

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Meeting date: 24th May 2022
Title: Children and Young People’s Participation Scrutiny Advisory Board Briefing
From: Fiona Musgrave: AD Integration and Partnerships

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to update the Board regarding the progress of the Cumbria Childrens Participation Framework, as well as providing an overview of the work undertaken during the Covid pandemic and key developmental activity.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Participation is the active involvement of children and young people in experiences, opportunities and decisions that affect their lives and their ability to fulfil their potential. A distinction has been made between children and young people’s involvement in personal decisions, affecting them as individuals, and public decisions affecting children and young people as a group (Kirby et al, 2003; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009).

2.2 Regarding personal decisions, and in the context of the delivery of children’s services, a child or young person’s views should be heard whenever decisions are being taken that directly affect their lives.

2.3 The involvement of children and young people in public decisions involves hearing their voice or the voice of a representative group of children or young people collectively. This would generally occur, for example, in service planning, design, development, delivery and evaluation.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Consultation forums were held with a wider cohort of professionals, including children’s rights officers, participation officers, targeted youth support managers, youth offending service practitioners, policy officers. Consultation included a SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis along with Signs of Safety mapping and this ensured that the voice of managers and practitioners directly influenced the framework document.

3.2 The participation framework was developed with Senior Leaders from within the Council that are involved in participation in some way. Included in the conversations were:

- Fiona Musgrave, AD Integration and Partnerships
- Lynn Berryman, AD Children and Families Services
- Lesley Sanczuk, Senior Manager, Early Help

- Amy Holliman, Senior Manager, Integration and Partnerships
 - Tracey Thompson, Children and Families Principal Social Worker
- 3.3 Literature was reviewed and research was undertaken as part of the development of the framework. The research identified that there is a need to develop the structures necessary to enable children and young people to actively participate.
- 3.4 Feedback from the consultation strongly suggests that participation should sit under one Assistant Director with a 'strategic lead' clearly identified.
- 3.5 Young people were involved in developing the framework and designed a set of standards which aim to inform adults what children and young people's participation should involve, and they are fundamental to the participation framework. The golden rules to participation are embedded within the strategy. **(Appendix 1 Participation Framework)**

4. PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The framework contains a set of principles that have been developed to inform the way we deliver participation in the Council; the principles state what children and young people and others can expect. There is also a pledge to ensure that these principles underpin all that we do.
- We will ensure that all children and young people, especially those that are most vulnerable, are able to participate in decision making, if they choose to do so.
 - We will listen to children and young people and ensure that their views inform our work.
 - We will enable children and young people through supporting them to acquire the necessary skills to develop and deliver their own participation activities.
 - We will ensure that children and young people receive feedback about any decision making that they have been involved with.
 - We will provide accessible, supportive, meaningful opportunities so that all children and young people can make informed decisions about their lives.
 - We will involve children and young people at the earliest opportunity engaging them in the development and design stages of participation activity.
 - We will ensure a sufficient range of resources and incentives are made available to support the participation of children and young people.
 - We will ensure the children and young people's workforce acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to involve children and young people in decision making appropriately.
 - We will safeguard all children and young people through creating safe and friendly environments for participation activity.
 - We will recognise that children and young people's participation is voluntary, and we will respect that they have other commitments.

4.2 The framework has identified five key priorities, and for each priority some specific actions to deliver them. The priorities are,

- Embed a culture of participation
- Enable children and young people to participate
- A Coherent structure for the voice of children and young people to be heard, with clear pathways of influence.
- Governance
- A visible participation 'offer'

5. STRATEGIC AND MANAGERIAL OVERSIGHT

5.1 Embedding a culture of participation is a key priority in the framework outlining how we will create opportunities for sharing good practice around participation activity through sharing and learning what works.

5.2 Following the sign off of the participation framework on 2nd March 2021, it was agreed that the participation officers will move from the Assistant Director for Children and Families to the Assistant Director Integration and Partnerships to sit alongside the Children's Rights Officers, resulting in a wider Rights and Participation Service.

