



Hampshire
County Council

Children's Services Department Management Team

Date of meeting	1 November 2018
Report author	Laura Mallinson
CSDMT sponsor	Steph How
Subject	Participation Update
Reason for the report	To update on progress made in embedding the participation strategy
Confidential	No
People attending for the item	Laura Mallinson
Summary (full report to be attached)	The reports provides an update to CSDMT on the progress made on all elements of the strategy to strengthen the participation of children in planning and the contribution that children make to helping to improve services
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation Strategy continues to be rooted within all domains of social care• Development of the Corporate Parenting Board demonstrating its impact through change to services and opportunities for children in care and care leavers• Evolvement of the role of Care Ambassadors to represent the voice of children in care and care leavers• Participation events are further embedded and progress from the engagement stage to "You said, We Did" as the golden thread through all levels of our service• Endorsement from senior management to the frontline staff of the importance of the

Participation Strategy that has the support from all levels within the county council (given CPB involvement)

- **District managers and senior managers to attend participation events running in the districts and county.**
- **The voice of the child to be captured**
- **Evidence of the “You Said, We Did”**

Financial (capital & revenue) implications
(staffing/premises/other) None

ICT implications None

Personnel implications None

Learning and development implications None

Equality Impact assessment A race and equality impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified

Isle of Wight implications -

Future circulation (ie. PRC, schools etc.)

Hampshire County Council

CSDMT

Item No: (if known)

Date: 1 November 2018

Report title: Participation – update on progress of the Strategy

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Contact: Laura Mallinson, 01420 545638, laura.mallinson@hants.gov.uk

Summary

Participation is on CSDMT agenda for six monthly updated. This report will provide an overview of the progress being made within Children’s Social Care over the last six months.

The Participation Strategy has been in place for twelve months now.

The strategy identifies the need to further embed participation and the voice of children and young people throughout our work as the “golden thread”. This focus is now emerging. The report will highlight some of the successes we have had through the positive engagement and participation of children and young people in the shaping of service delivery.

The strategy included a need to create a Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) to improve the services we provide for our children in care and our care leavers. This has been established for twelve months now and an annual report was presented to the Children and Families Advisory Panel on 16 October 2018. In summary, the CPB members are enthusiastic and acting as Corporate Parents, want to improve the outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The CPB is created is still in its formative stages, but momentum, enthusiasm and shared objectives are driving this forward from a corporate perspective and the views of our Care Ambassadors. The Children and Families Advisory Panel agreed to continue to support this sub group continuing.

This report specifically looks at the progress that has been made over the last six months, progress made and the future plan of work.

Recommendations

It is recommended that CSDMT continue to support the Participation Strategy.

It is recommended that the priority areas are:

- Participation Strategy continues to be rooted within all domains of social care**
- Development of the Corporate Parenting Board demonstrating its impact through change to services and opportunities for children in care and care leavers**

- **Evolvement of the role of Care Ambassadors to represent the voice of children in care and care leavers**
- **Participation events are further embedded and progress from the engagement stage to “You said, We Did” as the golden thread through all levels of our service**
- **Endorsement from senior management to the frontline staff of the importance of the Participation Strategy that has the support from all levels within the county council (given CPB involvement)**
- **District managers and senior managers to attend participation events running in the districts and county.**
- **The voice of the child to be captured**
- **Evidence of the “You Said, We Did”**

