



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

REPORT TITLE:	A CELEBRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILY AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an overview of how Council services are actively engaging with children and young people to ensure their views, experiences and contribution are influencing delivery and helping to improve outcomes. The report also celebrates some of the many successes Wirral's young people have achieved in the previous twelve months.

The report is aligned to priorities of Wirral Council's Plan 2021-2026:

- Working for brighter futures for our children, young people, and their families by breaking the cycle of poor outcomes and raising the aspirations of every child in Wirral.
- Working for safe and pleasant communities where our residents feel safe, and where they want to live and raise their families.
- Working for happy, active and healthy lives where people are supported, protected and inspired to live independently.

The report supports the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priority 3- ensure the best start in life for all children and young people.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to acknowledge and note the important contribution made to service delivery and Wirral communities by children and young people.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The 'voice of the child' needs to be at the centre of the care and education system, with children and young people having the opportunity to share their views and shape the system that supports them. Leaders should assure themselves that Council services effectively engage the youngest residents, enabling them to participate, enjoy and achieve.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 As corporate parents, the Children, Young People and Education Committee should be assured of participation and engagement, therefore no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Wirral's Children's Services are passionate about the participation and engagement of children and young people. Practitioners and leaders observe Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines participation as 'the involvement of children and young people in decision making on issues which affect their lives'.

3.2 Voice

Our services offer multiple opportunities to give young people a voice. Alongside capturing the voice of the child within our statutory casework, there are multiple additional creative, expressive and inclusive opportunities which enable young people to demonstrate their thoughts and opinions in a safe way and space. These opportunities enable the young person to be heard and make impact locally and nationally. Key forums include:

- The Youth Voice Group
- The SEND Youth Voice Group
- Children in Care Council
- Care Leavers Council
- Creative Youth Development

- 3.3 In addition to forums, service areas use feedback surveys, focus groups and case studies to capture voice and lived experience. The Youth Justice Management Board is a good example, as each meeting opens with a case study. Members of the Youth Justice Management Board note that this helps them to remain focused on the child as well as keeping them connected to practice issues.

3.4 Co-production and Service Design

Wirral's recently developed charter defines co-production as "children, young people, parents, carers, and services working together as equals to make a change. Being equal means that everybody's experiences, voices and ideas have the same value.

Co-production happens when all partners work together to identify what needs to change or be developed and how it should be done.”

3.5 Recent co-production highlights include:

- The development of Our Space, the hub for care leavers
- Development of the Family Hubs offer
- Design and development of the new SENDLO Local Offer website
- Implementing a process which enables young people to make their own request for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment

Each of these activities has led to improvements in practice and service delivery, demonstrating that the views and contribution of young people are valuable.

3.6 Through a co-production approach, young people work alongside officers to make cultural change. Prominent examples include young people hosting panels as part of appointment processes, young inspectors assessing commissioned services and mental health provision.

3.7 **Participation**

Wirral has two Members of Youth Parliament who represent the borough at regional and national forums. They take a lead role in the local Youth Parliament and its associated workshops, which in 2023 have focused on *mate and hate crime*. Through the Youth Parliament work, young people engage with a wide range of professionals and political leaders to influence Council decision-making and agendas.

3.8 Throughout the previous twelve months Wirral has made a strong contribution to Liverpool City Region developments, with membership on the regional Equality Board and contributing to Voice Events across Merseyside. Young representatives from Wirral have attended meetings with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Metro Mayor to speak on behalf of their peers.

3.9 Meaningful participation requires training and personal development, which is provided to young people through the Creative Youth Development service. Participants report how learning builds confidence, self-esteem and helps to develop skills which prepare them for adulthood.

3.10 **Celebrating Achievement**

In June 2023, the first Zillo Youth Awards, organised by the Zillo Young Reporters, took place at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. This event honoured and celebrated the remarkable achievements, talents, and passions of young people from across the borough. Nominations for the awards were made by young people, with a panel of peers selecting the winners. The Zillo Youth Awards will be an annual celebration.

3.11 The annual Children Looked After awards, which took place in October 2023, saw over 100 children and young people being celebrated for their achievements. With children as young as 4 years of age receiving awards, this event captured the spirit of every child being unique with something special to offer.

3.12 It is not only the children and young people known to Children's Services that are celebrated. The Zillo Young Reporters actively seek out local young people who are achieving successes, such as in sports, acting, business development, and charity fundraising activity. A popular feature on the website was the report on the Young People's Market which took place in Liscard shopping centre earlier in the year, sparking a lot of interest and conversation in business/entrepreneurial opportunities.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is a celebration of young people's activity and participation as such, there are no associated financial implications.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report is a celebration of young people's activity and participation as such, there are no associated legal implications.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 This report is a celebration of young people's activity and participation as such, there are no associated resource implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 This report is a celebration of young people's activity and participation as such, there are no relevant risks.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 This report has been produced through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders from across Council services as detailed in the above sections.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is a celebration of young people's activity and participation from across a wide spectrum of the population. Participation and engagement of diverse groups such as those involved with youth justice services, having special educational needs and disabilities, and care experienced young people.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is a celebration of young people's activity and participation as such, there are no environment or climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report is a celebration of young people's activity and participation as such, there are no community wealth implications. It is notable however, that there are a number of initiatives which make employment/ enterprise opportunities available to young people in Wirral.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is accessible at
<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section A of its Terms of Reference; “exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
N/A	N/A