

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 18 March 2014

Framework for Young People's Engagement and Participation

1.0 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 This report outlines the current situation to enable children and young people's engagement and participation and introduces a draft framework for the future facilitation of the engagement and participation agenda.
- 1.2 In the policy paper Positive for Youth, the Government has outlined a statutory duty for local authorities to take into account young people's views.
- 1.3 Wirral has a strong record of involving children and young people in developing service delivery and in local democratic and community processes. This has resulted in the Council gaining Beacon Status for Positive Youth Engagement in 2006/2007 and OFSTED consistently awarding the Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) outstanding for Positive Contribution.
- 1.4 Through a variety of young people's forums, such as the Children in Care Council and the Annual Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament, Wirral strives to ensure that it listens and remains responsive to the needs of children and young people.
- 1.5 Historically the Executive Youth Board was formed to act as an overarching group bringing together representatives from other youth engagement groups and to act as a young people's shadow cabinet. However, this group has ceased to operate, with any remaining members being involved in a number of other participation activities.
- 1.6 The Positive Contribution outcome group was charged with reporting on youth engagement activities. This group has ceased to operate and CYPD have ensured that the function of the Engagement and Participation Champion' has been recognised as a key responsibility of the locality coordinator with responsibility for youth and play. Accountability will ensure that the voice of children and young people is part of the decision making process and will develop a framework to support this and ensure it routinely happens at every level.
- 1.7 Wirral Charter of Participation for Children and Young People (2006) has underpinned all previous youth engagement and participation activities. This Charter was updated in 2012, but has not yet been ratified.

2.0 Proposals for the Future

- 2.1 A draft Wirral Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework has been developed (see Appendix 1).
- 2.2 The Framework proposes that the following structures be established:
 - **Youth Voice Group** – an overarching young people's group which will replace the Executive Youth Board.

- **Youth Engagement Reference Group** – The group will be a multi-agency forum for those people who have young people's participation in their job description. The group will also be open to those people who wish to take a more active part in this agenda. The group will act as a reference group to co-ordinate children and young people's participation and engagement activities. The group will initially be tasked with revising the Charter of Participation to enable it to influence policy and underpin all future engagement/ participation work.
- **Youth Engagement Strategic Champions** - A virtual team selected from key elected members, chief officers across the private and public sectors and the voluntary, community and faith sector, e.g. Chief Executive Wirral Council, Lead Member for Families and Wellbeing, Chief Officer Merseyside Police.

3.0 Governance

The proposed Youth Voice Group, Participation Reference Group and Youth Engagement Strategic Champions will report to Wirral Children's Trust through the Engagement/ Participation Champion.

4.0 Resources

It is envisaged that these proposals will be able to be developed as continuous improvement from within existing resources.

Once in place it is proposed that a review of current participation and engagement activity and processes will take place to align to the new framework

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 3.1 That members of the Children's Trust Board endorse the draft Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework and approve wider consultation of this Framework as a next step.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Draft Wirral Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework.

Report Authors:

Deborah Gornik
Wirral Council

Lindsay Davidson
Wirral Council

Contact:

Phone: 666 4330
Email: deborahgornik@wirral.gov.uk

Phone: 637 6099
Email: lindsaydavidson@wirral.gov.uk

Wirral Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework

2014



Introduction

In the policy paper Positive for Youth: a new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19, the Government outlines the following statutory duties for local authorities:

The Government has confirmed that local authorities should continue to have a duty to secure sufficient leisure-time educational and recreational leisure-time activities for the improvement of the wellbeing of 13 to 19 year olds, so far as is reasonably practicable. This duty also requires local authorities to ascertain and take into account young people's views and to publicise information about the local offer. (Cabinet Office and Department for Education, 2010).

Wirral has a strong record of involving children and young people in developing service delivery and in local democratic and community processes. Through a variety of forums, such as the Children in Care Council and the Annual Youth Voice Conference, Wirral strives to ensure that it listens and remains responsive to the needs of children and young people.

In order to continue to ensure that young people are able to engage and fully participate in decision making and that services and organisations routinely involve them, a Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework has been developed.

Principles

This Framework provides a strategic approach to drive future engagement and participation activities. The Framework is underpinned by the following principles:

- The recognition that young people have a right to positively contribute as decision makers and that services and organisations have a responsibility to ensure they are given the opportunity
- The aspiration to make a positive difference to the lives and experiences of Wirral's young people through enabling them to be true partners in democratic processes
- To build young people's capacity for involvement in the future and ensure they are recognised (and recognise themselves) as valued members of the wider community
- Young people have a range of enjoyable, accessible and relevant opportunities for their positive engagement in service design and delivery and Wirral's community and democratic processes
- Positively promote young people and their achievements to counteract negative societal stereotypes and misconceptions regarding young people