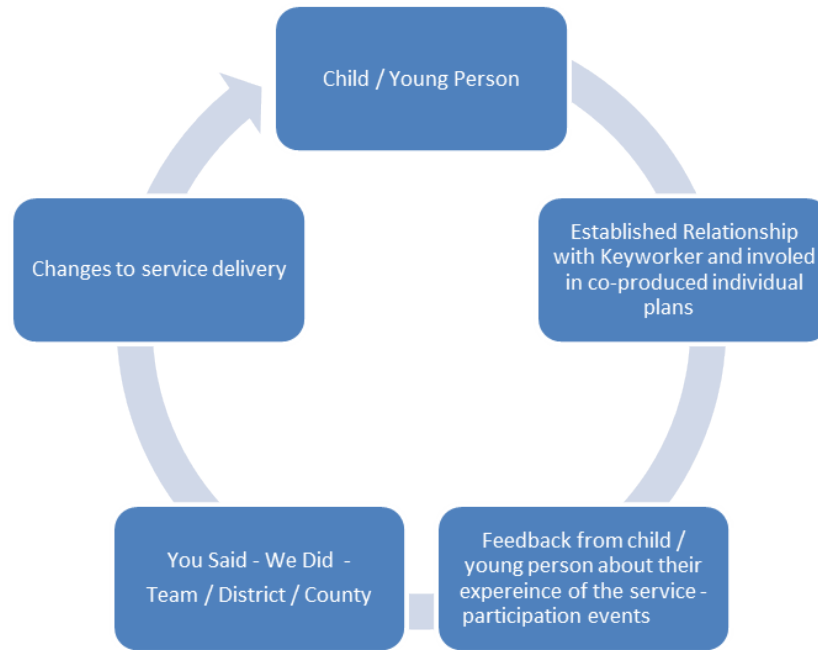
MAIN REPORT

Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress made over the last six months for Participation and embedding the voice of children and young people through all levels of service to influence change and improve Social Care's service delivery.
- 1.2 The Social Care Participation and Engagement Strategy for Children and Young People 2018 has been in place for 12 months with staff briefed on the departmental aims and objectives and activities engaging young people are taking place and contributing to service change.
- 1.3 A quarterly thematic report on Participation is presented to County PAG providing an update on all events, therefore this report will not duplicate and detail such activity, but summaries the next steps. [Thematic report - Health and participation - Sep 2018](#)
- 1.4 The report will provide an update on the recommendations made to CSDMT in May 2018.

2.1 **Background, context and key facts**

- 2.2 To provide the context; as detailed within the Social Care Participation and Engagement Strategy 2018, *"Trust is the key factor in achieving successful participation from children and young people. Those working directly with children and young people need to build positive working relationships, which are open and honest where time is offered to our children and young people"*.



- 2.3 Social Care are keen to maximise the time in which practitioners can spend working directly with children and families and have sought and secured significant investments through Partners in Practice which has resulted in the implementation of CAST, increased SWPA's and implementation of the Hampshire Approach for intervention. Such changes aim to increase social work capacity to enable better engagement and establish positive relationships with children and families. This being the first step to build the trust and enable effective participation in their individual plans.
- 2.4 **District Events** - This is open to all children and young people currently open to Social Care. It is part of the plan that each district holding monthly "Have your Say" events, these are detailed in the quarterly PAG report and whilst there is still some way to go in some district, other districts have embraced this opportunity, the SE Care Leavers is a good example where they have listened to the voice of their young people who wanted a youth group *"that was accessible to all and didn't necessarily highlight them as Care Leavers. We are working with Y Services on this project. The first Wednesday of the month the 16-21 group also has two PA present for the evening's activities. The idea is that we will encourage and support our Care leavers to attend the session offering lifts where needed. The sessions have various activities during the evening, these are planned by the workers but also allow time for young people to participate in developing the programme for future weeks"* PAG thematic report September 2018.
- 2.5 Monthly meetings need to be continually encouraged. Sessions include a pizza night, summer picnic, youth groups and a forthcoming pizza night and Halloween parties. Work within the session has been on what is a social worker, what are the qualities of a social worker, what needs to improve? As this develops out of the engagement stage, we need to ensure that the cycle

of information is disseminated throughout the county and actions of change are evident.

