



SANDWELL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
2019-2022





VISION

Our vision is to develop and sustain a dynamic collaborative engagement relationship with the children and young people of Sandwell, irrespective of their diversity and with a particular focus on including the voices of those who are not always heard.

Our engagement methods will meet their diverse social, emotional, physical and cultural needs, to enable them to participate fully in a way that suits them best. This will enable local services to gain an understanding of what is important to them living and growing up in Sandwell and will influence how we provide services to meet their changing needs.

“Every child’s voice matters in Sandwell”

INTRODUCTION

The SHAPE Strategic Board aims for all its multi-agency partners to engage with children and young people in ways that enable them to be actively involved in shaping decisions, and leading and initiating action for change and development across our services on an ongoing basis. Refer to appendix 1 for list of members. We want all children and young people in Sandwell to ensure they are:

- Staying **S**afe
- Being **H**ealthy
- Enjoying & **A**chieving
- Making a **P**ositive Contribution
- **E**conomic Wellbeing

Our vision for engagement needs to be explored and endorsed by our children and young people to help inform how we achieve it. They need to feel able to work with us to enable their experiences to be heard in a way that is accessible to their needs and how they feel comfortable. We also need to listen to their views and experiences of previous engagement and ensure lessons are learnt.

The rationale for this strategy is a realisation that our engagement activities may not always have reached all the groups and individuals that we need to, so that we can hear their views, nor has it always been joined up and focused on identified and agreed joint priorities for the SHAPE Strategic Board. It has therefore been recognised that we, as partners, need to develop a fresh collaborative and structured approach to how engagement work is carried out across our services. Exploring our current engagement gaps is an initial priority for agreeing future work whilst being mindful of the population profile of all Sandwell’s children and young people.





HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

The governance process for all engagement with children and young people will be received and agreed at the SHAPE Board. This will facilitate clear visibility, and enable discussion and shared ownership around the allocation of funding priorities for the year.

This will enable the Board to identify and address engagement gaps and target engagement where it is most needed. It will alleviate duplication of effort and promote the use of resources more equitably and efficiently enabling us to reach a wider range of service users and potential service users of all partners and deploy a joined up approach to engagement.

This enhanced collaborative approach provides a solid foundation for all services to better understand and meet the needs of all children and young people when planning, delivering and commissioning our services year on year.



SANDWELL POPULATION PROFILE OVERVIEW

The population of Sandwell is 328,450 people (The Office for National Statistics 2019), of which 89,783 (27.3%) are aged 0-19. Sandwell is ranked 12th in the most deprived Local Authorities out of the 317 in England (IoD, 2019, Rank of Average Score). It is an ethnically diverse borough with 57.1% of school children from minority ethnic groups.

The Public Health England (PHE) Child Health Profile (March 2020) stated the Health and Wellbeing of children in Sandwell is worse than England particularly in terms of infant mortality, teenage pregnancy and child obesity.

25.5% of children aged 16 years were living in poverty (2016), 2.7% of school pupils had social, emotional and mental health needs (2018) and 4.3% of young people aged 16 to 18 were not in education, employment and training.

The diversity of the population needs to be taken into account when planning and engaging with children and young people. This diversity interfaces with other social, cultural and environmental factors which need to be taken into account for the methods of communication and engagement used.

OUR PRINCIPLES – HOW WE WILL WORK

The five 'I' principles we have adopted for engagement have been endorsed by members of Sandwell's borough wide SHAPE Youth Forum, and is our partnership commitment to young people:

1) Involve

- We will make sure that you can co-design, co-develop and co-review the services you receive
- You will make sure you have your say when making decisions about the services that affect you.

2) Invest

- We will make sure that members of the SHAPE Strategic Board understand the importance of participation and co-production
- You feel valued when working with us to improve the services you receive
- The SHAPE Programme in Sandwell demonstrates that it is one of the best in the country at participation
- You will have fun!

3) Inform

- We will make sure that you understand the information that you need, to make decisions about your life
- We will make sure you know exactly what your rights are
- We will make sure you understand how lots of different organisations are working together to help you.

