad or when you're not feeling good"*. We discussed their understanding of the terms 'coping' and 'not coping' and wrote their definitions on a page. It was explained that A Million & Me is interested in supporting projects that work with children that are in the middle - who may be struggling to cope.

The CAP queried why we were looking at these children, and one answered that *"it's no use looking for children who are happy and coping well"*. We explained that really sad children or those that might not be coping well might already be getting the help they need and A Million & Me wants to get in and help children before things get to the really sad stage. This set the stage, building their capacity, to begin the first activity in meeting 1.

2) Describe 'coping', 'struggling' and 'not coping':
The group were given 3 blank human-shaped paper cutouts (figure 7) and were asked to write words or phrases on these to represent, **i) a child who is coping; ii) a child who is struggling, and, iii) a child who is not coping.** These were stuck up on the wall in each cluster. Descriptors for each scenario were,

Figure 21. Paper Figures

i) **Coping**

getting on with it	handling it well	calm
happy	friendly	delighted
smiling	jumping	shopping
playing	fun	friends
family	drawing	pets
excited	school	positive
family	hopping	strong
party	cool	

ii) **in the Middle/Struggling**

something happening	having difficulties	confused,
don't know what to do	ok but not ok	uncertain,
know something is wrong	feeling weird	confused,
not feeling yourself	sick	sleeping a lot,
crying	aggressive	acting out of character
irritable and blow up	over reaction	

something new has happened don't know what to do
stuggling with friends who may notice if you get sad

iii) Not Coping

finding it hard	can't handle it	sad
mad	lonely	faint
upset	help	strange
scared	difficulties	hard
confused	angry	negative
unhappy	bored negative	cry
depressed	nervous	frown
struggle	hurt	

3) Which adults might you go to for help:

The word clouds were again used as a prompt for this activity. The group were provided with a blank chain of paper figures (see figure 15) and asked to write or draw ideas on these to represent who the 'trusted adults' might be. Every child completed at least one set of figures. We regrouped and discussed who can help and how.

Suggestions included: mum, dad, person you trust, teacher, family, friend, doctor, online, yourself, no one, a pet, A Million& Me.

The group cautioned that adults need to be more informed, if they are to be able to help a child who is confused and anxious about their situation but not yet showing signs of not coping.

Figure 22. Trusted Adults

Project Principles (Adults)

A Million & Me - core principles that will apply throughout the programme:

- The young person should feel in control of what is happening to them and be able to participate in decisions that affect them.

- The provision of a stable relationship(s) around the young person can be critical in helping that person access and navigate the support they may need.

- We recognise mental health issues can affect young people of all ages, but for the purpose of focus this programme will target those in the 8-13 age group.

- The programme will be based on early action, non-clinical interventions.

- These interventions are likely to be provided by community and voluntary organisations, not the statutory sector (accepting that partnership with statutory organisations may be key in that delivery).

- We will implement the programme across all four nations of the United Kingdom.

1) Project Principles to be reviewed by CAP: A Million & Me operates under a set of agreed adult informed principles. Going through these one by one was difficult as a group activity. After delibertion within the team and in discussion with the CAP, it was decided that they shcould devise their own 'Project Principles'. The CAP was divided in to groups of three and came back to the main group with ideas and value statements that are important to children. The focus was to see what they would come up with when directed to *"think of 1, 2 or 3 things/values that projects must do for children, and   should only receive funding from A Million & Me, if they are doing".* Their suggestions included,

Projects do what they say they are going to do.
All children are happy and enjoy what they do.
Children think it is helping them.
Children feel safe and not afraid to do things.
Children are listened to.
Children have fun, play, games.
Children have lots of friendly people and tutors.
Children feel good about themselves.
Everyone gets included.
Everyone gets support.
Everyone is kind.
Adults should treat children with respect.
All children should be treated equally.
All voices should/must be heard

The children's value statements: The group's value statements were added to a draft design template. This design was used as a prompt to give the children an idea of how they might look if printed out.

Figure 23. Draft Design

The group reviewed, refined and agreed the wording to make the statements stronger.

1. All children should be ~~are~~ included and everyone should get~~s~~ the support they need.
2. Adults should listen to children and all voices must be heard.
3. All children should be treated equally.
4. Everyone is kind and gets treated with respect.
5. All children should enjoy what they do.
6. Everyone ~~is~~ should be happy and feel~~s~~ good about themselves.
7. Children should think, feel and know it is helping them.
8. Children should have lots of friendly people and helpers ~~tutors.~~
9. Children should feel safe and not afraid to do things.
10. Children should have fun and play ~~and do~~ games.
11. Adults need do what they say they are going to do.