- 2.6 Districts continue to have their own methods of collating feedback through questionnaires or interviews, whilst this is positive, it needs to be evidenced how this is full participation at a point where the engagement is child initiated and where decisions are shared with adults. This being the evidence of true participation as stated under the Hear By Right approach and method adopted within the Participation Strategy. Using questionnaires does not meet this level of true participation and more about consultation. We need to be mindful of this and evidence how the information has been collated, shared departmentally and shaped service.
- 2.7 **District Log** - The district events are collated in a District Log which will provide a clear platform to gather the thoughts and wishes of the young people and evidence clearly the effect upon care planning and staff training. This needs to be utilised better and each district need to take responsibility for their part of this.
- 2.8 **District Participation Leads** – Social Care have identified the need for each district to have a lead participation champion. Eight designated Participation Leads have been identified and are responsible for the co-ordination and recording of all District Participation events and forums. The next step in the Participation agenda is to ensure that a Participation “Champion” is elected in each team to keep the agenda relevant and “live” in each team. On 5 June 2018 the Participation leads meet on an “away day” training and awareness building exercise to look at what can be done locally in each District, to raise the levels of Participation not only in events but in the everyday. Emphasis was on keeping the momentum moving forward on all children’s cases (Section 17/CIN/CP/DCT) open to Social Care to allow a full and effective embedding in of the participation agenda and policy. The district leads will further encourage participation of children in Children in Need and Child Protection planning processes.
- 2.9 Whilst the Participation Leads were enthusiastic, they felt they required the endorsement from senior management that the Participation Strategy is to be a legitimate model. This could be achieved by district managers and senior managers engaging in the district events, which is part of the plans.
- 2.10 What has been recognised is that Child in Care for example don’t quite fit in the district model if they are placed out of the district. Therefore it has been agreed that we are going to set up a separate CIC participation events, run similarly to the district runs ones, but arranged as a service. This DOES NOT preclude any young person participating in the district events.

2.11 **District Events Going Forward** - District Events need to be further embedded to create the true participation, there needed to be further analysis on information that is obtained and how this is shared to impact on service delivery – the “We Did” element.

- Senior and District Managers to attend the participation events
- Analysis of the information from the Participation Conference needs to be fed into the District Events.
- District Log to be maintained and evidence the cycle of “You Said, We Did”

2.12 **Participation Conference** - The Participation Conference took place on 22 October 2018, it had the aim of further exploring Participation and each district presenting and sharing their good practice. The event was hosted by the Participation Lead and Care Ambassador, the event was attended by members of the CPB, senior managers, practitioners and young people. The day was full of energy, data is still being collated, but there were approximately 100 people in attendance with a 50:50 ratio of young people to staff. The contribution from the young people was extremely empowering and provides the department with clear evidence of participation and a plan going forward. Activities from the day included a graffiti wall where the young people stated what they would like more or less off. An activity on language and something as easy to change as “Contact” to “Family Time” was suggested, to activities around importance of communication. Feedback from the session has been exceptional.

2.13 The conference was also attended by Bear Face theatre who are a local organisation looking for the genuine voice through theatre and art. They attended the event as they have offered the opportunity for the delivery of the ICE project which is a project designed to work with vulnerable young people to increase their wellbeing and mental health through the exploration of creative arts. They also made a montage of the Participation Conference which is just being edited and will be shared with us.

2.14 **Children in Care and Care Leavers**

2.15 **Documents in Review**; Hampshire’s Pledge for Children in Care and Care Leavers is a promise to our young people of the support we will provide as corporate parents. This Pledge is currently being reviewed by a working group involving care leavers, social workers and team managers. Initial feedback is the view that the wording “pledge” needs to change to “aims”. It was discussed at CFMT and felt that the word Pledge needs to remain as it

is a strong commitment the department are providing. As corporate parents we must have aspirations for our children in care and care leavers.

2.16 **Care Ambassadors**

2.17 **Care Ambassadors (16+ years old)**, the Participation Officer is actively promoting the role of Care Ambassadors seeking the recruitment of young people into this role. There is capacity for 16 young people to be part of the group, currently there are 8 with 3 of these young people regularly engaging with the role. Care Ambassadors are the representative voice for children in care and care leavers, there is a diary of events and meetings in which they are encouraged to attend to represent the voice of children in care. There is a programme of events which includes, Corporate Parenting Board, conferences, interviews, training, HSCB and Bright Spots feedback. They have recently had a team day outlining their role and expectations.

2.18 The role of Care Ambassadors has been difficult to recruit to, a review of the reasons why will happen and consider if there is a need to disband and re-group under a new framework in a couple of months.

