

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

For information

Board:	Corporate Parenting Board
Date:	28 March 2023
Title:	Update on Participation Action Plan for 2023
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Participation since the last update to Corporate Parenting Board in the summer of 2022. It also provides an update on the progress made against the Participation Strategy and plans for further developments in 2023.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

Notes the contents of this report.

Continues to endorse the priorities for participation in 2023.

Executive Summary

3. HCC has a well-established business as usual approach to hearing and responding to the voices of the children, young people, and families we work with. We are strong at ensuring that everyone we work with is able to influence their own individual plans and the service they receive. Participation measures are also included in service plans, the QUIP (Quality and Improvement Plan) and transformation activity.
4. However, we want to do more to ensure that these voices also influence at a strategic level. 2022 saw the review and update of our Participation Strategy, which was informed by consultation with children and young people led by our Independent Reviewing Service. The updated Participation Strategy for 2022-2025 is now in place and a key focus of the Strategy is to provide more routes

for this strategic influence.

5. As part of the strategy review, we also made the decision to evolve our Care Ambassador model into two independently facilitated Councils. This is because we wanted to ensure a wider range of voices are heard and can more robustly shape our service. In addition, we found that our group of Ambassadors were 'growing out' of the service and together with the impact of Covid, 2021 provided an ideal opportunity to reconsider our model.
6. Introducing two new independent Councils for Children in Care and Care Experienced Adults is a critical part of our action plan and has been informed by a survey of our care experienced HCC staff. These Councils will both provide representative groups of young people in Hampshire, to contribute their views on a strategic level to the Corporate Parenting Board and to senior leaders. They will be supported and empowered by giving them the skills to provide a voice to children and other care experienced young people to make changes that matter at a local level.
7. In addition to the Councils, we will be building on our participation offer in a range of ways. For example, we are creating a Participation Network to share learning, resources and better demonstrate our impact. In addition, we will work across the service to review the processes by which we collate family and child feedback, to ensure the wealth of information collected locally, is more systematically used to inform transformation and service improvements. This will include an analysis of providers in this area (e.g., Bright Spots, Mind of My Own) as well as our emerging in-house capability through Mosaic and portals.
8. The remainder of the report provides an overview of the Participation activity and events that have taken place in 2022.

Contextual Information

9. Hampshire has a strong history of participation and weaving the voice of children and young people into all that we do. All assessment and planning documents place a strong emphasis on child and family voice. For example, embedding strength based direct work tools like the 'what's working, what's not' into the C&F Assessment ensures all voices are captured and inform the social worker analysis.
10. Another example is the My Life My Future Care and Pathway Plan (which was named by children in care) which has evolved over the past four years to increasingly highlight the child's voice. The child's perspective is embedded throughout the document and features age-appropriate scaling as both a direct work tool and also to demonstrate change over time.
11. In recent years the responsibility for Participation has moved from a standalone role sat centrally, to every district and service. The rationale for this shift is the recognition that participation is everyone's responsibility and that

we should incorporate it in business-as-usual activity.

12. Local teams have continued to deliver a broad and varied range of participation events and activities throughout 2022. The section 'Participation throughout 2022' provides further details of these events and their impact.
13. The voice of children and young people is also embedded within our case recording. We have moved away from standalone 'Participation Case Notes' and instead practitioners integrate the voice of children and young people across all recording including supervision notes.

Participation Strategy 2022 – 2025

14. The beginning of 2022 saw the review and update of our Participation Strategy, which was informed by consultation with children and young people led by our IRO Service. The updated Participation Strategy was signed off in the summer of 2022 and describes:
 - a. That Participation is everyone's business and is managed as 'Business as Usual (BAU).
 - b. A priority for 2023 is to commission a Children in Care Council and a Care Experienced Adult Council – these will be a more formal vehicle for children and young people to shape and influence services
15. The Lead for Participation moved from the Principle Social Worker to the Service Improvement Lead in September 2022. A discussion was taken to Strategic CFMT in November 2022 to agree the action plan which would drive forward the Participation Strategy in 2023 and beyond.
16. The remainder of this report details the work undertaken since September to commission the new Councils and deliver the action plan.