4) Influence

- We will make sure that the feedback you give us and the things that you tell us make a difference to the services we provide
- We will make sure your views and experiences are making things better for children and young people in the future
- We will make sure your views and experiences are improving the way that we work with local and national partners.

5) Impact

- We will recognise progress made through the monitoring of the action plan
- We will ensure the voice of the child is a priority for all organisations.

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that any child or young person has a right to express their views and have them given due weight in decisions affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity. Participation is not a privilege and does not have to be earned; rather it values children and young people as citizens in their own right.

Lundy's Model of Participation

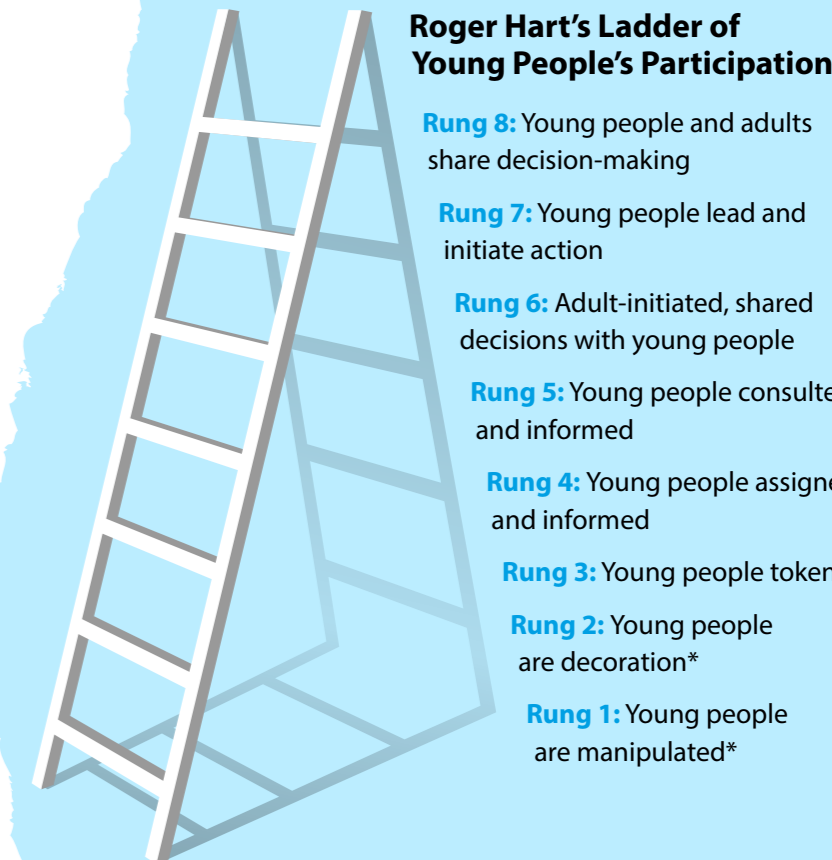
Lundy's model which conceptualises Article 12, will be adapted to ensure space is available for young people to express their view, their voice is enabled, an audience takes note of their views and their views influence change.



Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation

Harts Ladder of Participation will be used to monitor the level of consultation and engagement. The SHAPE Strategic Board has a clear aspiration to move further up the ladder. In order to climb higher, all partners have committed to assessing their current position on the ladder and then develop actions which will enable them to progress to rungs 7 and 8. For some organisations it is acknowledged this may take time but a commitment is made to take steps to achieve this. In the first year the work of SHAPE Board will be taken through the 'Hear by Rights' assessment process to gauge the current level.

We will make children and young people aware of our vision and how we are going to get there. We will inform them of their right to get involved and participate. This will be achieved by rolling out an awareness campaign on rights to involvement alongside our engagement plans.



Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

- Rung 8:** Young people and adults share decision-making
- Rung 7:** Young people lead and initiate action
- Rung 6:** Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
- Rung 5:** Young people consulted and informed
- Rung 4:** Young people assigned and informed
- Rung 3:** Young people tokenized*
- Rung 2:** Young people are decoration*
- Rung 1:** Young people are manipulated*

* Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are non-participation

HOW WE DEFINE PARTICIPATION

We define participation as:

“The means by which young people realise their rights, where they join with adults to make decisions”

Our strategy aims to ensure children and young people have opportunities for meaningful participation in three different ways:

Individual participation – Ensuring the individual child has a say in decisions about his or her life and service provision is the bedrock of good participation practice e.g. individual care plans.

Social participation – Young people are motivated to be involved in their community and develop active citizenship skills e.g. social action projects, community-based youth and play work.

Public participation – Young people through forums or school councils, special schools, youth clubs, other forums within partner services and the voluntary sector, will engage through activities to improve services or quality assure them.

Young people through a variety of forums and groups in schools, community, youth and play services will engage through activities to improve services or quality assure them e.g. through surveys and consultations and representation on boards and committees. They will be enabled to participate in a way which suits them.

We are mindful that some children and young people will fall through the gaps and not be reached without extra effort and a targeted approach i.e. seldom heard groups, whose voices we know we need to capture. We will address this need following an analysis of previous and planned consultation and engagement activities. A Consultation and Engagement Plan will be developed to set out requirements.

HOW DO OUR SHAPE THEMES WORK?

Economic Wellbeing

- Support young people to develop skills that will support their future careers through education, employment and training
- Ensure young people have access to careers information
- Improve housing options for vulnerable young people and prepare them for independent living
- Educate young people on financial capability
- Improve Sandwell to enable young people to build a future here

Making a Positive Contribution

- Promote Rights Respecting Education (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) to become responsible citizens and understand their rights and responsibilities
- Promote school participation through school councils and SHAPE Youth Forum
- Ensure all young people, regardless of gender, disability, age, religion or sexuality can voice their views and opinions

Staying Safe

- Improve awareness of the exploitation of children
- Educate parents of e-safety dangers
- Educate children and young people to manage risks and become more resilient
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Raise awareness of radicalisation through the prevent agenda

Being Healthy

- Promote emotional health and wellbeing
- Reduce and tackle substance misuse
- Reduce levels of teenage pregnancy
- Reduce and tackle obesity at Primary School age
- Promote sexual health services
- Promote support for mental health issues
- Raise the profile of school nurses

Achieving & Enjoying

- Promote opportunity for young people to participate in activities within their local community
- Continue to build resilience in schools through PHSE lessons and citizenship.
- Promote resilience and support to parents
- Ensure access to opportunities for children and young people is available to all
- Ensure young people have access to youth provision and youth facilities that meet their needs

Sandwell Children & Young People Engagement Strategy 2019 – 2022
Priorities

GOVERNANCE PROCESS

The SHAPE Strategic Board will be the governing body for all engagement with children and young people in Sandwell. The Governance Structure in Appendix 2 shows how it reports to other Boards and committees to enable effective communication and ensure all work undertaken is shared with others.

The SHAPE Strategic Board is chaired by the Director of Public Health who is the Council's lead director of SHAPE. The SHAPE Board is made up of a number of partners representing internal and external agencies including the voluntary sector who have played an integral role in the Programme. The SHAPE Board reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the new Children and Young People's Commissioning Partnership.

SHAPE Youth Forum is made of a diverse range of young people aged 11 and above from across the Borough. This forum connects with other regional and national groups. It also links to the Looked After Children Board and Care Leavers Forum working closely with the Children's Trust Participation Team.

It is important to note SHAPE **is not** a Youth Service, it is an initiative run by young people offering a mechanism for consultation.