2.19 **Junior Care Ambassadors (12-16 years old)**, it is the plan for Social Care to enrol, recruit and support 16 new, younger Care Ambassadors to further promote the engagement of and representation of all looked after children in Hampshire. The younger cohort of Care Ambassador will be an effective step forward in enabling the views and feelings of younger looked after children to be heard and acted upon. There has been delay in the recruitment process for the Young Care Ambassadors but it is anticipated that they will all be in post within the next 6 months. The role of the foster carer will be paramount in this project and the Hampshire Fostering Network (HFN) will be integral to the process.

2.20 **Next Steps for Care Ambassadors** - Whilst work needs to be completed to review the Care Ambassadors, it remains an aim to continue to increase the number of Care Ambassadors and develop the role to enable Care Ambassadors to consult directly with Children in Care and Care Leavers to obtain their views on subjects – this is likely to be via social media apps.

2.21 Recruit the Junior Care Ambassadors supported by HFN

2.22 **Corporate Parenting Board**

2.23 The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) is a sub-committee of the Children and Families Advisory Panel, the board was established in November 2017.

The first annual report on the progress of the CPB was presented to the Children and Families Advisory Panel on 16 October 2018. It detailed how the CPB have embraced their role as the corporate parent and want to make a difference to the lives of children in care and care leavers. It has been acknowledged that although running for twelve months, the CPB is in its formative stages, the next twelve months will see the CPB really emerging and demonstrate the appropriate challenge of care and services that are provided to children in care and care leavers with the purpose of improving the outcomes for such young people.

2.24 There are three co-opted Care Ambassadors that sit on the CPB and three elected members. The CPB is positively evolving setting its priorities and have an identified plan of work. The CPB are keen to promote a more informal workshop briefings which will be held prior to the CPB and provide feedback from the representing group to inform the progress of planning at CPB. The CPB met with foster carers on 11 September 2018 and previously met with Children in Care.

2.25 Items to be addressed at future meetings:

- Leaving Care – Support beyond the age of 21
- Suitable housing for Care Leavers
- Placement stability and finding the right placements
- Continuity of Social Workers and responding to complaints
- Outcomes for Children in Care with Disabilities

Next Steps for Corporate Parenting Board

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2.31 Corporate Parenting Board to continue to embed and changes for children and care and care leavers to start being evident as a result of the progress made by the group.

2.23 Bank of Interviewers (aged 16+)

2.24 Hampshire has been able to actively promote and utilise the use of young people in the recruitment of permanent staff. This has been effective in the recruitment campaigns for Area Director, Independent Reviewing Officers and is on going for the Social Worker recruitment programmes. The Participation Officer supports and enables a number of panels of young people who are now confident and experienced in this activity. Once there is evidence that this process is fully embedded in the recruitment policy, this could be handed over to an administrator with minimal support and oversight from the Participation Officer. The County

has embraced the involvement of young people on interview panels and it seems to be running well. The role is rewarded by a payment to the young people in recognition of their support of this work. This is an excellent example of positive participation from young people, where they know why they are attending, they interview and assess the candidates which is scored and contributes to the decision to employ a candidate. Young People have been involved in telling the successful candidate of the position and provided the candidate with feedback.

2.25 Next Steps for Bank of Interviewers - It is vitally important that as a department we continue to promote that young people participating in interview panels is the norm and not exception. The participation of young people is very powerful and influences the future workforce.

2.26 Peer Inspection

2.27 This is not yet fully operational

2.28 Next Steps for Peer Inspections - This needs to be developed to ensure that young people are part of the county peer inspection team.

2.29 **Involvement in Training (aged 16+)**. Involvement with Hampshire Futures has allowed a Traineeship opportunity to be established within the Participation agenda. This is being supported directly by the Participation Officer and is in the early stages of its establishment. There are no limits to the number of participants that could potentially be utilised and trained to develop further the participation work in Hampshire. Training events involving the contribution of children and young people are planned and prepared to be running after 28 April 2018. Isle of Wight have just successfully appointed a care leaver on an apprentice scheme.

2.30 **Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) (aged 12 -18)**. Hampshire supports 3 MYPs and 4 Deputy MYPs. The role of the Participation Officer will actively encourage and recruit to a further 3 MYPs as currently there is capacity for County representation to hold 6 MYP's.

2.31 Future consideration can be given to actively engaging the use of the Leader of the Council in the work with these young people.

