

## **CHILDREN EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT – PROGRESS REPORT**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To inform members of the progress being made with regard to the participation and engagement of children and young people in Sunderland and to outline areas of development and emerging issues.
- 1.2 To consider the opportunities available for members to be involved in participation and engagement of children and young people.

##### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The vision of the participation and engagement framework is that all children, young people and their families have the opportunity to actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives, in the delivery of the services they receive, and in the development of the policies that impact on them.
- 2.2 In terms of Participation and Engagement Team Staffing, there are currently: P& E Lead Post – 32 Hours, Senior Youth Worker – 22 Hours, Youth Worker 5 Hours for City Equals (Youth Services), Viewpoint Officer – 18 Hours. A request has been made for a full time social care engagement officer.
- 2.3 Participation and Engagement Framework covers the participation and engagement of all children and young people aged 0- 25 and their families. The purpose of the framework is driven by a series of articles within the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the government in 1991). Article 12 states that every child has the right to express their views and to have these views given due weight in all matters affecting them.
- 2.4 There are currently five existing participation and engagement groups; Sunderland Young Inspectors, Sunderland Youth Parliament, Change Council, City Equals and Children's Trust Advisory Network. Although they are not directly supported by Sunderland City Council, involvement of young carers and the EYE group (young people who have experienced mental health) is also standard practice. Sunderland City Council is in the process of currently supporting the development

of a forum/support group for LGBT+ young people.

- 2.5 The amount of dedicated resource to participation and engagement is relatively small, however work is supported by input from workers from across the directorate and beyond. A system of Engagement Champions is in place, to support the embedding of participation and engagement, however this is an add-on to their current role. (see appendix 1 for group).

### 3. Participation and Engagement Groups

Group Name	Members (June 2016)	Meetings	Main Topic of Work	Outcomes (Jan-May 16)
Sunderland Youth Parliament	22 Age 11-19	Every wed 4.30-6.30	Campaign: Mental Health  Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of an mental health charter mark for schools-supported by the Director of Education</li> <li>• Trained in mental health wellbeing to support other young people within school settings</li> <li>• Trained in a life worth living</li> <li>• MYP Elections</li> <li>• Attendance at BYC regional events</li> <li>• Completed Youth Leadership Programme (3 YP)</li> </ul>
Change Council	11 Age -11-21 (currently have young people 13-18)	Core Group – Monthly Wed 4.45-6.45  Sub-groups – as and when  CPB - quarterly	Campaign: Challenging the stigma of children in care  Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Conference development – 2YP</li> <li>• 3 Tall Ships Ambassadors</li> <li>• Accommodation Interactive presentation for care leavers</li> <li>• Re-branding of change council</li> <li>• Challenging stigma telling their story on SUN-FM</li> <li>• Involved in foster carer training</li> <li>• Working with pledge buddies</li> <li>• Working with CREO re challenging the stigma.</li> <li>• 1 YA winner.</li> </ul>
CTAN	14 Age 11-19 (up to 25 with LDD)	Monthly – Tuesday 4.30-6.30	Requested service  Currently being reviewed as part of CSP*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Sunderland People's First re bullying</li> <li>• Working with Gary Hetherington re CSE</li> <li>• SSCB Development</li> <li>• Cultural Partnership</li> </ul>

			Action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the development of the CSP</li> </ul>
Sunderland Young Inspectors	17 (includes 6 newly trained YI)  Age 13-19 (up to 25 with LDD)	Bi-weekly  Tues/Thurs for report meetings  Inspections as and when needed	To carry out mystery shops and inspections as and when required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review inspections of the 3 connexions buildings</li> <li>• Mystery shops of everyone active establishments</li> <li>• Feedback to the directors of Everyone active</li> <li>• Full Inspections of all commissioned youth projects as part of their contract management</li> <li>• GP You're welcome inspections</li> </ul>
City Equals	3  Age 14-25	Every Wed 4.30-6.30	Championing for children and young people with a learning difficulty or disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a drama to support YP with regards to a EHC plan</li> <li>• Consulted on the transport reform and supporting independent travel</li> <li>• Recruitment drive</li> <li>• 1 Tall Ship Ambassador</li> <li>• 1 YP trained as a Youth Leader</li> <li>• Involved in the interviewing of the CE of THFC.</li> </ul>
LGBT+ Forum/ Support Group- NEW*	7 young people are supporting the development	TBC	To give support to young people who identify as LGBT in the city.	Currently visiting similar projects in other authorities to see how they do it?  Supported by the youth service and anti-bullying co-ordinator.