Discussions on the principles continued and focused around how some of these things may not be actually happening in projects but should be happening. We discussed the concept of *'fun'*, which the children felt should be a top priority for projects because *'if what you're doing is fun, it makes you learn'*. On deeper reflection, they thought that their principles were more than just a guide for project staff but should be used to check back with children to see if these things were happening by way of a tool to assess/evaluate children's views of a project.

They thought this would give great insight as to how well the organisations were implementing the principles and working with children. It was agreed that we could turn their principles into a 'checklist' and some measurement scales were suggested – *'tick YES, NO' or a 'SCORE (from 1-5) with a 'sometimes' in middle'.*

The draft design of leaflet was in the style of a 2-sided flyer, based on Pudsey yellow with coloured (stress) balls in background, the new A Million and Me logo on the front and the principles on the back with a faded rainbow coloured heart – in keeping with the suggestions for the logo. On review, the CAP thought that the principles were too important and we needed to make these available in large A3 (landscape) posters to go up on walls. Some boys queried the muted colours and heart image and suggested colours, which would appeal to both boys and girls. They wanted the principles to stand out and be highly visible so they thought maybe a black background with white and/or rainbow writing. The group agreed saying this would be easier to read, would make it stand out and be more noticeable. This was put into our design template and brought back to the group during the next meeting for their feedback.

The children's value statements – updated wording and design: During meeting 3**,** the group were again asked to review the refined wording and design for 'the Principles' - which was to make the statements stronger by using the word 'should' (see figure 18).

1. All children should be included and everyone should get the support they need.
2. Adults should listen to children and all voices must be heard.
3. All children should be treated equally.
4. Everyone is kind and gets treated with respect.
5. All children should enjoy what they are doing
6. Everyone should be happy and feel good about themselves
7. Children should think, feel and know it is helping them
8. Children should have lots of friendly people and helpers
9. Children should feel safe and not afraid to do things
10. Children should have fun and play games
11. Adults need do what they say they are going to do

It is important to note that during both the on and offline completion of this task, the adults provided their feedback on the 'children's principles' too. The projects that completed the tasks offline also showed the children's principles to staff and other children and young people in their organisations. During the online meeting, we discussed some suggestions on how we could make this document and the wording suit both adults and children.

- Change the document name from 'Principles for Projects' to 'Things that are important to children'; 'How we should treat each other'; or 'In an ideal world'.
- Our world would be better for us all if......
- Change the word 'should' to 'all try to make sure/ensure that'.

The children still liked the term 'should' and could not quite grasp why the adults found the word troublesome, although at this stage they were getting restless, putting on their coats and wanted to finish up the meeting. We opted to come up with a way to keep the children's

language and maybe change the focus of the document so as adults might feel better able to implement the children's principles.

Design: During the online meeting the group was shown the bi-leaflet design and draft poster design for the principles. This was forwarded to projects for offline review. Suggestions from the Activity 2 Session 2 to change the design included - choose gender-neutral colours – maybe black background, white/rainbow writing. Everyone who commented, adults and children alike, liked the layout of the poster and had positive comments about the rainbow colours and logo.

Offline Adult's feedback on the CAP principles

- *Bit too instructive*
- *Too many - some of them could be combined to reduce the number eg 5 and 6* (5. All children should enjoy what they are doing; 6. Everyone should be happy and feel good about themselves.)
- *Better to say 'aim to' rather than 'should'*
- *How would a child feel reading this if they don't have these things*
- *Better to say children 'should have an opportunity to do things that they enjoy' rather than should - don't like the word should*
- *No 11 is too prescriptive - sometimes you intend to do something and then events mean that you can't manage to complete.* (Adults need do what they say they are going to do.)

Offline Child /young person feedback on CAP principles

- *Sometimes it's Ok to feel sad and we don't have to be happy all the time I felt sad when my Gran died.* (Everyone should be happy and feel good about themselves.)
- *Some children might lose at games and not have fun or be happy about this.* (Children should have fun and play games.)
- *Some children say bad things and they shouldn't be heard - they can hurt your feelings.* (Adults should listen to children and all voices must be heard.)
- *Bit confused about no 7 (Children should think, feel and know it is helping them.)*

2) Child Friendly Checklist

The Checklist was developed by adapting the children's principles and converting these to a set of questions, which the CAP thought could provide a child friendly evaluation of a child's experiences while participating in a funded programme. The project design template was used to keep all project documents consistent. The CAP thought that a bi-fold pamphlet style booklet would be best fit for the information and purpose. Based on the adult dilemma around the strength of the 'children's principles' the heading was changed to, *'Things that are important to children'* and a traffic light scale system was added to gather children's responses (YES; SOMETIMES; NO).

