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Yes we can

Rob Williams

Deputy Children's Commissioner



**"The 11 MILLION children and young people
in England have a voice"**

Children's Commissioner for England,
Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green



DO YOU WANT

MILLION

SHAPE IT!

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SHAPES
YOU WANT

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YOU WANT

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SHAPES
YOU WANT



MILLION



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Today



- Our role
- How do children participate?
- What change can result?
- Right to participate?
- Problems
- Are we there yet?

Children Act 2004



The Children's Commissioner has the function of

promoting awareness of the views and interests of children in England.



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Our duties



- To be concerned with the five ECM outcomes
- To involve children
- To make sure we involve those who are not often heard
- To have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



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Our powers



- enter any premises, other than a private dwelling, for the purposes of interviewing any child cared for there; and
- if the child consents, interview the child in private.
- require to know what action has been taken in response to the Children's Commissioner's recommendations.



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Case work



- We can't take on individual cases but
- We can investigate the operation of systems where individual cases suggest an issue which will effect other children



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The way we work


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Proactive

We lead from the front to change attitudes towards a single issue each year, either alone or in partnership with others.

Responsive

We engage in the policy debate and process on a wider range of Spotlight issues (5 to 10 per year).

Listening

We will be available to all children and young people, to gather and monitor their views on emerging problems, issues and experiences.

Our key targets for participation



- We don't have any CYP on our board
- We set aside 50% of our project budget to the choices of children and young people
- Our spotlights are chosen by adults but informed by buddy groups
- 300 children per year with ongoing involvement
- 50% are from marginalised background
- No staff recruited without children's panel.



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Type of group	No.
Local Authority - youth or voice project	5
Local Authority - Children's Fund	1
Local Authority - Social services	2
NHS	1
Surestart / Nursery	5
Primary school	4
Primary & Secondary School cluster	1
Special needs secondary schools	2
Voluntary sector (various different projects)	16
Private (parent)	1
Surestart - transition	1
Secondary Schools	2
Total	41

How do children feel about it?

They liked...

Having responsibility

Being listened to

Seeing change

Social aspects of participation



How do children feel about it?

They did not like...

- lack of time
- questionnaires
- being pushed by adults
- the food



Can 11 Million turn children's views into change?

Mental Health Act

Lancaster Farms YOI

Kent mosquitoes

Tescos in Newton Aycliffe

Grimsby's infant
playground



The space for change is not unlimited

- Attitudes around crime
- Resistance to Children's Rights
- Media pressures
- Our economic consensus



You could show
us a bit of manners
and we'll show you
manners back.

Sholga Ndima
Age 8



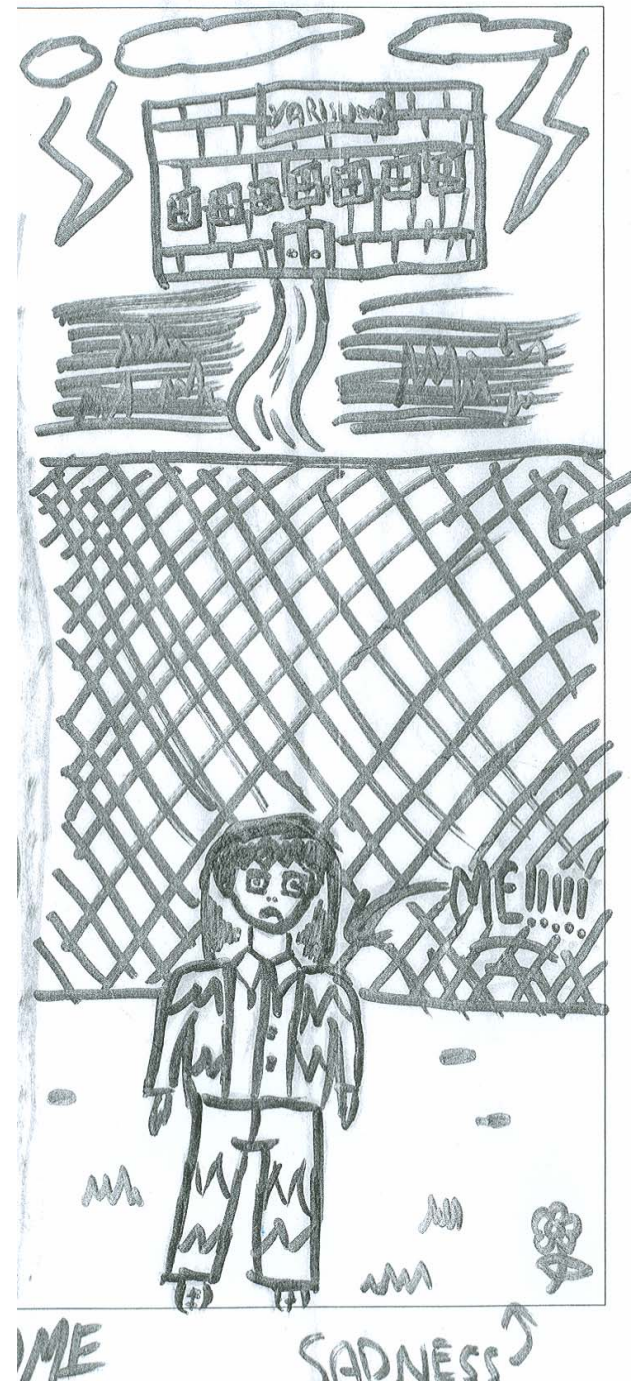
Does participation have to improve
outcomes?