ENGAGEMENT PRACTICE

When carrying out any consultation and engagement with children and young people, the following must be adopted:

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines to be followed
- Parental consent for offsite visits
- Photographic consent for any images or videos being taken
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for any work being undertaken with children and young people

As part of the joint working approach for this strategy, all partners are expected to undertake and share the following:

1. Sign the agreement to be a partner of the SHAPE Strategic Board and adhering to Sandwell Children and Young People Engagement Strategy 2019-2022.
2. To carry out a self-assessment of SHAPE consultation and engagement activities to identify an organisation baseline. This will be carried out using the Self-assessment Audit Tool – Hear by Right produced for the National Youth Agency. <https://nya.org.uk/hear-by-right/>
3. Contribute any engagement and participation taking place in their agencies to the Engagement Activity Action Plan.
4. Agree to the future process of bringing engagement proposals to the SHAPE Board for discussion and agreement so that engagement activities can be discussed and agreed according to need, and with reference to the population profile and to ensure voices that are seldom heard are included.





RESOURCES

There is an expectation of funding and/or support in kind from each partner as a contribution towards the work of the Strategy. This will be to support consultation and engagement activity costs and to support training for organisations and stakeholders to improve engagement work and improvement outcomes.

Financial support for 2019/2020 received is £155,000 contribution.

PERFORMANCE

The Children and Young People Engagement Action Plan will have measurable outcomes which will be monitored by the SHAPE Strategic Board as part of the usual governance process for SHAPE on a quarterly basis.

2019/2020 is considered to be a transition year for this strategy. To start building on our vision – i.e. In order to achieve, we need to understand where we are now.

An Action Plan which sets out how we will work through our strategy and achieve our vision will be developed which will contain measurable outcomes for the three years.

This year 2019-2020 will be an information gathering period where we will assess our levels of engagement, review current consultation activity and identify gaps.

Outcomes for subsequent years will be more ambitious once we are clear and confident with our working practices and collaborative approach to engagement.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

A mapping exercise will take place, of all engagement activities planned with children and young people and in progress for this year 2019/2020. Engagement activities for subsequent years will be agreed based on the agreed governance process and based on the SHAPE key headings:

Either – Staying Safe, Being Healthy, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Economic Wellbeing

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

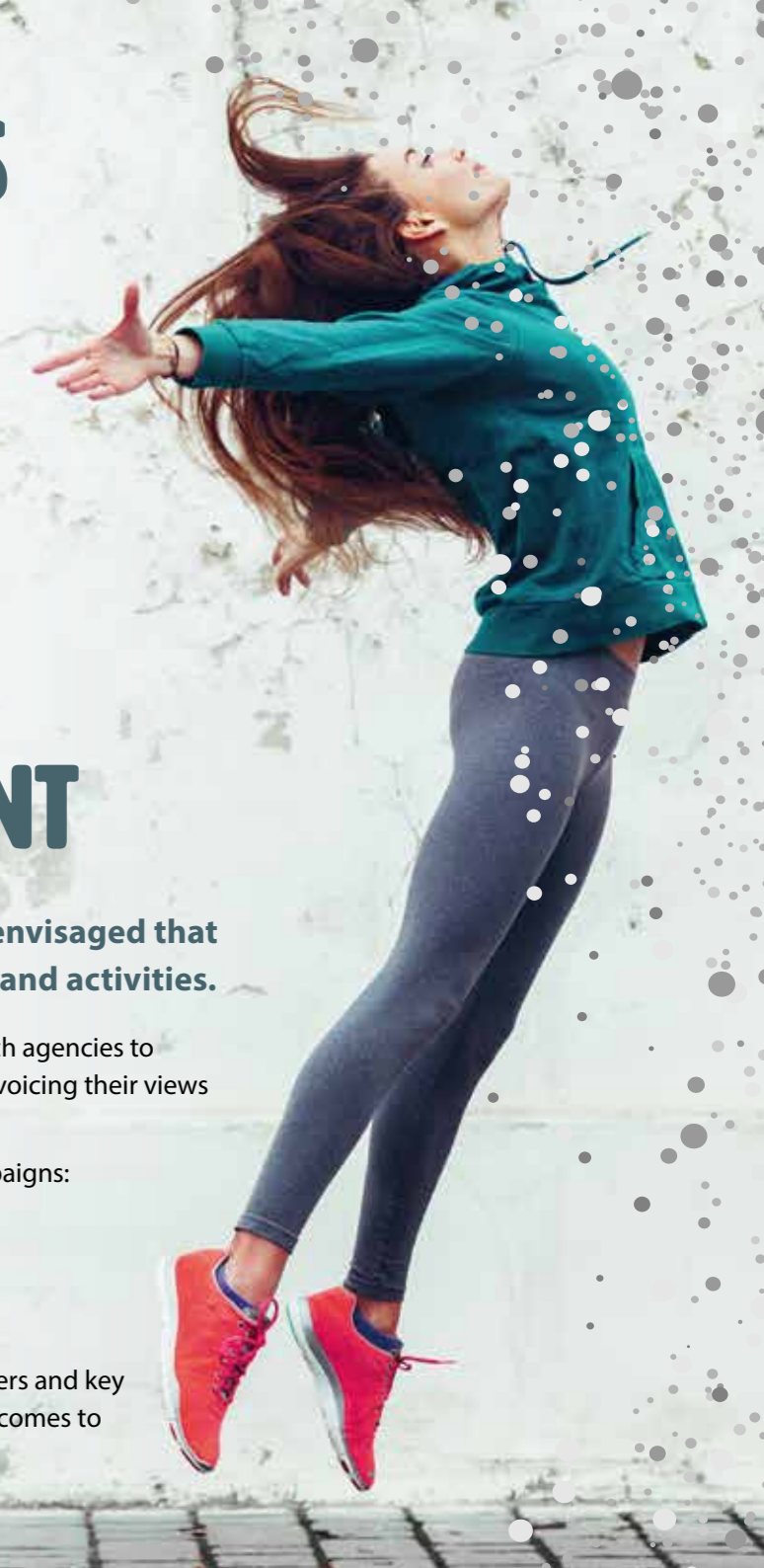
A coordinated means of communication for young people has been developed. It is envisaged that parents and professionals would also utilise the channels for information, resources and activities.