The group, both on and off line, provided their feedback on the Checklist. This included,

- *Booklet is easy to understand and makes sense.*
- *Young people should be able to understand this and it looks fun. It talks about real things in life.*
- *Traffic light system makes sense and does work.*
- *Like the multicoloured colours in the booklet but think that black is quite a 'down'. colour for the background. Does it have to be black?*
- *They read through the statements on the back with me and agreed with these.*
- *Wording makes sense and is very clear and concise.*
- *The traffic light system is very good for non-verbal/non-literate youngsters.*
- *Bright colours makes you want to open it again and again*

Things that are important to children

1. All children should be included and everyone should get the support they need.

2. Adults should listen to children and all voices must be heard.

3. All children should be treated equally.

4. Everyone is kind and gets treated with respect.

5. All children should enjoy what they are doing.

6. Everyone should be happy and feel good about themselves.

7. Children should think, feel and know it is helping them.

8. Children should have lots of friendly people and helpers.

9. Children should feel safe and not afraid to do things.

10. Children should have fun and play games.

11. Adults need to do what they say they are going to do.

BBC Children in Need
A Million & Me

CHECKLIST for PROJECTS

Please answer each question by choosing YES, SOMETIMES or NO on the answer grid

Question			
1. Are all children included and get the support they need?	① YES	SOME TIMES	NO
2. Do adults listen to children and make sure their voices are heard?	② YES	SOME TIMES	NO
3. Are all children treated equally?	③ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
4. Is everyone kind and treats each other with respect?	④ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
5. Do all children enjoy what they are doing?	⑤ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
6. Does everyone feel happy and good about themselves?	⑥ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
7. Do children think, feel and know the project is helping them?	⑦ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
8. Do children have lots of friendly people and helpers around them.	⑧ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
9. Do children feel safe and not afraid to do things?	⑨ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
10. Do children have fun and play games?	⑩ YES	SOME TIMES	NO
11. Do the adults do what they say they are going to do?	⑪ YES	SOME TIMES	NO

**NOW count how many times you chose each answer
WHAT WAS YOUR SCORE?**   YES ☐   SOME TIMES ☐   NO ☐

3) Reviewing the Child Evaluation Tool

CHILD EVALUATION FORM

[draft 1]

A Million & Me

BBC Children in Need

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How old are you?

How would you describe your gender?

- ☐ Boy
- ☐ Girl
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ I describe my gender in another way....

_____

Would you say that you have a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Would you say that you are or have recently been very physically sick or unwell (for longer than a few months)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Here are some sentences about how you might have been feeling or thinking about things over the past couple of weeks.

For each one please tick in the box which best describes your thoughts and feelings; there are no right or wrong answers.

	Never	Not much of the time	Some of the time	Quite a lot of the time	All of the time
I've been feeling calm					
I've been in a good mood					
I enjoy what each new day brings					
I've been cheerful about things					
I've been feeling relaxed					
I've been able to work out my problems					
I have known where to go for help when I have problems					
I have tried to work out problems by talking about them					

ID: First contact/mid-way/last contact (delete)   date:

70

A Child Evaluation tool had been designed by the CiN team which was given to the CAP to review . The CAP were asked to work in pairs and to mark out anything on the questionnaire that they liked as well as anything that they did not understand or would change or add. Each team then presented their suggestions in a group discussion.
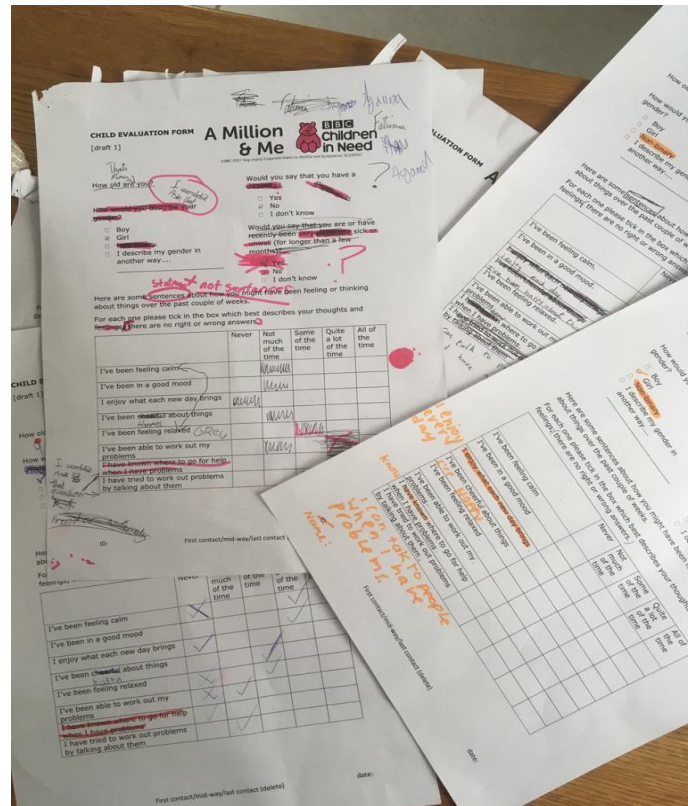

