

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2 October 2023

Priority 4: Educational Achievement, Employment and Training:-

Participation Strategy Update

Reasons for the Report

1. As part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, Cardiff Children's Services are in the process of developing a Participation Strategy.
2. The aim of the project is to develop a participation 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.

Background

3. A steering group was formed with representatives from NYAS, Cardiff Youth Service and Child Friendly City to map out best ways of initiating the consultation with children currently open to Cardiff Children's Services. Whilst the aim of the strategy consultation was to listen to all children and young people, it was also recognised that there needed to be a particular focus for those that are care experienced or looked after. Historically, this cohort group is reluctant to engage in strategy consultation and as such, identifying key ways of including them at the outset was paramount.
4. Consultation style listening events were delivered to groups of children and young people in collaboration with Cardiff Youth Service and NYAS. The young people discussed the different ways they would like to participate, the types of questions

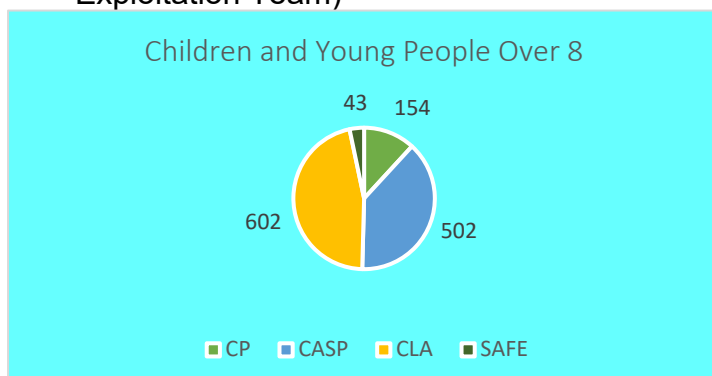
they wanted to use and the circumstances within which they would prefer to take part.

5. It was decided that the best way forward would be to design an anonymous online questionnaire consultation, which included open and closed questions and also provide room to add any other information the young person may feel is applicable.
6. The young people suggested that engagement would improve if the consultation took place within their school setting or as part of a fun activity within a group.
7. A participation workshop event was held with the Bright Sparks Group, during which, the young people developed the specific questions they wanted to be included in the online consultation questionnaire.

Project Development

8. 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.
9. Attending wellbeing support groups with the Youth Service has allowed us to engage directly with children and young people and to collaborate with them to create the consultation. The young people shared their preferences for engagement and participation and these views formed the basis of the online questionnaire.
10. 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.
11. On the 1st September 2023 1300 children and young people were written to, which included X number of looked after or care experienced children and young people. They were invited to take part in the online questionnaire that was co-produced with other children and young people. There has been an encouraging response to the consultation, with over 100 responses received to date.

12. The chart represents the 1301 children and young people consulted and the proportion of each cohort group (Children Looked After, Care and Support Plans, Child Protection and those that are open to Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation Team)



Issues

13. Progress to Date:

14. To develop a successful strategy that is fully co-produced a decision was made early on, with the agreement of the children and young people in our steering group, that we needed to speak to and hear from at least 100 children and young people. The online questionnaire was open to consultation between the 1st and 18th September 2023. At the time of writing there have been 108 responses. A significant amount of information and feedback has already been gathered through the completion of the online questionnaire consultation, but the work to analyse this has not yet begun.

15. There will be further face to face interview consultations taking place between the 18th September 2023 and 30th September 2023 at school sites across the city and a specific engagement session with children and young people open to the Child Health and Disability Team also taking place within this timeframe.

Examples of communication received from young people

16. Whilst the consultation has not yet closed, or the analysis process started, at the time of writing, we have been able to start reviewing the feedback responses.

One of the questions from the questionnaire asked, *'what is it that you don't have, that if you did have it, would make the biggest difference to your life?'*

Some of the answers included:

'to know more about my past.'

'Affordable season tickets for sports centres so I don't have to worry about weather I can afford extra classes'

'a phone'

'a Dad that cares'

Next Steps

17. Schools with the highest proportion of care experienced and children looked after have been approached to host series of small group listening events. They have been planned to take place within the school setting, in partnership with the Youth Service and NYAS. The Youth Mentors who are already working with these groups of young people are going to support the events and help to further engagement.
18. Face to face visits to Residential Placements and children in Unregulated settings have also been scheduled to obtain the views of the young people residing there.
19. We are aiming to collate the responses of the online consultation by the end of September. We will then review the responses alongside children and young people from the Bright Sparks and Youth Service Wellbeing groups.
20. The information will then be converted into qualitative data and look to prepare a draft of the Participation Strategy by the end of **October 2023**.
21. Consultation with children and young people, via our steering group will continue to take place, with feedback from them sought at all stages prior to the completion of the strategy.
22. A draft of the Strategy will be taken to the Children and Young People Partnership Board in November 2023 and an update will be provided to the committee at the next Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee in December 2023.

23. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee will have the opportunity to consider what they would like to include in the strategy, as well as being able to review the Strategy in the October and December 2023 Committee meetings.

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11 September 2023