**Gateshead SEND Participation Strategy 2023-2026**

**SEND** stands for **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**.

**Participation** means being involved in something.

A **strategy** is a plan for making something happen.

We have put together this **SEND Participation Strategy** because we want you- the children, young people and families of Gateshead - to be involved in decisions that affect you.

We want your views about the council services you use.

This strategy is our plan for how we will achieve this.

We want to make Gateshead a better place for you to live.

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|  | **What is Participation?**  **Participation** means being involved in something.  We asked members of the Gateshead SEND Youth Forum and the Gateshead Parent Carer Forum what they thought participation meant. Here are some of the things they said:   * “Having your say in anything that affects you.” * “The opportunity to be involved in decision making.” * “Knowing that your views and ideas have made a difference.” * “Being listened to and taken seriously.”   **What Does Participation Mean to You?**  We asked members of the Gateshead SEND Youth Forum what participation meant to them. Here are some of the things they said:   * “Participation means being listened to and not being ignored.” * “Don’t speak on behalf of people, use my words and my voice. There’s nobody can say it better than yourself.” * “For me it means having people who support you with your decisions instead of other people just making decisions for you.”   **What are the benefits of being involved?**  We asked members of the Gateshead SEND Youth Forum and the Gateshead Parent Carer Forum what they thought the benefits of being involved were. Here are some of the things they said:   * “It’s about me and instead of people who don’t know me making decisions for me - I know myself and what I need. I have a voice.” * “It creates a sense of belonging.” * “It improves motivation.” * “It makes me feel listened to.”   **Getting involved means...**   * We learn what you think and what you need. * We can use your views to help us improve our services. * We get to hear new ideas from your point of view.   **Your Rights…**  You have the right to be involved and have your say in any decisions that will have an impact on your life. This is confirmed by a law called the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).** This says:   * You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously. * All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, whether they have a disability, or whether they are rich or poor. * You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others unless it harms or offends other people. * You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this convention, so that you can live a full life.   **Did You Know?**   * Gateshead has a population of   196,100 people   * 27% of the population is under 25.   That’s 52,900 people!   * In 2020/21 9,183 (26.3%) of Gateshead’s children lived in absolute low income families. This is an increase of 11.6% since 2015/16. * In January 2022, 4859 Gateshead pupils were reported by schools to have a special educational need or disability - that’s 15.9% of the school population. 25.5% of these had an Education, Health and Care (EHC)   Plan and 74.5% were categorised as ‘SEN Support’.    **Our Pledge**  To help you get involved, we will make sure that participation is:  **Inclusive**   * We welcome views from all. * We will promote equal opportunities through a variety of communication techniques. * We will provide opportunities to engage in a way that is meaningful to you.   **Respectful**   * We will listen to you and take your views seriously. * We will treat your views with care and respect. * We will ask you your opinion and not   edit or change your words.  **Enjoyable**   * We will help you to get involved and work hard to ensure you have a positive experience. * We will use a variety of interesting ways to involve and listen to you   **Rewarding**   * We will celebrate your achievements. * We will make sure that our activities help to build your confidence and skills.   **Meaningful**   * We will listen to you and tell you what we have done with your feedback. * We will be honest about what is possible and what is not. * We will look for opportunities to work with you to design and deliver services.   **How can I get involved?**  **There are lots of ways you can make your opinions heard in Gateshead:**   * Gateshead SEND Youth Forum * Gateshead Parent Carer Forum * Gateshead Young Inspectors * Gateshead Youth Assembly * Gateshead Children in Care Council   Mail, Message, Email, Send Message  **Contact**  **If you want to get involved or would like any more information, we would love to hear from you.**  Email: senteam@gateshead.gov.uk  FacebookPhone: 0191 433 3626  Facebook: Search for Gateshead SEND Local Offer |

To find out more visit [**www.gateshead-localoffer.org**](http://www.gateshead-localoffer.org) or scan the QR code.