## 4. Viewpoint

4.1 **Viewpoint** has been used in Sunderland for a number of years and has always sat with the IRO team. The viewpoint officer moved to the participation and engagement team in March 2016.

Viewpoint is a computer assisted interviewing tool. Some Looked After children complete their questionnaires independently on-line but the majority are visited and supported 1:1 by the viewpoint officer.

After a Viewpoint visit the reports generated are sent by post to the child and by email to the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and Social Worker (SW). Additional comments and observations are included in the emails. Anything of concern is brought immediately to the attention of the IRO and SW. The child's views and the information gathered are then considered at the Looked after Review.

- 4.2 In 2014-2015 90 individual children gave their view. Some children gave their views twice in the period.
- 51 were fostered within the local authority area.
  - 27 were fostered outside the local authority area
  - 9 were in kinship care
  - 3 were in residential care outside the local authority
- 4.3 Viewpoint will also be used with foster carers as part of their annual review. Foster Carers normally fill in a paper questionnaire in preparation for their Annual Reviews. This has been carefully reviewed and brought up to date and made available on line. The advantage of completing the questionnaire on line is that we can produce very detailed statistical reports that will inform the Carer's review and the Fostering Service as a whole. Foster Carer's will receive their printed report. At the same time foster carers are doing their annual review young people will also be asked to complete a viewpoint with regards to placement. Barring unforeseen delays the questionnaire will be available on-line in July.
- 4.4 The viewpoint officer is also working alongside the commissioning team to ensure we hear the voice of young people who are placed out of area with regards to their placement.

## **5. MOMO (Mind of My Own)**

- 5.1 Sunderland launched **MOMO** in November 2015. We have purchased the use of the app for 3 years.

MOMO enables young people to create a structured statement of their views in relation to events and situations they encounter while in care or receiving support from social care services. This could include Looked After Children (LAC) reviews, Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, In Need Reviews, Child Protection Conferences, Family Group Conferences, Pathway Planning, Requesting a change to care, raising a problem or complaint or making a disclosure.

- 5.2 In Sunderland we currently have over 35 people trained in MOMO, including IRO's Social Workers, Residential Staff, Virtual School and Foster Carers. MOMO is a simple tool to use and was reviewed by young people from change council before we commissioned the service.
- 5.3 Sunderland had a great start to the use of MOMO, above what was initially expected. However since February MOMO statements appear to have fallen and this was down to the inadequate equipment staff had. This issue is currently being resolved. To remind staff about the use of MOMO an email will be sent to all staff and a reminder email will be sent to all MOMO champions within teams.

- 5.4 To ensure that all young people know about MOMO a letter will be sent along with some post cards and fact sheets to children and young people eligible to use MOMO.
- 5.5 From 20/11/15- 30/03/16 in Sunderland:
- 46 statements have been created and sent;
    - 5 complaints
    - 21 preparing for meetings, typically child in care review
    - 7 change statements
    - 2 pathway plan statements
    - 11 conference statements
- 5.6 In phase 1 of the implementation of MOMO, young people could only choose to send their statement to their social worker or IRO, as we move into the next phase (July 2016) we will extend their audience to include the complaints manager and the virtual school.

## **6. Advocacy**

- 6.1 Independent Advocacy for looked after young people, care leavers and other users of Children's Social Care Services during 2014-2016 has been provided under a contract with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS).
- 6.2 The advocacy contract commences from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014 for a period of 2 years. An extension has been agreed for a further 12 months.
- 6.3 NYAS provides the service 52 weeks of the year, with an accessible website including contact through a Freephone telephone and call back service Mon-Fri 8am-8pm Sat 10am-4pm, an email service and Freepost (also a message service outside these hours). Children and young people can self-refer and there is a professional referral form than can be completed through the website. There is also a confidential online chat service from 9am-5pm for children and young people.
- 6.4 Allocation of advocates continues to be well within the 3 working days of referral as required in the service specification and usually within 24/48 hours (please see attached information for Jan-March 2016). The Commissioning Officer has worked with internal services and the provider to ensure that access to Advocacy is promoted.
- 6.5 The Advocacy Monitoring Group for this contract has been inconsistent due to internal staff changes. The Participation and Engagement Lead from Feb 2016 will act as the operational lead and will attend regular meetings in relation to the commissioned service.
- 6.6 From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016, 23 individual young people have accessed the Independent Advocacy service with 26 referrals in total including 3 young people have used the support more than once.