Figure 24. Feedback on Evaluation Tool

Here are some of their thoughts:

- They liked that the form was short and quick to complete.
- The design needed work, e.g., colour and layout, don't keep it black and white.
- Children aged 8 years will not understand
  'Non-binary' and may not know how to describe gender in another way, best to remove these and include a category - 'other' - in addition to 'male' & 'female'.
- The headings could be - *Never, Not much, Some of the time, A lot of the time, All of the time.*
- The tense in which the statements had been written was discussed. They thought that focusing on the past could cause some children to reflect on bad times, rather than stay in the present.
- The use of some words and language, e.g., they said children do not use the term 'cheerful' in every day conversation so suggest changing to 'happy'.
- They also suggested 3 additional questions that they thought might be relevant to assess how children are coping;
  > i) I haven't been feeling scared, frightened, lonely;
  > ii) I am happy when with my friends;
  > iii) I am able to have fun.

4) Reviewing the 'Own It' app - <u>https://www.bbc.com/ownit/take-control/own-it-app</u>

Share the app with the children and advise them to check this out just before our meeting so they will have had a chance to look at it beforehand.

Please help the children record some of their thoughts on the app so they can report back to the group:

Have you heard of BBC Own It? If so where did you hear about us?
- No – I don't think we have, maybe the BBC people told us about it one time, but this is the first time I've properly heard about it.
- Yes, Debbie (Director of Music4U) told me about it and said it was to help people who get sent mean messages online.
- I haven't heard about it

What are your first thoughts?
- It's awesome! The keyboard is really cool because it tells you if what you are saying is nice. It's really good that it can stop people from bullying and try to make them say nicer things.
- The app is really cool and it's very positive. It makes me happy looking through it.
- It's good, it's very detailed and interesting
- That girl on the phone has the same hand as me! (Excitedly)
- I like this app, there's loads of videos on it.
- It tells you about stuff online, like if someone hacks you and what your digital footprint is.
- I think it's cool that you can type whatever you like
- It's got the ChildLine number on it, I already knew it but it's good for everyone else to see
- I want to get this app on my phone (using her Mums phone for this)

What do you like most about the app?
- The memes, the noises it makes when you press the buttons on the face screen – is there a fart noise?!
- I love the way the app interacts with you – it's engaging and so much fun!
- I like all of it. I like the smiley faces on the keyboard when it tells you if you're typing good things or bad things. I would say that but also the bit where you can type in anything you like
- It's good because you can feel good about yourself when you say nice things.

Which topics did you find interesting?
- I liked the Good Vibes section, and the Online Basic – it tells you about things that could happen in real life, which is important.
- I like the feelings topics.
- I was kind of liking the Dolittle video, but I haven't seen the movie so I stopped watching because of spoilers
- I liked the little circles that you click on that tells you how long you've spent on apps because then you can try not to go on your phone for too long.

- I think the videos are cool because they give you good advice if you're getting bullied or if your friend is. I watched a video that said you shouldn't be scared to talk to your friends about bullying because talking about it might make them feel better.

Have you learnt anything from the app?
- There is so much on the app to learn!
- I've learnt about digital footprint – I didn't have a clue about this before. I thought digital footprint was how much you use your phone or your car but now I know what it really means because of the app.
- That the national animal of Scotland is the unicorn, I thought it was a highland cow.
- I learned how to stand up for a friend and to not to be scared to tell teachers if a friend is being bullied.

What should we include to make the app more interesting?
- You could make the face talk to you – it could help you if you needed to talk to someone. I like the faces it makes but if it spoke to you that would be really cool.
- You could use voice control on the app because maybe there are people who can't type and speaking would be better for them.
- Videos talking about other movies, like Goosebumps or Sonic the Hedgehog?
- More things, more information and just more. More videos, more articles because they're really good and interesting.

Would you recommend the app to a friend?
- Yeah! I know for a fact that my friends would be interested and they would really like looking at it and playing on it.
- Yes
- Probably, because it's pretty good
- I would especially if they were getting bullied but even if they weren't.