The current cohort of MYPs are in their final year of representation and they have embarked upon the campaign 'Curriculum 4 Life' and met the Head Teachers Executive in June 2018. This will have the further impact of raising the profile of the UK Youth Parliament as well as the particular campaign that the young people are currently working on.

Work has commenced on the 2019 elections for Members of Youth Parliament with the Make your Mark ballot taking place in January 2019 ready for the MYP's to commence their role on 1 March 2019.

Hampshire has an allocation of 6 memberships for the MYP. Information is going out in school comms at the beginning of November 2018.

- 2.32 Digital Participation Progress - Facebook. The SW and SW Care Leaver Team continue to use Facebook to contact care leavers Feedback continues to be that this is a positive method of communication.**
- 2.32 “Mind of My Own” (MOMO). Care Ambassadors attended a marketing event for MOMO along with a range of social workers and support staff. Feedback was a resounding success and the general feeling was that Hampshire should seek to progress the use of this communication app. Whilst MOMO was seen to be a positive communication app for young people, it is not felt that the Express MOMO designed for children with additional needs will add anything to our existing tools and methods of communication for our children with disabilities.**
- 2.33 YouTube. As part of the digital offer to young people, we would benefit from age appropriate video messages. Work continues to explore the possibility of engaging groups of young people in video workshops via the Hampshire Cultural Trust (Charlotte Slinger). Bearface Theatre are about to commence some work on the production of a film about entering care. This can be added to the Social Work toolkit and used when out working with young people entering the care system.**
- 2.34 No update - Web Pages. The current pages are being modernised to make them more accessible and appealing to our young cohort of Children Looked After. The pages visible at the moment are taken from the Care Leaver Manual posted on to the website. There is a requirement for a modernisation and overhaul of the existing system to produce a more interactive and attractive option as the current site does not serve any benefit to young people. This is work that is ongoing and it is recognised that there is a requirement to establish the “push and pull” apps in place before setting up new web-pages.**
- 2.32 No update- “You Said We Did”. This is a proposed newsletter informing the actions Hampshire County Council has completed in response to children and young person’s feedback in relation to services. The idea is to allow children, young persons and their families the opportunity to understand how their constructive feedback has directly resulted in a change and improvement to service delivery and care planning. This can involve Children looked after, alongside those working together with Children’s Services on Children in Need and Child Protection Plans. This is an ambitious project yet to be fully established however consideration has been given to utilising the Bright Spots survey feedback alongside district responses to the participation agenda. There are really powerful pieces of work that can be incorporated into on going Social Work training to allow a real**

positive impact to be delivered by all Children's Services staff.

Conclusion

- 3 It is positive the activity around participation has increased and there are very good examples of participation, however we are in the formation stages and still not in a position to evidence how the Voice of the Child has influenced service delivery. As this report documents, there is little by way of the child's voice in the report, as such information is not extracted. This was identified in May as a recommendation going forward and further needs to be evidenced.
- 4 Participation needs to remain on the agenda for Social Care and expectation that children and young people are included and involved in shaping service delivery in a productive way not "done to".
- 5 The Participation Strategy itself remains relevant, progress is being made, but not to the level we would like to be fully inclusive and work needs to continue to drive this change.

6 Recommendations

- **Participation Strategy continues to be rooted within all domains of social care**
- **Development of the Corporate Parenting Board demonstrating its impact through change to services and opportunities for children in care and care leavers**
- **Evolvement of the role of Care Ambassadors to represent the voice of children in care and care leavers**
- **Participation events are further embedded and progress from the engagement stage to "You said, We Did" as the golden thread through all levels of our service**
- **Endorsement from senior management to the frontline staff of the importance of the Participation Strategy that has the support from all levels within the county council (given CPB involvement)**
- **District managers and senior managers to attend participation events running in the districts and county.**
- **The voice of the child to be captured**
- **Evidence of the "You Said, We Did"**

7. Consultation

None – this is an update not change to policy

8. Legal implications

None

9. Financial implications

None

10. Personnel implications

None

11. Learning and development implications

None

12. Impact assessment

Race and equality impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified.

13. Implications for Isle of Wight Children's Services

None