

VOICE OF THE PERSON

1. What is 'Voice of the Person'?

The term 'voice of the person' suggests the words spoken by a person to the professional, but really it means much more than this.

It means actively providing the space and opportunity for the person to share their concerns & wishes and for us as professionals to respond to communications that include all behaviours, senses & emotions and is not limited to the spoke word.

2. Key Messages

- Consider the person's age, development stage, language, disability, ethnicity, culture, and barriers when trying to understand & analyse behaviours, expressions, emotions of the person and people around them
- The person in need should be seen alone, often enough, by professionals involved to seek their views without interruption from parents/carers
- Practitioners should listen to others who try to speak on behalf of the person and others who have important information to contribute
- Encourage the person to describe their situation, how it feels and what they think will help them
- Care should be taken to recognise when parents and carers are preventing practitioners from seeing and listening to the person in need
- Practitioners should take care not to focus too much on the needs of the parents or carers and overlook the implications for the person in need



4. Resources

- Voice of the Child: 20 sheets to gain child's wishes, feelings & views
- NSPCC evidence based resource to help adults ensure children feel listened to
- The John Safeguarding Adult Review is a Solihull case which contains a lot of learning for professionals about making sure the adult's voice is heard
- LSCP - 'Ask yourself what life is like for me?'
- The Voice of the Child – Understanding the child's lived experience Practice guidance and standards

3. What Does This Mean for Me?

- Be aware of the power of your own & others roles (parents/carer/partner) & how this may be a negative/positive influence. Consider how to reduce the possibility of these voices being stronger than that of the person in need.
- Have you established a toolkit to promote connection and to show you respect & value the person in need, to break down any barriers to communication?
- Record what the person's needs and wishes are in their own words and/or drawings etc.
- Is there evidence in your practice that person in need's communications are directly influencing assessments and action plans
- Is there recognition that any records you make have been created through dialogue with/for the service users & not just your agency? Are your records clear, jargon free & do not contain victim blaming or overly complicated language

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