Just Youth (<https://www.justyouth.org.uk/>) is a web platform and the primary source of information detailing which agencies to contact for support needs, activities taking place, Youth Services offer and how young people can get involved in voicing their views and opinions.

The following social media channels are used to promote key messages for young people and any youth led campaigns:

- SHAPE Instagram – SHAPE_Sandwell
- Just Youth Facebook – Just Youth
- You Tube – SHAPE Events

A Consultation and Engagement Plan will be developed alongside the communications offer to outline stakeholders and key priorities and mediums for consultation and engagement for this year and subsequent years with measurable outcomes to highlight success.





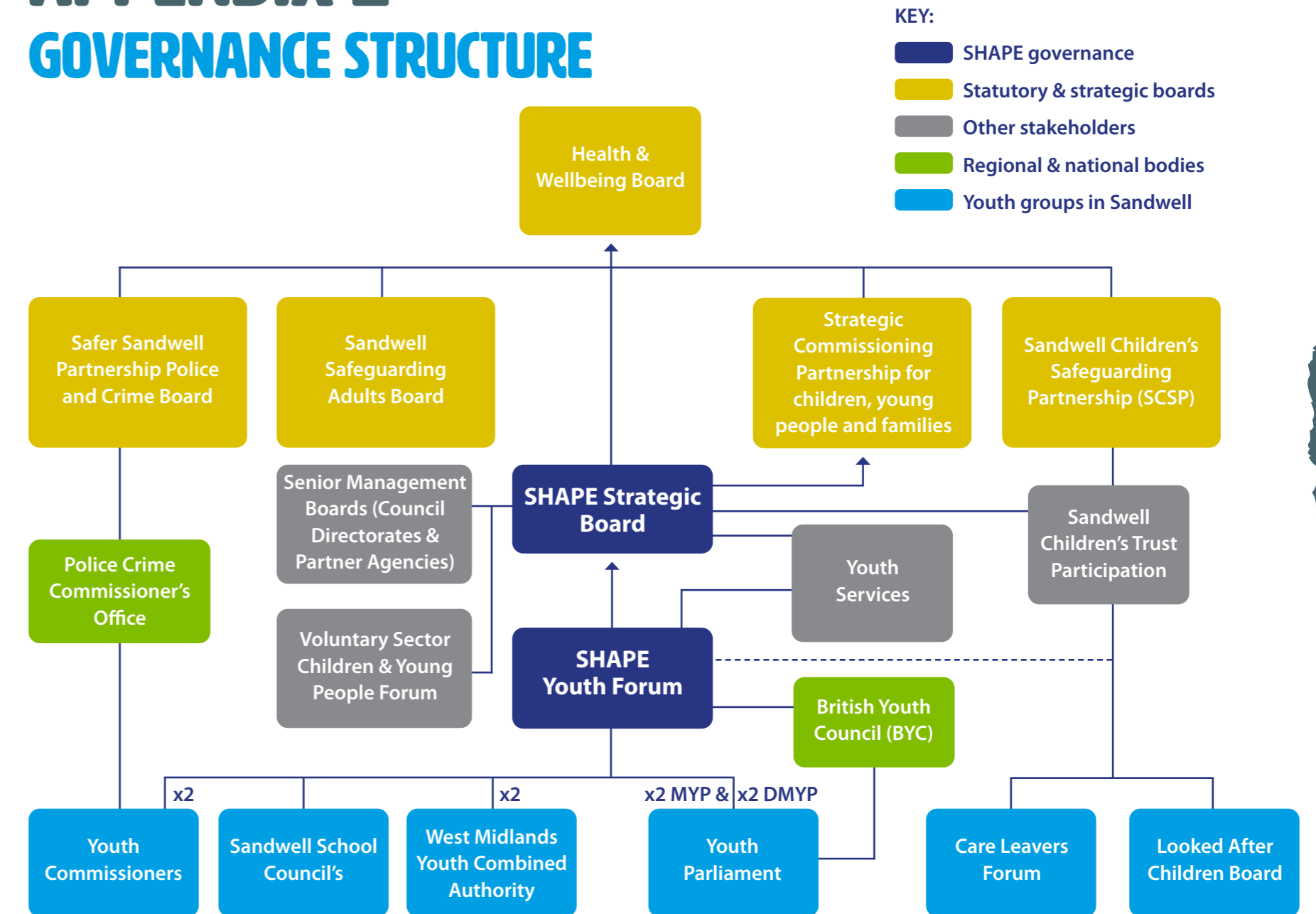
APPENDIX 1

SHAPE STRATEGIC BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Agency	Role
Sandwell MBC (Public Health)	Director of Public Health and Strategic Lead for Child's Voice
Sandwell MBC (Public Health)	SHAPE Programme Manager
Sandwell MBC (Public Health)	0-19 Programme Manager
Sandwell MBC (Public Health)	Adolescent Children's Project Manager
Sandwell MBC (Children's Services)	Youth Services Manager
Sandwell MBC (Children's Services)	Play Services Manager
Sandwell MBC (Children's Services)	Advisory Teacher for Personal, Social and Health Education
Sandwell MBC (Children's Services)	Family Information Services
Sandwell MBC (Neighbourhood Services)	Neighbourhood Engagement Manager
Sandwell MBC (Resources)	Director of Resources
Sandwell MBC (Resources)	Senior Accountant
Sandwell MBC (Resources)	Communications Officer
Sandwell Children's Trust	Business Manager – Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP)
Sandwell Children's Trust	Partnership & Engagement Manager
Sandwell Children's Trust	Participation Manager
West Midlands Police	Police Sergeant
NHS Hospital Trust	Safeguarding Supervision – Health Visiting
NHS Clinical Commissioning Group	Senior Engagement Manager
NHS Clinical Commissioning Group	Interim Commissioning Manager
Sandwell College	Assistant Director for Student Services
Barnados	Assistant Director
West Midlands Fire Service	Business Partner – Children and Young People
Voluntary and Community Sector (SCVO)	Chief Executive, Creative Academies
Voluntary and Community Sector (SCVO)	Chief Executive Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children
Voluntary and Community Sector (SCVO)	Murray Hall

APPENDIX 2

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE





“ Together we will **SHAPE** sustainable engagement with children and young people into the future ”