
YOUNG PERSON PARTICIPATION UPDATE

Reasons for the Report

1. The report has been prepared to update the Committee about the current mechanisms in place that are used to seek the views, concerns and issues facing looked after children throughout Cardiff.
2. The update outlines legislation which promotes the active and informed participation of children as citizens and right holders, details are also provided on current ways looked after children are able to have their voices heard as well as plans to strengthen and build on current participation mechanisms in place.
3. The Terms of Reference require the committee to develop and undertake a programme of consultation, listening and engagement events with Children Looked After, Children in Need and Care Leavers as well as visits to services providing support and advice to those children and young people

Background

4. Children and young people have 42 rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These 42 rights give children and young people what they need to grow up happily, healthily and safely.
5. The requirement to obtain the views of young people are outlined in Article 12 of the UNCRC which states;

“Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously”

6. When participating with young people there are a set of national standards that should be adhered to in order to ensure that the views of young people can make a difference to services and issues impacting them.
7. The Committee are regularly updated on how the voice of looked after children have been incorporated in a range of areas of work and were made aware of a range of initiatives and projects in development to further strengthen the voice of the child.
8. Through a number of reports such as Complaints and representations reports and Independent Reviewing Officer service report the voice of looked after children are placed at the centre. There has also been a wide range of specific Participation initiatives, programmes and projects presented to the Committee aimed to strengthen the voice of a young person and ensure that our young people have meaningful engagement to have an active role in shaping services that affect them. Members also have the opportunity to directly engage with young people when the undertake member visits.

Issues

9. There are some areas of work that needs further development to strengthen the voice of looked after children and children leaving care in Cardiff. There are also future projects aimed to strengthen the voice of looked after children including the Mind of your Own – a digital app that supports looked after children to have a say in their care.
10. The Bright Sparks forum is the main platform where looked after children can have a say on the issues impacting them, the forum meets fortnightly and plan and organise the annual Bright Sparks awards , a celebration event for Looked after children across the city. Working with the Bright Sparks Forum membership will be strengthened as well as links between the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

Financial Implications

11. As outlined in the report, this proposal will result in new activities and initiatives, some of which will lead to new financial commitments, such as the Mind of My

Own app. However, these financial commitments will be met from within existing available financial resources, including external funding such as the Integrated Care Fund.

Legal Implications

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

RECOMMENDATION

13. The Committee is recommended to note the Young Person Participation update which outlines the mechanisms in place to capture the voice of looked after children; and to make any observations or comments.

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