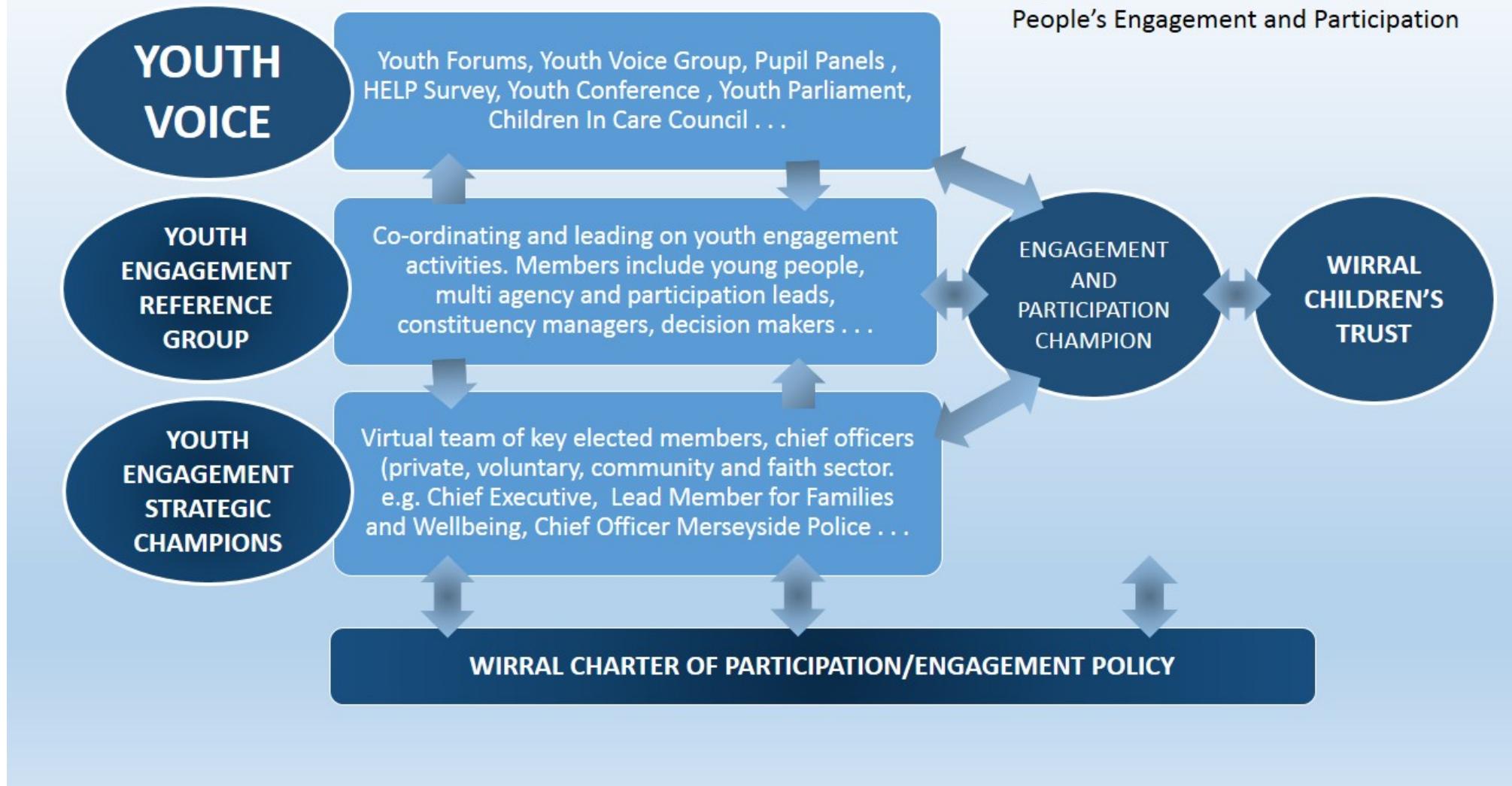
Aims

This Framework will enable Wirral to:

- Develop strong, strategic, multi-agency leadership and vision to put children and young people at the heart of services
- Enable harder to reach young people to have a voice in service provision and their local community and democratic processes
- Take a strategic approach to co-ordinating positive youth engagement through developing consistent standards across agencies
- Collaborate with key partners to ensure that young people are offered a wide range of meaningful opportunities for their positive engagement
- Promote the benefits of positive youth engagement

In order for the principles and aims to be taken forward, the framework introduces a future model for the development of engagement and participation, see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Framework for Young People's Engagement and Participation



The Framework for Young People's Engagement and Participation will be underpinned by the Wirral Charter of Participation and Participation / Engagement Policy and comprises of three main elements, namely:

- **Youth Voice Group** – an overarching young people's group.
- **Youth Engagement Reference Group** – The group will be tasked with revising the Charter of Participation for Children and Young People so it underpins all engagement/participation work and influences relevant policy. Members of the group will be recruited from across wider service areas to support the work. A person specification/role will be developed and members will be trained in youth voice work. It is envisaged that they will be supported through time out from their role (approximately 2 days across a year or volunteer) and be a representative for their respective organisation and a champion of young people.
- **Youth Engagement Strategic Champions** - A virtual team of key elected members, chief officers across the private and public sectors and the voluntary, community and faith sector, e.g. Chief Executive Wirral Council, Lead Member for Families and Wellbeing, Chief Officer Merseyside Police.