Commissioning of Children in Care (CIC) and Care Experienced Adult Council (CEA)

17. In December 2022 we began the tender for the implementation and management of two new CIC and CEA Councils. The contract has now been awarded to Motiv8, an organisation with a wealth of experience supporting and empowering children and young people in Hampshire. We are currently in the pre-go-live mobilisation phase and planning the logistics of how the Councils will operate and link into operations, senior management and the Corporate Parenting Board.
18. Both Councils aim to:

Facilitate a representative voice for the full range of children in care and care experienced adults in Hampshire.

Which can then influence and hold to account Hampshire County Council as the Corporate Parent and the members of the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure they deliver the best experience for children in care, and adults previously in care.

And together improve outcomes for all children in care and care experienced adults.

19. In practice, both Councils will play a crucial role in
- a. Influencing the Corporate Parenting that young people receive
 - b. Providing a voice for children in care and care experienced adults
 - c. Working in partnership with Corporate Parenting partners and HCC to shape strategy and improve the care system and the wider services young people are entitled to
 - d. Shaping their own work plan as the service is mobilised and developed.
20. As a new service, we will be working collaboratively with Motiv8 and the Councils to develop and shape this offer and the way the Councils work alongside other children, young people, staff, and the Corporate Parenting Board.

Milestones

Activity	Milestone	Status
Strategy signed-off	July 2022	Complete
Tender specification signed-off	November 2022	Complete
Tender out to providers	December 2022	Complete
Response deadline	End January 2023	Complete
Award contract	End February 2023	Complete
Pre-contract mobilisation	March 2023	In progress
Go live	1 April 2023	
Mobilising Councils	April – June 2023	
Councils fully operational	August 2023	

Action Plan for 2023: the next iteration of our participation journey

21. Whilst the commissioning and mobilisation of the Councils is a key priority for the year, there are additional improvements we are in the process of making to build on our existing good practice. The following areas build on the 'business as usual' actions assigned to District and Service Managers to embed Participation within their area of work. Those tasks are captured within the QUIP and reviewed regularly.

Co-ordinate

- a. Set-up Participation Network across Hampshire and Isle of Wight with current participation leads. The Network will provide an opportunity to
 - i. Meet quarterly to share learning and inform strategy
 - ii. Have early sight of event/participation planning
 - iii. Use a dedicated Sharepoint site to share resources and ideas
- b. Support teams and services to promote and celebrate their participation activity

STATUS: In progress – first meeting booked April 2023

Collate and analyse

- c. Continue to update the Participation and Insight log to place even more emphasis on outcomes and impact
- d. Add section to Service Plans 'how has participation of CYP contributed to service plan' and collate this centrally as well
- e. Undertake an options analysis to assess the most effective way to collect feedback
- f. Continue to collate family feedback from audits
- g. Analyse responses from the above into regular thematic reporting along with other strands of insight

Opportunities to inform and be informed

- h. Use Participation and Insight Network to share information back to teams, families, and children about changes we're making because of their insight
- i. Mobilisation and embedding of CIC and CEA Councils will provide main route to gather insight and share information back to these cohorts
- j. Develop plan with the Councils and Participation and Insight Network to create more opportunities (including for families and children not in care) for 2024

Opportunities to contribute

- k. Mobilisation and embedding of CIC and CEA Councils will provide main route to engage YP in service improvements
- l. Develop plan with the Councils and Participation and Insight Network to create more opportunities (including for families and children not in care) for 2024
- m. Plans to support/enable/facilitate national participation

Evolving our methods to collect child and family feedback

22. We currently use a range of methods to understand children/young people's views of the service they receive and how it could be improved. These methods include:

- a. Feedback forms
- b. Feedback gathered/embedded within participation events
- c. Bright Spots survey

23. The Action Plan includes undertaking an options analysis to review our methods of collecting feedback. This is in recognition that technology has developed, and children/young people want to interact with our service in different ways.

24. The Options Analysis will be led by a Working Group and will involve young people who will consider Bright Spots, Mind of My Own as well as our evolving in-house capability through Mosaic and service-user portals.

Participation throughout 2022

25. There a significant number of examples of participation across our services and districts in 2022. This report aims to give a flavour of the breadth and impact of these events.

