



Voice of the Child Toolkit

Using Tools to gain the voice of the child

Practitioners often use tools to enable them to seek the views of children or to aid participation, enabling children to draw or write their views more freely than in direct conversation.

It is important to note that tools are not intended to replace other good practice.

Practitioners need to plan ahead and adapt tools to suit individual children & young people or circumstances. There are no set ways to do this.

A wide range of tools are available to encourage us all and help with our direct work with children and young people. Please take care and exercise professional judgement as they do not fit all children or all circumstances.

There are more formal tools used within organisations that form part of assessments or reviews such as those used with looked after children and young carers.

Tools can help enable the child or young person to:

- have a voice which is listened to and acted upon
- give their view on the support they receive
- identify what help they would like and who from
- identify and share what is important to them
- give their views on actions for change
- review what has worked or not worked for them

Tools can also enable practitioners to build positive relationships and gain a better understanding of the child or young person to best support their needs.

They can also support improved outcomes and evidence what differences listening to the child or young person has made.



Example Tools

The pages that follow are examples of tools that the WSP have identified that may assist practitioners to gather the child's voice. Your own organisation may use other tools that are as effective. If you feel that you use a tool that works well and want to include it within this toolkit, please contact safeguardingpartners@warrington.gov.uk for consideration of inclusion in future versions of this toolkit.

One Page Profiles (all ages)

A one page profile captures all the important information about a person on a single sheet of paper under three simple headings:

- what people appreciate about me
- what's important to me
- how best to support me.

One page profiles are simple. They help us to support people better by, helping us build better relationships by truly understanding what really matters to the person in their life and the way they are supported to live it. They can be adapted to use with all ages and are very useful when working with those with differences in their communication style.

Examples and templates can be found at <http://www.sheffkids.co.uk/adultsite/pages/onepageprofiletemplates.html>

Three Houses (6-11 age range)

The three assessment questions from the signs of safety model are used:

- what are we worried about
- what is working well
- what needs to happen

The child puts them in the three houses / islands drawn to engage children in filling in their worries, their good things and their dreams.

<http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/the-three-houses-template/>

The Wizard and the Fairy

The Fairy/Wizard tool serves the same purpose as the Three Houses Tool, but with different pictorial representation. Rather than Three Houses, you can explore the same three questions, using a drawing of a fairy with a magic wand or a Wizard figure. The same process for using the three houses tool applies in using the Wizard/Fairy tool. The practitioner can present the child with a pre-drawn outline or begin with a blank page and draw the wizard or fairy from scratch, asking the child to help, depending on what best suits the situation.



The Wizard and Fairy Tool:



Sheffkids (all ages)

[Sheffkids website](#) hosts a wide range of free to use resources in addition to some pay for materials all designed to support practitioners to engage and to work with children and young people.

'Say it your own way'

40+ engaging worksheets facilitating children's participation in assessments.

The worksheets help workers to ascertain children's daily routine, likes, dislikes, feelings, wishes as well as their views on their family, friends, helpers, home, neighbourhood, school etc.

Available from the social workers toolbox website at www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/say-way-40-worksheets-facilitating-childrens-participation-assessment/

ELSA Support Website (all ages)

Extensive resource website aimed at those working with children and young people. The site contains both free and paid worksheets, activity plans and programmes of work that can be used with children and young people to enable them to express themselves and develop.

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/>

Resource topics include:

- All about me
- Bereavement and loss
- Circle time
- Display Resources
- Emotions
- Friendship
- General Resources
- Managing strong feelings
- Nurture group resources
- Online Learning
- Planning
- Secondary Resources
- Self-esteem
- SEN Toolkit
- Social Skills
- Thinking skills



Talking Mats

Talking Mats is a social enterprise whose vision is to improve the lives of people with communication difficulties, and those close to them, by increasing their capacity to communicate effectively about things that matter to them. Range of free and to buy resources.

Talking Mats is an established visual communication framework that uses a mat and picture symbols as the basis for communication. It is designed to help people with communication difficulties think about issues or topics in a different way and it provides people with a way to effectively express their views visually.

Research evidence demonstrates that Talking Mats is a very useful tool for assessing and helping children and young people to make decisions about their future targets.

<https://www.talkingmats.com/>

CAFCASS - My Needs, Wishes and Feelings Pack (all ages)

An extensive pack of resources developed by CAFCASS to support its workers to enable and ensure that children and young people are able to express their views and feeling.

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/professionals/resources-for-professionals/>

Children's Participation Toolkit for Social Workers (activities & worksheets)

This resource contains various activities, worksheets and templates assisting social workers and early help workers to involve children in the process of assessments, intervention planning as well as conducting reviews in a positive, supportive and enabling way.

The resource is available from the social workers toolbox website at www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/childrens-participation-toolkit-for-social-workers/



'Animal talk' activity: using animal pictures to get to know children and discuss their views and feelings

This tool contains 24 pictures of various animals and suggestions how they can be used to get to know children and discuss their views and feelings in an interactive and fun way.

