

**CORPORATE PARENTING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2 October 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, CHILDRENS SERVICES

PARTICIPATION STRATEGY UPDATE

Reasons for the report

1. This report provides an update to the committee regarding the Participation Strategy and the associated consultation that has been undertaken in conjunction with the development of the strategy.
2. The consultation has been co-produced by members of the Bright Sparks groups, as well as children and young people who attend services provided by Cardiff Youth Service and the Personal Advisor Service.

Background

3. The aim of the Participation Strategy is to develop a strategy that will set out how we engage with our children, young people and families and how services can be shaped in the future to better meet their needs. The strategy will be co-produced with children and young people, ensuring their voices are at the heart of the strategy development.

Issues

4. A steering group was set up with members from Children's Services, Cardiff Youth Service and NYAS to map out a structure to engage with children and young people.
5. Members of the steering group attended wellbeing support groups facilitated by Cardiff Youth Service. The engagement allowed for direct consultation with those children and young people, but also aided collaboration in the development of a wider consultation to roll out to a larger cohort. The young people shared their preferences for engagement and participation and these views formed the basis of an online questionnaire. The young people explained that they wanted to use a mixture of open, closed and multiple-choice type questions with an option to participate anonymously.
6. Interviews, participation workshops and Bright Sparks meetings facilitated the creation of the consultation questions by our children and young people. The

questions were developed in an informal setting, whilst the young people took part in fun activities (VR headsets/ giant Jenga etc) and using a 'graffiti wall' to brainstorm ideas.

7. Significant growth has taken place in the working relationship between Children's Services and Cardiff Youth Service and Youth Mentors. The collaboration has allowed us to build relationships with the workers who support our children on a daily basis. As a result, there has been consistent engagement from the children and young people that use these services and for those this strategy is being designed to benefit.
8. 1300 children and young people, including 602 Children Looked After, were written to on 1st September and invited to take part in the online questionnaire that was co-produced. A target of 100 responses has been set and to date we have achieved in excess of this, with 108 responses to date.
9. Contact has been made with schools in Cardiff that have the highest numbers of care experienced or children who are looked after. The aim is to deliver participation workshops within a school setting, to obtain the views of children and young people in relation to the participation strategy. The workshops will be delivered in September by Children's Services, NYAS and The Youth Service. It is hoped that there will also be several young people who can co-produce the workshops and assist in their delivery.
10. Plans are being developed to visit children and young people on a one-to-one basis within residential placements to discuss the production of a participation strategy. This would include offering support to the children and young people to take part in the consultation and also providing an incentive to participate.

Financial Implications

11. The budget for the Participation Strategy has been provided by Children's Services. Costs for incentives and the delivery of workshops has been borne equally by Cardiff Youth Service and NYAS.

Legal Implications

12. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the update as outlined in **Appendix A** and to make any observations or comments.
13. To consider how the Participation Strategy will meet the needs of our Children Looked After and how it is reported to the Committee going forward.

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD
Director, Childrens Services
11 September 2023

Appendix A – Participation Update Report