Hampshire Children and Young People's Plan, 2022 – 2025. Focus groups were carried out with 120 children and young people in Hampshire: • 77.5% were aged 11-15 years old • 14% were from ethnic minority backgrounds • 16% were identified as having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). In addition, feedback from 479 children and young people was collated by the Hampshire Members of Youth Parliament.

Big Activity Week - this ran from the 1 - 5 August 2022 where 77 looked after children in school years 3-9 and in Hampshire County Council Local Authority Care, took part in 6 activity weeks. From the New Forest to the Brecon Beacons in Wales, these young people made lifelong memories and created friendships with young people in similar situations to themselves. The week was run by Hampshire Outdoors staff along with other staff within Children Services. The week was free for all young people with the cost partly funded by National Lottery Community Fund with most of the cost coming from Hampshire Outdoors, a part of Skills and Participation.

Care Leavers week

Care Leavers Week in Hampshire is going from strength to strength with the largest attendance across the week that we've ever had. Our teams across Hampshire arranged a series of events in collaboration with our care experienced adults.

- Open Mic Night Hosted by Step-by-Step - Aldershot.
- Wessex Dance Academy Day Event
- Money works course - Via teams.
- Meet the Southwest Care leaver Team – Totton
- Thinking of going to Uni? Support in higher education for Care experienced Young people via Teams.
- London Meet Up
- Winchester Uni tour – Winchester
- Crate Stack - Aldershot
- Halloween Spooktacular – Gosport

Developing Child Exploitation Resources for schools across Hampshire. In 2022 Hampshire County Council's Willow Team, a multi-agency team supporting children at risk of exploitation, launched a series of short films and accompanying teaching packs for schools across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton. The films highlight the dangers of criminal and sexual exploitation, with a particular focus on the grooming process.

The characters in the films were played by local young actors from The Young Creatives. The scripts were written in collaboration with young people being supported by the Willow Team to ensure their authenticity. The resources have been trialled with school groups by Willow and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

C&F Awards 2022 – A young people's judging panel shortlisted the final three for the 'above and beyond' award. This is a way for us to involve young people in decision making about activity in the branch (assigned but informed approach).

East Hants Youth Conference – The East Hants Family Support Service supported the annual Youth Conference which focused on young carers in 2022. The event provided activities and facilitated discussion for young people to understand their needs and what support should be offered.

Disabled Children's Team (DCT) Audit tool for children

A SNAP audit tool has been developed for use by children, to capture the child's voice. The tool includes video clip questions using Makaton with various options to return answers via video or boxes for use with switches.

Creating a multi-disciplinary residential home. Throughout 2022 we have been planning the opening of a new multi-agency health and social care residential home for young people with complex needs. The home has been **renamed** by young people as 'Hockley House' in honour of local artist John Hockley. Young People form part of the working group who can **share their views and ideas, on everything from interior design to how residents will have their voices heard, as we work towards** the opening of the home in Autumn 2023.

Family Fun Day – Havant Disabled Children’s Team had two family fun days in April and July 2022 in order to show support to their families, and to provide an opportunity for networking between families and professionals. The events were attended by over 40 children and their parents/carers and feedback confirmed the events were inclusive of their children’s needs.

Spring to spring – Test Valley, Family Support Service (FSS) held an event which included bulb planting, pictures, games, crafting, and teddy tombola. Positive feedback was received about the support offered to children and families by Family support workers.

Circus skills workshop – this took place over May/June 2022 half term; it a two-hour circus skills activity for children subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) and their carers to attend. Carers felt it was good to meet other carers in their situation and it made them feel less alone. Staff signposted carers to community support available and encouraged attendance at the monthly SGO support group and parenting programmes where needed.

Theatre backstage experience at Chesil theatre, Winchester – this experience was offered to care experienced children to provide a backstage experience for 20 young people who reside in foster care or residential care locally. The activity was offered after young people had requested an activity that did not involve being onstage, singing or dancing. This evidences that staff had listened to the needs of the young people prior to providing the activity.

Art therapy pilot project age (8 - 12) - New Forest FSS co-delivered a 6-week art therapy programme with Hart art therapists. The activity had positive outcomes in that 70% of parents saw an improvement in their child’s overall emotional wellbeing. 85% of parents report feeling closer and more connected with their children. 85% of parents have seen an improvement in their child’s confidence and self-esteem.