Issue	Number	Issue	Number
Placement	5	School	0
About Local Authority or social worker	4	Complaint	5
		LAC review	1
Family contact	7	CIN meeting	2
Child Protection meeting	1	SEN issue	0

## 7. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

- 7.1 Children and young people have been involved in the **recruitment and selection of staff** from social workers to senior members of staff, involving children and young people in training of foster carers and staff training.
- 7.2 Services can involve children and young people in recruitment and selection at any stage. The recruitment and selection process consists of several stages where children and young people could have the opportunity to become involved.

## 8. Celebration Events

- 8.1 The participation and engagement lead is responsible for the co-ordination of the annual **Young Achievers Awards** since Jan 2014. The Awards ceremony has been in existence for 22 years.
- 8.2 Young Achievers is financially supported by a range of sponsors; this has drastically reduced over the past years and has left a shortfall in 2015 and 2016. After discussion with the Executive Director of Enterprise Development we have been in contact with Sunderland Live to look at whether they can help with regards to the sponsoring of the event.
- 8.3 Sunderland had a history of different celebration events, one of the events that no longer takes place is the shout about it awards which was specifically for children and young people in care or leaving care. Work is currently being undertaken around re-developing this event with the Head of LAC and Change Council.

## 9. National Participation and Engagement

- 9.1 There exists a positive and robust relationship with the **Office of Children's Commissioner**, which is a national organisation which promotes the rights of England's children and young people.
- 9.2 Sunderland has now been involved in **Takeover Day** since 2010. In 2014 year we had over 230 young people involved in activities in the city. Sunderland was recognised as a 'Super Ambassadors' in 2014. However due to capacity in 2015 we only had 50 young people take part across the board.

- 9.3 Two of Sunderland's looked after children have been down to the office to review the website that will promote the UNCRC. This is now live and for people to view.  
<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/childrens-rights-and-uncrc>
- 9.4 We are a member of the **British Youth Council (BYC)**. BYC are responsible for the annual sitting which takes place each summer for our elected Members of Youth Parliament, arranges the annual debate in the House of Commons and organise 3 regional conventions per year.
- 9.5 As part of our BYC membership this year we managed to secure another 6 spaces to train our young people as youth leaders. The Youth Voice Leadership Development Programme is a programme of seven tailored training courses that support young people to be successful youth voice leaders in their community. We now have 12 youth leaders across the groups.

## **10.0 Commissioning Arrangements**

- 10.1 Service User engagement is a '**commissioning standard**' and is a requirement for all services. Guidance notes are available to support the involvement of children, young people and their parent/carers in this process. A commissioning officer has also been identified as a Participation and Engagement Champion.
- 10.2 Children and young people have been involved in reviewing contracts such as advocacy and the youth services. Young people were also instrumental to the commissioning of Healthwatch.

Action: In the coming month's children and young people will be more involved in the recruitment and selection of foster carers, the quality assuring of looked after children's placements, reviewing the independent visitor's contract and involved in the review of services for children and young people with disabilities.

## **11.0 Participation and Engagement Champions**

- 11.1 The People's Directorate has nominated **participation and engagement champions (appendix 1)** for children and young people who support and inform their own team areas to ensure young people's voices are heard and embedded within their services.
- 11.2 Participation and engagement has been monitored and reviewed by adopting the Hear by Right self-assessment tool in the past. The tool is not as relevant to participation and engagement in Sunderland as we have hoped so a task and finish group has been created from P & E champions and will meet in early March.
- 11.3 Sunderland has created a '**What's Changed**' Tool in April 2015 to monitor, review and evaluate participation and engagement work. We

are committed to measuring what's changed as a result of participation and engagement. This enables the city council to track the impact of participation and engagement work and to what extent it has had over influencing decision making. Champions will be responsible for updating this for their areas.