Do you feel safe using the face?
- The face doesn't actually talk to you, it is cool, but I thought it would talk to you and say stuff. I feel safe because you can tell the face how you are feeling in the notes section. I like telling it how I feel.
- I never saw that, all I found was the thing to add the notes on, the little circles, and the videos and articles.

Did the keyboard feature change the way you message your friends?
- The keyboard is really cool. The face when you are typing on the keyboard is good because it will tell you what's good and bad to do – and you can get help from an adult rather than fight online. It will change how I message my friends – I think its such a good idea.

Was the information on the app useful?
- Yes, it was very useful!
- It's useful for people who don't know about certain things because it makes you aware. It's cool that sometimes there's a famous person in the video or something!
- Yes, The videos were helpful, because they gave you good advice about what to do if your friends sad, or mad, or hangry

- Yes, It can teach you to talk all about what has happening to you if you're getting bullied or if a friend is getting bullied.

What piece of content did you enjoy the most and why?
- The memes are so funny and they make me laugh. I love memes.
- The keyboard, videos and face is what I liked the most. If you're stuck and need advice, these things can help you – I like that.
- The bit where if you're sending a message on any app it tells you if you should send it or not and it tells you if you're doing a nice thing, I think that's really good.
- I enjoyed the typing (notes) because you can write whatever you want and it tells you how you're feeling

How often will you use the app?
- 24/7! All the time!
- Whenever I can and whenever I need advice
- Every, maybe second day, or every day
- A lot, because it's pretty useful for a lot of things

CAP Feedback on the Own It app: Most children had not heard about the Own It App before the CAP but they felt safe using it and would likely recommend it to a friend. They thought it was useful to raise awareness of bullying and what to do about it. They liked features such as the video messages with real life advice, famous faces in the videos, the face on the keyboard that helps you use nice words, and helpful information such as the Childline phone number. They also learned new information about 'digital footprints' and how to speak out to defend yourself or a friend. However, some information they thought was unnecessary as it was incorrect (i.e., Unicorn is the national animal of Scotland). The interactive element was particularly engaging as it made good use of sounds, memes and emojis. They suggested that more interactivity, such as making the face talk to you and using voice controls rather than writing, could make the app more interactive and accessible to other children, especially those with disabilities.

CAP comments & suggestions on the App: The children managed to set up the app and keyboard with little difficulty but were a bit confused and concerned when the App directed them to their phone Settings menu to adjust this. They noticed platform glitches such as the fact that the icons disappear when you click them. They were interested as to why it is called the Own It App? *Why that name?* One suggestion was that it could have a more relevant name, *"something that makes you think of helping people, because the app is all about helping people and teaching people things".* Rather than just logging their feelings, the children thought that the face on the app could tell jokes or provide some inspirational words to cheer you up if you are sad. Creating a personalised avatar within the App and incorporating the use of speech recognition software, rather than typing at some points, the children suggested, would help children who struggle with typing, reading and other disabilities.

x) A Million & Me CAP Products

From the first meeting, the CAP demonstrated an impressive capacity to engage productively with the main issues and each other, and absorb and respond to new information in a short timeframe. Through discussion and other activities, in only 2 face-to-face and 1 online meeting, they provided rich insights into how adults can engage with 8-13 year olds about mental health in a meaningful and child friendly way. We conducted a number of activities across our meetings to access the children's understanding of mental health and how we could talk about it with other children by employing art and graphics, brainstorming, voting, game strategy and group consensus.

The CAP, in only 3 meetings, were supported,
- to develop a language on mental health for adults to use with 8-13 year olds.

- Reviewed and suggested child-friendly refinements to a questionnaire designed by adults to evaluate children's mental health.

- Authored a set of child focussed value statements/principles (which caused some debate with the adults in relation to the strength of the statements, as they may not be able to fulfil these in real life situations).

- Provided a list of people (pets) and places where they would seek help, but cautioned that awareness raising and training is required.

- Co-produced a child-friendly Checklist to enable children's perspectives, on things that are important to them, to be integrated into project evaluations.

- Co-designed an appealing logo and colour palette, and shared ideas for relevant and useful branded merchandise and activities for A Million & Me.

- Reviewed the 'Own It' app and suggested how it could be improved.

- Provided a justification to use to convince other adults that this age group is capable of being, and should be, involved in discussions around mental health.

Based on the feedback from children and partners, it is clear that the children felt valued and had a part to play as members on the team. The child-friendly documents they helped produce can help the A Million & Me team engage with other children on issues around mental health in a meaningful, child friendly and appropriate way.