The Big Conversation at Swanwick Lodge – The Youth Commission visited Swanwick Lodge to ensure these young people could contribute to the Big Conversation. Their report at the end of the visit fed back: *“Overall, the major points we will be taking forward centre around better training and changing attitudes to mental health and neurodivergence, as well as greater access to support. Before leaving, we were treated to a performance of a twenty-minute play that the children had been rehearsing for, which we enjoyed immensely”*

Using Arts across the Youth Offending Service – YOT and YCP offer a range of creative interventions, with Easter and Summer focused activities taking place in 2022. These events provide an opportunity for young people to express themselves through poetry and photography and also gain an Arts Award.

Findings from 2022 Bright Spots Survey

26. At the time of writing this report we have only just received the findings from the Bright Spots survey and are awaiting a full dissemination meeting with the organisers.
27. An initial review of the findings for the *Children In Care* survey has highlighted:
- Overwhelmingly **our young people have a high level of trust in their carers**, with 100% of respondents aged 4-11 responding positively and 95% of those aged 11-18.
 - The level of trust in social workers was also high** ranging from 89 – 100% across the age ranges.
 - 54% of Hampshire's 11-18 year olds had the same social worker over the year which is **higher than other local authorities at 34%**.
 - Positively the vast majority of our young people responded that their lives are improving with 83 – 92% across the age range describing their lives as 'a bit better or much better'.
28. Areas from the review which identify potential areas for improvement include
- Whilst there are a number of positive responses about contact with social works, 2 in 10 of 11-18 year olds had 3 or more social workers in the past year
 - 1 in 10 11-18 year olds described 'hardly ever' having a chance to practice life skills
 - 1 in 10 8-18 year olds hardly ever felt included in decisions about them.
29. We note that there was a relatively low response rate of 17%. We will discuss this with Bright Spots during our dissemination meeting to identify learning and opportunities for improvement. This will also inform our options analysis and decision whether to continue with Bright Spots and/or collate children's feedback via other methods.
30. A full analysis of the findings will inform service planning, transformation and service improvement projects.

Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

31. The role and responsibilities of the CPB continues to evolve since it was introduced in 2017. In January 2020 Hampshire County Council Cabinet approved the Corporate Parenting Board becoming a Board in its own right, with the specific function to ensure that Children in Care and Care Leavers are provided with the best standard of care.
32. In fulfilling its function, the CPB must also hold partners to account to ensure Children in Care and Care Leavers are accessing all that they are entitled to. For this reason, Hampshire's Designated Nurses, CAMHS and Police all report regularly to the Board.

33. The involvement of the CPB in hearing the voices of children and young people and gaining an insight into the work of the service was recently reviewed with the Chair of the Board. As a result of this, CPB members are now provided with a timetable of branch activity (including the core statutory work carried out) in their local area and members request to visit an office or observe a meeting. This model is working well, and members report their activity to the Board to ensure this opportunity is well utilised.
34. The report from the recent Ofsted Focused Visit on 31 January and 1 February is being presented to Full Cabinet on 18 April. Following this, the report will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board. Any recommendations in the Ofsted report in relation to the Corporate Parenting Board will be taken forward by officers and Board members over the coming months.
35. With the introduction of two independently facilitated Councils for children in care and care experienced adults, it is a good time to review how the Corporate Parenting Board can hear the voice of children and young people in order to enhance the impact it has on their lives and experiences.

Finance

36. There are no finance implications for this report.

Performance

37. There are no performance implications for this report.

Consultation and Equalities

38. Any consultation and consideration to equality impact is part of the business as usual approach for participation.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

39. There are no climate change implications to this report.

Conclusions

40. Participation is business as usual in the Children and Families branch. We make it a priority to hear the voices of children and families and this informs our planning for children.
41. We have started seeking the views and opinions of children and families in service improvement and have several examples of good practice in this area. We are clear that we now need to clearly articulate the impact of hearing the voice of children on their lives and their outcomes, so that we can measure the distance travelled, both for children and for us as a service.

CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

A EIA will produced with the new provider as part of the Mobilisation phase

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

*Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:*

- (a) why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*