

Opportunities for Members to be involved in participation and engagement with children and young people in Sunderland

1. Looked After Children Pledges

The Pledge is a key element of the Government's recommendations under Care Matters: Time for Change. It represents a commitment by the local authority to looked after children and young people, and signals the intention of the Council to carry out its responsibilities to children in care effectively and in a way which will have real impact upon outcomes.

Young people in the change council identified the 6 main priorities for them in the pledge. Each pledge identified is owned by a young person in care, they hold the responsibility as critical friend. The young person has been buddied up with a corporate board member and councillor who will act as the strategic drivers.

| Pledge | Young Person | CPB Member | CPB -Councillor |
|---|--------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1. If possible I want to live with my own family or relatives | Two young people | Catherine Witt Chief Social Worker | Cllr Louise Farthing |
| 2. If you need to come into care we will make sure that you are safe and properly cared for | Three young people | Martin Birch Interim Head of LAC | Cllr Paul Stewart |
| 3. I feel I am being listened to | One young person | Kerry Mehta Interim Head of Safeguarding | Cllr Rebecca Atkinson |
| 4. I want to get a good education and enjoy my free time | Three young people | Dawn Shearsmith Virtual Head | Cllr Patricia Smith |

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|--|------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 5. I want to keep fit & Healthy | Two young people | Anne Brock Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse | Cllr Daryl Dixon |
| 6. I don't want to leave care Until I feel Ready | Two young people | Sheila Lough Strategic Service Manager | Cllr Christine Marshall |

2. Takeover Challenge 2016

Takeover is a fun, hugely successful and exciting engagement project which sees organisations across England opening their doors to children and young people to take over adult roles.

It puts children and young people in decision-making positions and encourages organisations and businesses to hear their views. Children gain an insight into the adult world and organisations benefit from a fresh perspective about their work.

It takes place on Friday 18th November, however the challenge can take place at any time leading up to that date and beyond. Members can get involved by giving young people the opportunity to shadow them, work with them on a current issue or share a challenge with members and other senior officials.

4. Sunderland MYP's and DMYPs

The UK Youth Parliament (UK YP) was formally established in January 2001, with the aim of giving the young people of the UK, between the ages of 11 and 18 (inclusive) a voice, which will be heard and listened to by local and national government, providers of services for young people and other agencies who have an interest in the views and needs of young people. The UKYP has a rolling programme. It meets nationally on an annual basis, and gives the young people of the UK a chance to express their views and concerns at the highest levels.

The UKYP provides a formal structure for young people from every local authority in the UK to feed their local issues into the national arena, whilst providing evidence of local government formally engaging young people in the democratic process.

Every two years Sunderland hosts the UK Youth Parliament election to appoint youth representatives to highlight the issues that are most important to young people in the City at a national level.

The two young people with the most votes will become the MYPs for Sunderland for the period June 2016 to May 2018. The two young people who

finish third and fourth in the election will take up the position of Deputy MYPs. Deputy MYPs will work to support the MYPs on a local level.

Member of UK Youth Parliament (MYP) for Sunderland will be expected to:

- Attend local, regional and national meetings and events.
- Debate key issues concerning young people.
- Represent the views of young people in Sunderland
- Have regular contact with youth groups and schools councils.
- Actively participate in Sunderland Youth Parliament.
- Present updates to the City of Sunderland Council.

MYP and DMYPs meet weekly as part of Sunderland Youth Parliament. Members are welcome to attend meetings as and when and also the young people are more than happy to engage more actively with local councillors.

5. State of the City Debate

Members are invited annually to attend the young people's State of the City Debate which takes place in November. This event is an opportunity for members to observe young people from across Sunderland debating on a number of topics that have been voted by young people in Sunderland as part of the Make your Mark consultation. Last year we had over 6,000 young people vote.

6. Participation and Engagement Groups

There are five dedicated participation and engagement groups (please refer to full report) and there is a close relationship with other groups such as young carers that are based at the carers centre and the EYE group which is a group of young people who have had access to mental health services. The engagement groups also have links with youth forums based out in the youth projects. Members can request to attend any of the above groups to review what they are working on or to ask for advice and guidance on an issue.

7. MP Meetings

Sunderland Youth Parliament met quarterly with Sunderland MP's to have an informal discussion about the work they are currently doing and have the opportunity to ask questions and seek their views and any issues or areas of concern. We are looking to expand these meetings to the other participation and engagement groups over the coming months.