5.3 The Children's Rights Officers work with all children and young people however the specific focus is with:

- Children looked after by Cumbria County Council, including those in secure accommodation, foster care placements and in residential education settings. This comprises of children and young people aged 0-19 or up to 25 years if still in education, placed both in and out of county
- Young people leaving care
- Children in need
- Children subject to a child protection plan

The aim of the Children's Rights Service is:

- To promote and protect children and young people's rights within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international human rights agreements
- To empower children and young people to make sure that their rights are respected, and their views and wishes are always heard.
- To represent the views, wishes and needs of children and young people to decision-makers
- To speak up for children and young people

5.4 There are several participation structures and mechanisms which ensure children and young people across the county have the opportunity to participate, the Childrens Rights Officers support the ones that are listed below:

- Locality and Countywide Children in Care Councils (CiCC)

- Locality and Countywide Care Leaver Councils
- All of us, SEND district forums
- RESPECT assessment
- CLA Survey
- Individual one to one consultation
- Quality Audit
- Corporate Parent Board

5.5 The Participation Officers work with all young people, the priority age range prior to the move across was 11 to 19 years old, however, the team have now started to work with primary school age children. The objectives are:

- To enable young people to have and use their voice, to campaign and represent their peers
- To enable young people to actively participate in the design, delivery, development and improvement of services
- To empower young people to inform and influence decision-making
- To ensure vulnerable young people are listened to and have choices
- To ensure young people are signposted, supported and encouraged to access positive opportunities

5.6 There are a number of participation structures and mechanisms which ensure children and young people across the county have the opportunity to participate, the Participation Officers support the ones below:

- Youth Councils
- Representation in schools
- Issue based projects
- Consultation and campaigns
- British Youth Council
- Youthforia (NW Youth Council)
- UK Youth Parliament
- Make Your Mark
- All of us, SEND forums

6. ACTIVITY AND IMPACT

6.1 The voice of children and young people has influenced and impacts on how services are delivered. The Childrens Rights Service support care leavers to regularly represent Cumbria at regional and national events. Members of the West CiCC represented Cumbria at the regional NW Game changer CiCC Conference. Other activities include:

- CiCC Workshops; Drumming, Drawing, Games
- Illustrated story (Bens Story)
- Fire Fighter Day
- CPB takeover
- Practice week sessions
- Hijack Valentine's Day feedback session

- Refreshing “Cumbria’s Promise” into “Our Promise” by working with an illustrator to create a more engaging and visual promise. Using the illustrations to create a short film which will be incorporated into an E – Learning package.
- 6.2 One young person that was involved in the CiCC in the west said “It’s given me the potential to help young children, to see how the care system affects them and make a change to this. It’s made such a difference to my life, with my confidence, self- esteem etc. and helped me with my future plans on continuing to help people.”
- 6.3 The Participation Officers support young people to have their voice heard and are involved in a wide programme of activities and projects. Project examples include:
- Regular chatty head sessions – mental/emotional health support during COVID 19
 - Regular youth council meetings based on the young people agendas which includes inviting visitors based on the issues they are working on.
 - West also has developed a network of youth ambassadors in some local schools has engaged with Mayfield and the SEND agenda
 - Attending Pride events across Cumbria, two youth councillors now on Furness Pride steering group.
 - Local sessions: Online/ face to face
 - YC meetings held monthly online in own area
 - County wide YC meetings
 - Engagement in local
 - Community projects and events
 - Development of a Young Inspectors programme (**Appendix 2**)

Activity	Why	Impact
Children in Care Council Local sessions: Online/ face to face including introductory meetings with children’s homes	Empowering children and young people to have a voice on decisions that affect them.	Hijack Valentine’s Day project, young people wrote letters and cards to adults and elected members, they asked for more quality time with Social workers. They met with Lynn Berryman who agreed that SW’s would spend half a day with young people doing something fun.
CLIC Activity (care leavers)	Empowering care leavers to have a voice	Supporting care leavers to navigate independence by offering the opportunity for them to socialise, try something new, signpost to other agencies/activities and allow them a voice to talk about the services they receive. Young people have influenced and are working on a better offer for care leavers on sport and physical activity and a better health offer.

