

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 15 May 2017

Update Young People's Engagement and Participation

1.0 Background

1.1 Wirral has a strong record of involving children and young people in developing service delivery and in local democratic and community processes.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 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 which comprises of three main elements, namely:

- **Youth Engagement Strategic Champions** - A virtual team of key elected members and chief officers across the private and public sectors and the voluntary, community and faith sector.
- **Youth Engagement Reference Group** – a reference group of officers who are have been trained in engaging young people and who can be brought together quickly to respond to need, co-ordinate children and young people's participation and engagement activities.
- **Youth Voice Group** – an overarching young people's group, with close links to ongoing work with Children Looked After (CLA), including the Children in Care Council.

2.2 Linked to the overarching Framework, there are a number of groups of young people in Wirral who are taking an active role in identifying areas for improvement across the Children in Young People's Department and wider partnership. This paper will focus on 5 of these groups.

3.0 Recent Developments

3.1 Youth Voice Group – 2016 Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament

3.1.1 Members of the Youth Voice Group planned and delivered the 14th annual Youth Voice Conference in October 2016 and Youth Parliament in November 2017. Following consultation with other young people the Youth Voice Group identified the theme for both occasions as mental health.

3.1.2 A number of issues and concerns were raised by young people at both these events. These issues have been presented to the multi-agency Future in Minds Steering Group and subsequently a pro-forma has been devised that will require chief officers from a variety of partner agencies to report back to the young people about developments within those areas.

3.2 Young People's Reference Group

- 3.2.1 This group provides a formal structure for the Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) to engage with children and young people regarding the department's improvement journey following the 2016 Ofsted inspection. The role of the children and Young People's Reference Group is to act as a point of contact for the improvement board to enable children and young people to be consulted throughout the improvement journey and to ensure that their views, wishes and feeling are taken in to consideration.
- 3.2.2 A mix and range of interested young people from other participation groups (such as the Children in Care Council, Youth Voice Group, Care leaver's Council, SEND Youth Voice, and schools are involved in the group.
- 3.2.3 Since November 2016 the group has met 5 times and has identified a number of priority areas and an associated action plan. To date they have been instrumental in developing a video on leadership and resilience for inclusion with the CYPD senior offer training. Currently they are finalising a survey to go out to children and young people in schools etc to ascertain their views about being a safe. In the near future they will meet with members of the Improvement Board, be involved in other creative inputs into CYPD workforce development and train to become young inspectors so they can inspect elements of CYPD post Ofsted improvements.

3.3 SEND Youth Voice Group

- 3.3.1 The SEND Youth Group was developed in June 2016 and aims to enable young people with SEND to ensure that their views and experiences are listened to and help shape the Wirral's Local Offer (www.localofferwirral.org) and in so doing the feedback gathered will be used to directly influence the commissioning of services on Wirral. The group is supported by young people with disabilities who are peer educators with Creative Youth Development.
- 3.3.2 Since their inception the SEND Youth Voice Group ran the Local Offer launch in October 2016, 'Listen to us', where they were instrumental in developing a film which shows how young disabled people feel while living in Wirral.
- 3.3.3 The group have also taken part in a commissioning process with the Commissioning and Contracts Officer at Short Breaks Wirral. As part of this work they experienced a workshop with a company who was applying to run workshops for SEND young people and gave feedback on their perceptions.
- 3.3.4 The Group are now planning 'What Next?' an event to enable Wirral SEND deliverers, practitioners, council officers and local businesses to see what could be next in improving the lives of SEND young people in Wirral.
- 3.3.5 Two SEND Youth Voice Group members also attend the Young People's Reference Group (outlined above). They use their experiences in this group to feed back to the SEND Youth Voice Group about the issues raised at the

meetings. In addition, the group will be delivering part of the 2017 Wirral Youth Voice Conference 2017 and Youth Parliament. The SEND Youth Voice Group also meet regularly with the Youth Voice Group to discuss common themes and work plans.

3.4 Children in Care Council (CICC) / Care Leavers Council (CLC)

- 3.4.1 The Participation and Engagement Service conduct monthly / fortnightly meetings and support young people in developing agendas. The CICC and CLC engage in various projects, consultations and activities and are supported in having a voice when contributing to the development of the CYPD and the improvement of service delivery.
- 3.4.2 Ongoing training for young people includes Recruitment and Selection, Young Inspectors and Team Building. In addition, Children Looked After and Care Leavers are involved in the training of social care staff and support the Fostering Team. They assist with various foster carers' training i.e. drop-ins, Connected Carers and life skills and a CLC member now also sits on the fostering panel. The first conference for foster carers, planned and delivered by Children Looked After and Care Leavers, is scheduled for September 2017.
- 3.4.3 Creating opportunities for working in partnership with internal and external professionals is achieved at CICC/CLC meetings and through other methods such as focus groups, consultations, forums and programmes.
- 3.4.4 The CICC/CLC hold annual conferences and work alongside social care professionals to make sure that young people's voices are heard and views on how to offer the best service to Children Looked After and Care Leavers in Wirral are shared. The most recent conference held in 2016 led to the creation of a "What makes a good social worker visit" leaflet.
- 3.4.5 Children Looked After and Care Leavers are informed about projects that have been identified locally, regionally and nationally and are encouraged to participate. Most recently, one of our Care Leavers was involved in the Princes Trust 'Young Researchers' project.
- 3.4.6 The Care Leavers' Council (set up in 2016 at the request of Care Leavers who wanted to help improve services for care leavers) created a video in which they talk about what they believe are the priorities of the Leaving Care Service. Work on this is ongoing and the video can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/203279772/50b5dabe1e>

4.0 Recommendations:

- 4.1 Wirral Children's Trust Board note the report and members of the Board complete the Future in Minds Steering Group pro-forma to report back

developments regarding mental health linked to issues raised by young people at the 2016 Youth Voice Conference / Youth Parliament.

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