

Forth Valley and West Lothian Youth Voice Charter

This charter was created by the children and young people of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Stirling and West Lothian. It was shaped by representatives from youth voice structures and informed by the views of over 650 individuals across all four local authorities.

These statements are the principles on how children and young people wish to be engaged with, and consulted on, their views and opinions.

Treat us with respect and fairness - Speak to us calmly and don't shout. Politely and patiently. Nicely and kindly. Remain balanced and calm, taking into account our feelings and frustrations.

Personalise your approach - Give us all of the information that we need. Be clear on what you are saying and double check that we understand. Consider the setting and environment where you speak to us, is it a positive space where we feel comfortable and welcome?

Consider our needs - Speak to us in a way that we understand, don't use confusing language. Make sure we can take part fully, thinking about those less confident or who have additional support needs.

Value us and show interest in our opinions - Recognise that all opinions are valid and valued. Involve us and give time to share our opinions, don't dismiss our ideas. Show you appreciate our opinions, speaking to us as you would another adult. Treat us equally and not differently or inferior.

Actively listen - Listen to us as we listen to you. Fully listen, waiting until we finish what we are saying. Don't talk over us and don't interrupt. Don't seek some options over others and don't ask the same people all the time, look to get the views from as many as possible.

Be understanding and take us seriously - We are all individuals, try to understand our point of view. Put aside your own bias and don't make judgements because your opinions are different to ours. Don't make assumptions about what we think and consider our perspective. Be aware of our gender / background / race / beliefs and circumstances.

Give us time to think and share - We need time to understand and work at our own pace, give us different ways to share our opinions and the chance to do so. Find out what works for us, sharing views individually or with others, privately or publicly. Don't overwhelm us but don't limit the information you give us either. Plan to speak to us and don't leave things till the last minute.

Make it meaningful - Give us realistic expectations and tell us why something can/cannot be done. Be encouraging and praise our involvement. Explain how our views make a difference and what can change.

Take action and give feedback - Act on what we have told you and tell us what has happened as a result. Explain it in a way that makes sense and share this in places which we go to or in things that we look at. Give us real feedback and allow us to do the same.

We are collaborators not consultants - Work with us as a partner in a genuine and equal way. See all our opinions as the same and don't let yours as the adult be the dominant one. Allow us to make decisions and be involved in actions taken.