The Framework will support a commitment to young people's engagement and participation across Wirral organisations. It will make the voice of the child everybody's responsibility and ensure young people are supported to become responsible and resilient adults.

Each of these three elements is discussed in greater detail in the following pages.



Youth Voice Group

Aims:

- Act as an overarching mechanism for young people's engagement/participation.
- To bring together interested young people from other participation groups (such as Children in Care Council or District Youth forums).

Who will be involved:

- Previous members of the Executive Youth Board and Youth Opportunity Fund Grant Panel
- Children in Care Council
- Representatives from District Youth Forums

Any young person who wishes to be involved, recruited through:

- Annual Youth Voice Conference
- Annual Youth Parliament
- Young Reporters
- Youth Theatre Peer Educators
- Youth Hub 'members' groups

In addition, there are a number of other groups operating within schools (e.g. pupil panels) and the community, voluntary and faith sectors who may be interested in participating.

What the Youth Voice Group will offer to young people

1. Chance to develop skills in:
 - Debating
 - Citizenship
 - Political education
 - Peer Education Training
 - Conference planning
2. Opportunity to be involved in major consultations to shape new and existing services, e.g.:
 - Wirral Youth Zone
 - Children and Young People's Plan
3. Accreditation;
 - Awards and certificates in relevant work, i.e. peer education etc
4. Other opportunities, for example to:
 - Take part in CYPD interview panels
 - Become involved with inspections of Youth Support provision
 - Elected Member Training

Recruitment

Recruitment for the new group commenced in July 2013 with a 'Youth Voice Tour' of all Youth Service units. The tour was facilitated by Peer Educators from the Youth Support Creative Development Team and supported by young people from each locality. Recruitment continued at the Youth Voice Conference in October. The initial meetings of the new group will take place in February 2014.

Meetings

The frequency of the meeting will need to be determined by the group themselves. However it is envisaged that, in the first instance, they will meet monthly at a central location.

Youth Engagement Reference Group

Aims

- The group will be a multi-agency forum for those people who have young people's participation in their job description.
- The group will be open to those people who wish to take a more active part in the participation agenda.
- The group will act as a reference group to co-ordinate children and young people's participation and engagement activities.

Objectives

The multi-agency group will:

- Co-ordinate children and young people's participation and engagement activities.
- Provide a formal structure for the three CYPD Strategy Group leads to engage with young people representatives and the overarching Youth Voice Group.
- Disseminate information and good practice.
- Act as a single focal point for consultation requests etc..
- Contribute to the planning of major consultations and events, i.e. Youth Voice Conference, Youth Parliament, Children and Young People's Plan.
- Identify future funding streams to develop participation and engagement activities.

Governance

The group will report to Children's Trust Board via the Children's Executive Board, the WSCB. The minutes of the Group's meetings will go to the CYPD Strategy Groups and Youth Voice Group.

Frequency of meetings

The group will meet three times per year. These meetings will be established to support annual events/consultation, i.e. Children and Young People's Plan consultations, Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament. Therefore, initially the meetings will take place in February, June and October. The meetings will be scheduled during half term holidays to enable attendance by the young people's representatives.

Membership

Members of the group will be recruited from across wider service areas to support the work. A person specification/role will be developed and members will be trained in youth voice work. It is envisaged that they will be supported through time out from their role (approximately 2 days across a year or volunteer) and be a representative for their respective organisation and a champion of young people. Membership of the group will therefore include representatives from the following:

- Youth Voice Group, Children in Care Council and other relevant groups
- Schools
- Link Forum
- Merseyside Police
- Merseyside Fire Service
- Representatives from key Council services, including Constituency Managers

The following CYPD staff would also be members:

- Participation Champion; Inclusion Manager; CYPD Strategy Group leads; Team Manager – Youth Support (Creative Development, Inclusion & Accreditation)

Subgroups

No formal subgroups will be established. However, on occasion members may be required to attend a time limited task and finish group.

Initial Responsibilities

- Finalise the re-draft of the 2006 Charter of Participation
- Revise the Participation Policy
- Consider mechanisms for engaging younger children, families and communities
- Develop an Engagement/Participation Action Plan

DRAFT

Youth Engagement Strategic Champions

To ensure the Borough's leaders fully support and champion positive youth engagement to enable young people to have a valued role in Wirral, a forum of Youth Engagement Strategic Champions will be created.

This virtual team will be nominated and include; elected members, chief officers from across the private and public sectors and the voluntary, community and faith sector. It is envisaged that this will include, for example, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, representative Chief Executives from across the public, private and voluntary sector – such as the Chief Executive Wirral Council and the Police Chief Constable.

The Youth Engagement Strategic Champions will:

- Ensure strong strategic multi-agency leadership and vision to put children and young people at the heart of service design and delivery
- Enable a strategic approach to co-ordinate youth engagement across their respective organisations in relation to listening to and involving young people in decision making about local services.
- Offer challenge and scrutiny in respect of the design and delivery of strategies and policies which may affect young people.
- Ensure clear leadership with regard to addressing the needs of and advocating on behalf of young people
- Enable young people to have a voice at relevant and appropriate forums within their host organisations.
- Contribute to the recruitment of key positions in the representative organisations.