Is it enough to participate?

Challenges

- Not the quickest way to make a decision
- Robust research methodologies
- When can we speak out?
- Who should we talk to?





Have we arrived yet?

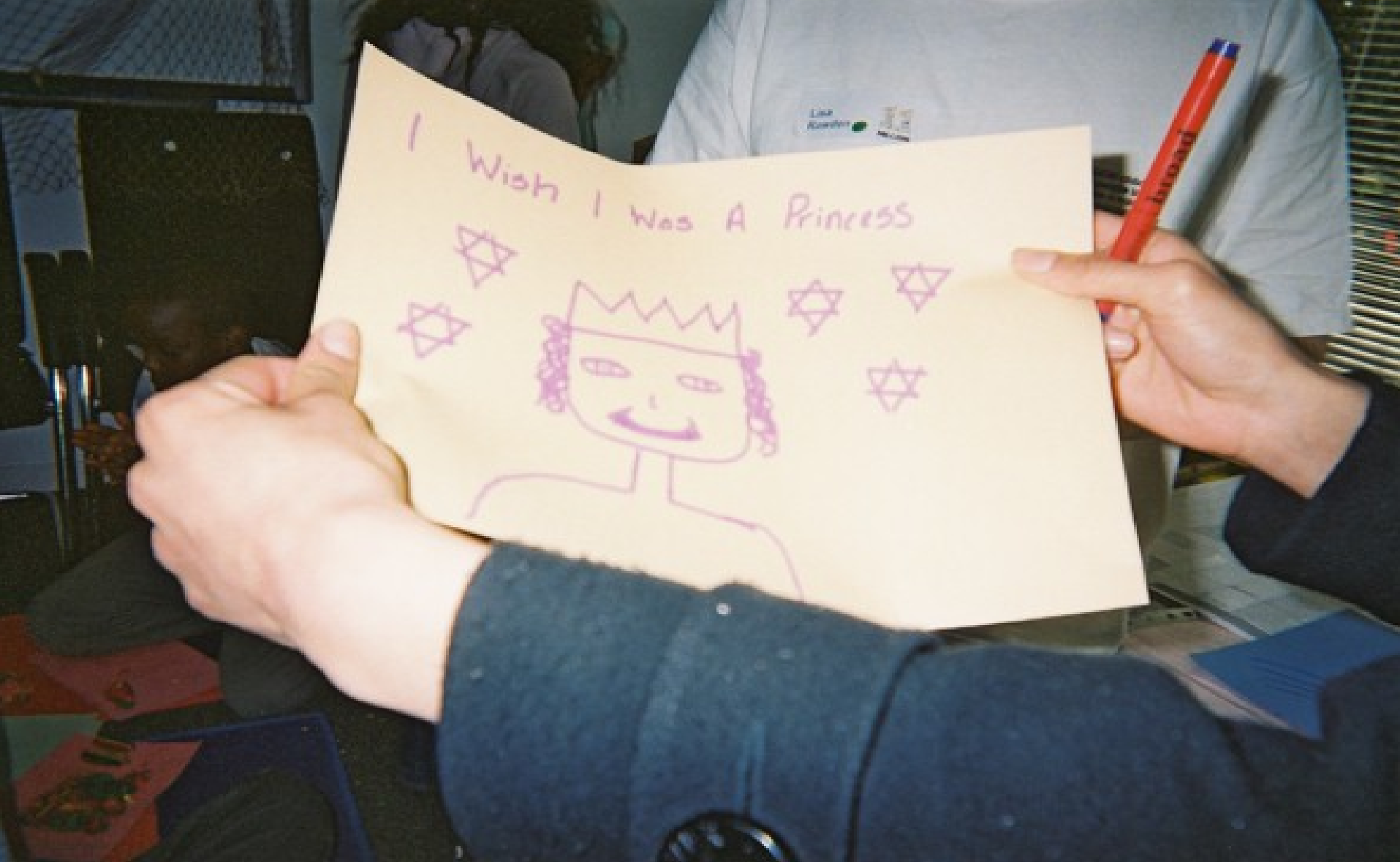
Does every individual child have a chance to influence what happens to them?

Does every service affecting children have a route for children to influence decisions?

Can ALL children access these routes

Do adults have a balanced level of interest in these decisions?

Do we still need a Children's Commissioner?



We can't go backwards



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