The resource is available from the **social workers toolbox** website at www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/animal-talk-activity-using-animal-pictures-get-know-children-discuss-views-feelings/

Getting to know a child's routine activity tool

This tool supports social workers to gain an understanding of a child's or young person's daily routine in an engaging way. The document contains 40+ individual slips with various activities/feelings which a child is asked to sort out into three piles – every day, sometimes or never, depending on how often they engage in this activity/have this particular feeling.

The resource is available from the **social workers toolbox** website at www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/getting-know-childs-routine-tool/

Establishing a day in the life of a school age child (sheet)

This tool supports professionals to gain a good understanding of a child or young person daily routine. It should help to identify positives or strengths in the child/young person's daily routine, as well highlighting areas where there may be concerns.

The sheet is available from the **social workers toolbox** website at www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/establishing-a-day-in-the-life-of-a-school-age-child-sheet/

Culturagram

A culturagram is a family assessment tool used in the practice of social work which was first introduced by Dr. Elaine Congress.

Find out more on the websites socialworkculturagram.weebly.com/culturagrams and socialworkculturagram.weebly.com/example

Scaling

Some of the feelings that children experience can be difficult to articulate or make sense of.

Scaling is a useful tool when the words don't come easily.

Scales can be used for a variety of things such as:

- Happiness
- Sadness
- Anger
- Anxiety



Autism Toolbox website

The Autism Toolbox website is an online resource to support the inclusion of children and young people with autism spectrum disorder in mainstream education services. As well as introducing and describing some of the more common challenges a pupil with autism might face, it provides real life case studies from Scottish schools and practical examples of supports that practitioners can translate and use in their own school setting. It also signposts to other useful websites.

www.autismtoolbox.co.uk

NSPCC Solution-focused practice toolkit (2015)

Helping professionals use a solution-focused approach when working with children and young people. The solution-focused practice toolkit provides inspiration for worksheets and activities to use, adapt or devise for the children and young people you work with.

Solution-focused practice concentrates on helping people move towards the future that they want and to learn what can be done differently by using their existing skills, strategies and ideas – rather than focusing on the problem.

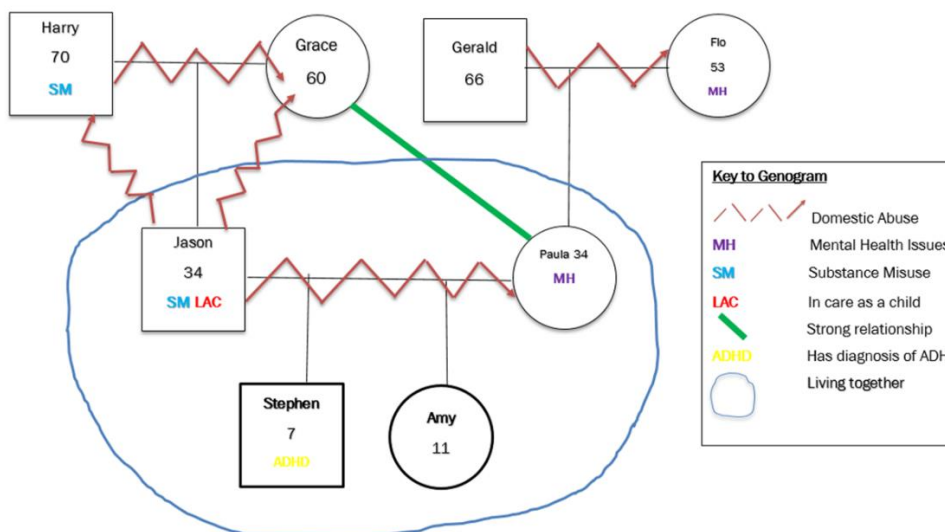
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2015/solution-focused-practice-toolkit>

Genograms

The genogram is a tool to map a family and patterns of relationships.

“Drawing a family tree with one or more family members, identifying intergenerational patterns, speculating about their significance for current problems, and exploring new ways of understanding family relationships.” Carr (2000) pg. 181

They are simple (but potentially powerful) representations of relationships and networks.



When completing a genogram with a child as a piece of direct work

- Be led by the child
- What colours, symbols would they like to use?
- They can add people, places, animals etc.
- Don't assume!

What to include on Genograms

- At least Three Generations
- Presenting issues and factors. i.e. Mental Health, Substance Misuse
- A range of relationships both strong relationships and those considered less strong.
- Include the date it has been completed. Genograms evolve over time they are organic.

How to complete a Genogram

- Take care these can be very powerful
- Try not to impose meaning- remain curious
- Know when to stop or pause.
- Think of the context to the session; if you are completing this as part of an assessment the person may be anxious about what they share
- Alternative to genograms: ecomaps; timelines.
- Let the person take the lead if they feel comfortable doing so.