

Engagement Framework

Guidance note

The Engagement Framework

The Engagement Framework (overleaf) is an outworking of the Department of Education's Priorities for Youth policy, which emphasised the need for new and proportionate ways to demonstrate outcomes of youth work. Its development has been underpinned by an extended process of research, dialogue, consultation and piloting.

Categories of Engagement

The Engagement Framework describes four categories of engagement in youth work, from 'Contact' to 'Maximising Potential'. Looking back over the past year, you are asked to assign each young person you work with to the most appropriate category, based on his/her engagement in your youth group/unit/project. It is important to note that there is no right or wrong response, only your considered judgement based on your knowledge and first-hand experience of the young people you work with.

Indicators of Engagement

The indicators of engagement are set out under three headings:

- i. Intensity and commitment of engagement;
- ii. Distance travelled for children and young people; and
- iii. Children and young people's influence in decision making.

You can choose to use one of the sets of indicators to help you assign each child or young person to a category of engagement. Or, just as each child or young person is different and will be engaging differently in your club, unit or project, you can move between the sets of indicators in order to assign young people to the most appropriate category of engagement.

How to use the Framework

If you work as part of a team we would strongly recommend you complete the Engagement Framework with your team of youth work staff and volunteers. This helps break the task down and keep it proportionate. Also, in this way you can use the framework as a self-reflection and planning tool, and it contributes to your quality assurance process. Equally you may choose to engage children and young people themselves in the process.

Starting with a list of your total membership, break it down into the age groups or sections you normally organise your club, unit or project around. Then consider each child or young person individually, and, using the indicators of engagement (overleaf) briefly reflect on the extent to which he/she engaged in, benefitted from and/or decided on what activities and services he/she took part in over the past year.

Of course, not all young people's engagement will be constant over the past year, so you are asked to use your professional judgement to decide on the most appropriate category for each child/young person.

Count each child or young person in one category only.

Engagement category	Number
Contact	
Engagement	
Active participation	
Maximising potential	
TOTAL	

The TOTAL number should be equal to the total number of your membership.

Evidencing the process

Whilst not required when returning the completed Engagement Framework, you are asked to retain the evidence-base which helped you assign young people to the most appropriate category of engagement. **For example**, session plans, session observation sheets, participant portfolios, satisfaction surveys, reports, records of badge work, awards, attendance records, photos, videos, scrapbooks, or displays, end of session 'happy sheets', etc.

You simply keep any supporting documentation you have in the normal way.

The Engagement Framework

Categories of Engagement	Indicators of Engagement		
	Intensity and commitment of engagement	Distance travelled for children and young people	Children and young people's influence in decision making
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attends, e.g. to meet friends and takes part in social, creative, recreational or sport activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Personal Capabilities Improved Health and Well-being Positive relationships with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes personal decisions on participation in activities designed by others
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in, short term, group programmes Makes new relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Personal Capabilities Improved Health and Well-being Developed thinking, life &/or work skills Positive relationships with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to decision making with others relating to a specific programme or activity
Active Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in planned, long term, group work programme with youth work outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Personal Capabilities Improved Health and Well-being Developed thinking, life &/or work skills Positive relationships with others Increased Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involved in assessing needs, decision making, planning and problem solving either around a single activity or within the club, unit or project generally
Maximising potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in the design and/or delivery of programmes or activities for self and others, including evaluation Acts in a leadership role Involved in the unit/club/project to their maximum ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Personal Capabilities Improved Health and Well-being Developed thinking, life &/or work skills Positive relationships with others Increased Participation Active Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively influences others, advocates on behalf of others Takes on a representative role within and/or beyond the your club, unit or project e.g. in governance arrangements or as part of a local or regional youth council or forum