Activity	Why	Impact
		<p>Questions to be raised about access to health services, that will be added to in May at the Health offer Review. Young people talk about their what they thought of health services and the experiences that they have had.</p>
Youth Council	<p>To work on local issues and encourage engagement from local YP to have their voices heard.</p>	<p>Working with the Child Centred Policing Team to deliver a name and logo for their latest mentoring initiative. YC members gave the name Reroute and a logo for the initiative. Incentivised with vouchers</p> <p>Youth councillors attending the LGBTQ+ group were involved celebrating diversity and one opened the video by performing a song.</p> <p>Representing youth voice and promoting opportunities for young people to be involved in the regeneration plans for Maryport.</p>
County wide Youth Council	<p>To work on local issues and encourage engagement from local YP to have their voices heard on a county level.</p>	<p>Consulting with Active Cumbria to find out what prevents YP from taking part in sports and activities both in and out of school. Challenging behaviours and barriers to access and influencing Active Cumbria's perceptions of how YP feel about participation in activities and sport.</p>
MYP programme	<p>Deputy MYP for Furness and South Lakes identified within their own manifesto the need for safeguarding kits. This was endorsed through a survey designed and carried out by Deputy MYP</p> <p>MYP for West supporting Cumbria Future Leaders</p>	<p>Successfully secured funding for kits to be distributed in KK school in Kendal. The kits include : a stress ball, torch key ring, a spikey and a fidget toy. 250 kits created and issued. An evaluation survey to be circulated by Deputy MYP to feedback to SLCYPWG</p> <p>MYP for West represents Youth Councils on the Cumbria Future Leaders steering group, and he organised an event for young people to discuss LGR, the event was hosted by two young people and Senior members of CCC made up the panel. Youth voice will be fed back through panel members to CCC LGR boards.</p>

Activity	Why	Impact
Young Inspectors Project	This project enables young people to be trained in the necessary skills to carry out the role of a Young Inspector who will undertake audits and measure the quality and impact of services for young people.	15 Young people attended a weekend residential to be introduced to the idea of the YI role. From the residential a core group of 5 young people were identified as candidates to move forward as YI's

(Appendix 3 Monitoring report)

- 6.4 Understanding what participation means in practice is key for staff at all levels and in all positions. The framework is on the CCC website and has gone out to all staff in the people directorate through the team brief. Development of the website is ongoing and will provide opportunities for sharing good practice around participation.
- 6.5 It is vitally important that children and young people know how their voices have been listened to and what actions have been taken because of their involvement. Strategic lead for participation reports into Childrens DMT, Officers have developed better links with local area committees and local children's partnerships, children and young people regularly meet with Senior Leadership including children looked after meetings with the DCS.
- 6.6 The Participation Framework has been highlighted as good practice regionally and has been shared with NW Local Authorities through the regional youth work unit.

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Plans going forward include the reshaping of the Youth Council Structure to align with the new local authorities. Conversations have taken place regarding the allocation of MYP's with the British Youth Council. The intention is to develop two Youth Councils working with schools and the voluntary sector, the young people will be elected to sit on the Youth Councils, and they then will elect an MYP.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report provides the board with an update on the progress of the Cumbria Participation Framework, as well as providing an overview of the work undertaken. The Participation Officers have settled into the team and over the last 11 months have increased activity and involvement of young people.
- 8.2 Elected members are pivotal in the role of Champions of children and young people's participation by ensuring that their voices are heard throughout the Council and their local communities.

- 8.3 As we progress through LGR it is important that Elected Members promote Participation Framework and ensure that it is central to the discussions around services in the new authorities.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Scrutiny note the progress being undertaken regarding the implementation of the framework as well as noting the work still to do.
- 9.2 Elected Members promote the Participation Framework and ensure that it is central to the discussions around services in the new authorities.
- 9.3 Elected Members undertake the E-Learning Our Promise training and the face-to-face training developed by the Children in Care Council.
- 9.4 Elected members to note that being involved in their local communities is important to young people, and support opportunities through local area committees for their voice to be heard and engage them in local projects.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1



Cumbria
Participation Framework

Appendix 2



Young Inspectors
Booklet.pdf

Appendix 3



Monitoring Report
CRO's.docx



PO report.docx