**Ethical checklist for children and young people’s participation in research**

**A set of planning prompts to develop an ethical protocol based on Houghton (2015)**

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| **Consent and information**  ‘Child or young person is the central participant in the process and key decision maker’ | |
| 1. What steps have been taken to ensure a potential child or young person participant can make an informed choice to participate? |  |
| 1. Is information available in different formats? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. Does project information include children’s rights – especially in relation to confidentiality, safeguarding, withdrawing from the project? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. Have children and young people with particular communication needs or learning disabilities been considered? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. Have you identified someone who can support a child or young person to reflect on the opportunity to participate and make an informed choice? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. Have you considered how to ensure consent is viewed as an ongoing process throughout the project and subject to review? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. What steps have you included in the process to make it easy for a child or young person to leave the project and change their mind? |  |
| **Other considerations** | |
| **Actions** | |
| **Confidentiality**  ‘Child or young person has control and choice over information sharing. Risks to anonymity require involvement of a non-abusing carer’ | |
| 1. What steps are taken to protect a child or young person’s anonymity within (and outside) the project? |  |
| 1. Do children and young people understand the concepts of confidentiality and anonymity and how they will be protected in this project? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. How are children and young people supported to make informed choices about the information they share (particularly in a group setting – recognising the limits to confidentiality within a group)? |  |
| 1. Do children and young people have a clear understanding of any limits to confidentiality - e.g., in the case of a safeguarding concern – and understand the steps that will be taken if confidentiality had to be breached? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. When children and young people are involved in campaign or other dissemination activities have risks to anonymity been identified? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. When there are risks to anonymity (particularly in relation to campaign or other dissemination activities), have children and young people (and their non-abusing parent or carers) been supported to consider the implications (now and in the future)? | **YES/ NO** |
| **Other considerations** | |
| **Actions** | |
| **Child, young person (and adult) protection**  ‘Child or young person is respected as an individual survivor, their own experiences and agency in their family’s protection validated’ | |
| 1. How can you safely ensure that a child or young person’s experiences are recognised and respected as distinct from (though possibly related to) those of their wider family members? |  |
| 1. Have you made steps to support children or young people to engage in any necessary safety planning relating to initial and ongoing participation in the research project? | **YES/ NO** |
| **Other considerations** | |
| **Actions** | |

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| **Danger**  ‘Child or young person’s perceptions of risk are vital to assessment and safety planning alongside others affected’ | | |
| 1. Has a risk assessment and safety planning exercise been undertaken for the project’s participation activities? | **YES/ NO** | |
| 1. How will children and young people be involved in assessing risk and safety planning for their participation in the project? |  | |
| 1. Have individuals been identified who will support children and young people in this process? | **YES/ NO** | |
| 1. Is there a structure in place for regularly reviewing and updating any safety plans (recognising that the nature of risk and safety can change)? | **YES/ NO** | |
| **Other considerations** | | |
| **Actions** | | |
| **Distress**  ‘Child or young person is capable of managing and minimising (inevitable) distress’ | | |
| 1. Have children and young people’s expectations about the project been considered – including any potential sources of sensitivity or distress? | | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. What strategies or resources are in place to minimise the chance of any participants becoming distress and to respond if someone becomes distressed? | |  |
| 1. Do you know and have contacts for children and young people’s preferred support networks or supportive individuals? | | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. Have you had a chance to discuss with children and young people strategies they may find helpful to respond to any distress they experience? | | **YES/ NO** |
| **Other considerations** | | |
| **Actions** | | |
| **Disclosure**  ‘Participation is an act of disclosure for young survivors, thereafter control/ choice over personal stories needs to be maintained’ | | |
| 1. How are children and young people supported to understand and consider the pros and cons of sharing aspects of their personal stories with different audiences? | |  |
| 1. What strategies have been identified to enable children and young people to share aspects of their personal stories while maintaining anonymity? | |  |
| 1. How will you ensure that other adults involved (partners/decision makers) are fully briefed to respect young participants’ guidance on confidentiality and disclosure of personal stories? | |  |
| 1. Have specific risks associated with sharing personal stories been identified and reflected on by research team (and with children and young people)? | | **YES/ NO** |
| **Other considerations** | | |
| **Actions** | | |

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| **Enjoyment**  ‘Fun while building trust is an essential component of participation and key to feeling able to speak out’ | |
| 1. Has trust and relationship building been considered and built into project planning – with dedicated time for this? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. How will the project maximise children or young people’s comfort and enjoyment? |  |
| 1. How will children and young people have opportunities to influence the work and inform how to make the project enjoyable for themselves (and other children and young people)? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. Are dedicated resources available to fund any activities for building trust and maximising participants’ comfort/ enjoyment? | **YES/ NO** |
| **Other considerations** | |
| **Actions** | |
| **Empowerment**  ‘An individual, equal voice (to each other and adults) and recognised status as experts and key decision-makers is crucial’ | |
| 1. Have strategies been identified to manage power dynamics within group settings (e.g. support lesser heard voices and manage dominant voices)? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. Have strategies been identified to support children and young people’s identification of themselves as young experts and support their confidence to share ideas? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. How will recognition, reciprocity and ‘fair exchange’ for young people’s time and contributions be demonstrated (e.g., payment, vouchers, opportunities?) |  |
| 1. What strategies are identified to support children and young people for whom ‘speaking out’ may be less easy or accessible? |  |
| 1. Where children and young people are brought into contact with other decision makers (e.g., policy makers, researchers or service managers), how will different stakeholders’ views and status be ‘managed’? What preparation for adults is needed? How could children/young people lead this engagement? |  |
| **Other considerations** | |
| **Actions** | |
| **Emancipation**  ‘Real power within the political system that results in an impact on abused children and young people’s lives is a condition of involvement’ | |
| 1. Is there a clear route in the project through which children and young people’s views can be shared and heard by people with power and influence to change children and young people’s lives? | **YES/ NO** |
| 1. How can the project support policy makers and strategic decision makers to enable children and young people’s ideas and views to inform future practice and policy? |  |
| 1. What feedback mechanisms are in place to inform children and young people about any future impact after their direct contact with the project has ended? |  |
| 1. How can researchers/young participants encourage partners/decision-makers to support ongoing participation in service or policy-development and implementation in this area? |  |
| **Other considerations** | |
| **Actions** | |