## **12. Other activities**

12.1 *Participation and Engagement Lead* engages and offers support within the people's directorate and externally to partners including;

- MALAP and Health MALAP
- Children's Strategic Partnership
- Shadow Improvement Board
- CAMHS Partnership
- SSCB participation sub group
- Inter-agency Disabled Partnership Group
- The Carers Centre – voice of young carers.
- Engagement with the vibrancy partnership to ensure children and young people are involved in the future of Sunderland.
- CYP-IAPT – Children and Young People – Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Programme – asked to support the meaningful involvement of children and young people in it development
- Anti-Bullying Charter Mark – support and attend Anti-bullying conferences around the voice of the child
- Primary and Secondary School Councils – attend school council or voice meetings to ensure meaningful participation and offer advice and guidance
- City of Culture bid – focussing on Tall Ship Ambassadors and recruitment

### *Workforce Development*

12.2 The partnership and engagement lead works in partnership with the **Workforce Development Team** to strengthen and engage more young people in the recruitment of social workers in Universities and training programme. Over the next 12 months we want to develop an e-learning tool for all staff around participation and engagement and the voice of the child.

## **13.0 Budget**

13.1 Participation and Engagement hold a budget of approx. £8,500 for all participation and engagement activities **excluding** Change Council. Social Care has a statutory budget for Change Council this sits with Sheila Lough.

## **14 Recommendation**



- (i) The Committee is asked to consider the progress being made in terms of participation and engagement of children and young people in Sunderland;
- (ii) To consider the opportunities available for members to be involved in participation and engagement of children and young people.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Participation and Engagement Champion Group**

#### **Remit of the group**

- To act as the lead for participation and engagement within their service area/team
- To embed participation and engagement into their own service area/team and ensure staff have a clear understanding of the UN convention on the rights of a child.
- Ensuring their team always considers how services can be more effectively developed through engaging service users in design, delivery and evaluation of services.
- Ensure all staff actively engage and consult with children, young people and parent/carers in decision-making process that impact upon them and the services they access.
- To attend training to help support and embed participation and engagement of children, young people and their parent/carers in service development and delivery.
- To contribute to and review existing resources dedicated to the development of participation and engagement and take action to identify existing resources to pool and develop collaborative working as and when needed
- To complete and return an annual 'self-assessments' or 'what's changed tool'
- To act as a MOMO app champion within their service area.
- To receive reports and updates from services and organisations in relation to participation and engagement of children, young people and parent/cares and share with team
- To publicise and promote this work to young people, their families, the wider community and services across Sunderland in team meetings and in other appropriate networks.

#### **Frequency of meetings**

- Quarterly Meetings

- Proposed dates for 2016:

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2016: 9.30-11.30 CR2 Civic Centre**

**9<sup>th</sup> June 2016: 9.30-11.30 CR3 Civic Centre**

**8<sup>th</sup> September 2016: 9.30-11.30 CR3 Civic Centre**

**8<sup>th</sup> December 2016: 9.30-11.30 CR3 Civic Centre**

- Meetings will take place at **Civic Centre, Sunderland**

### **Membership (Jan 2016)**

Membership is broadly based including representatives from the following organisations:-

<b>Service</b>
Disabilities
Connexions
Youth
Safeguarding – permanence team
Social Care Team Leader– change council/ LC
Safeguarding – SSCB
Workforce Development
Anti-Bullying
Safeguarding- YOS
Parenting
CAF and Children’s Centres
Health
Early Years
Parent Partnership
Social Worker – CP
Carers Centre
CYPS
Fostering
Commissioning
Adoption
Communications
Children’s Homes
Youth Voice

### **Representatives need to:**

- Attend quarterly participation and engagement meetings to share good practice
- Identification and recruitment of children. Young people and parent/carers who may want to become more involved in participation and engagement opportunities within their service
- Where possible to appoint a deputy to attend in their absence

**Time Commitment- Annually**

- Meeting four times a year – 8 hrs
- Request for support throughout year – 4 hours
- Information sharing – 2hrs