

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 10 April 2019
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Report title	Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy 2019-2021		
Decision designation	AMBER		
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paul Sweet Children and Young People		
Key decision	Yes		
In forward plan	Yes		
Wards affected	All Wards		
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services		
Originating service	Children and Young People in Care		
Accountable employee	Alice Vickers	Corporate Parenting Officer	
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Report to be/has been considered by	Education and Children's Leadership Team	4 March 2019	
	Strategic Executive Board	26 March 2019	
	Children, Young People and Families	27 March 2019	
	Scrutiny Panel		

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy 2019-2021.
2. Endorse the Council's commitment to ensuring that children and young people have influence over decisions and actions on services that affect them.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the City of Wolverhampton Council's commitment to the importance of effective participation of children and young people and co-production of the services that affect them.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child contains 52 standards that set out the Rights of a Child. Most countries including the United Kingdom have signed up to the convention. Many countries use the standards wholly or in part to promote children and young people's involvement. The standards of most relevance to the participation of service users are:
- Article 12: Children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.
 - Article 13: Children and young people have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.
 - Article 17: Children and young people have the right to receive, seek and give information.
 - Article 23: Disabled children and young people have the right to active participation in their community.
 - Article 2: Requires all of the rights in the convention on the Rights of the Child to be implemented for every child, without discrimination.
- 2.2 The City of Wolverhampton Council has a long and impressive history of effective participation of children and young people with the Youth Council (Youth Service) and Children in Care Council (Looked After Children). Both the forums and children and young people's participation is supported by 1.5 Fulltime Equivalent Participation Officers based in the Children and Young People in Care Service.
- 2.3 The Participation Strategy was developed and designed using workshops with members of the Children in Care Council and the Youth Council during 2018-2019. These workshops focused on what good participation means to young people and practice from other authorities. Young people shared that they wanted to be engaged in service development and decisions making.
- 2.4 The participation workshop group also explored the different forums for young people and how they could share the outcomes of consultation with young people i.e. School Councils and vulnerable young peoples' groups.

3.0 Progress

3.1 The Participation and Co-Production Strategy sets out clear standards of participation for children and young people to ensure that it is not tokenistic and remains relevant.

These standards are:

- Children and young people have the right to participate or not. If they choose to participate, they have the right to understand their responsibilities.
- Participation should be delivered within Wolverhampton's equality and diversity policies or structures.
- There should be clear evidence of commitment to participation from members of the Children and Families Together Board Trust, Safeguarding Children Board, City of Wolverhampton Council Leaders, employees and other relevant partner organisations.
- Services should agree to the Hear by Right quality standards and codes of conduct for working with children and young people.
- Participation should be embedded in strategic planning, delivery, commissioning, communication, business improvement activities, and recruitment.
- Opportunities and support should be provided to all staff and volunteers in order that they develop the skills and attitudes required to work effectively with children and young people.
- Children and young people's involvement should be valued. They should be treated honestly. This means that their expectations are managed, and they are helped to understand any practical, legal or political boundaries of their involvement.
- Children and young people's contributions (appropriate to their age and maturity), should be taken seriously and acted upon. There should be regular feedback from children and young people to confirm that this happens.
- Feedback to children and young people on the impact of their involvement should be timely and clear.
- Children and young people should have equal opportunity to get involved. They should not be discriminated against, or prevented from participating effectively, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sexuality, disability, age, ethnic origin, language, where they live, or the location of services.
- Services should proactively target those facing the greatest barriers to getting involved, for example, younger children, children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, children missing school, young people in the youth justice system, refugees, traveller children, and disabled and other children with special needs. Services should make sure that

children and young people are aware of opportunities to have their say, and they should be encouraged and enabled them to use them.

- Children and young people are encouraged and supported to develop skills that enable them to contribute effectively, and to realise the benefits of doing so.
- Relevant information should be made available to children and young people. It should be at the right time, in the right format, no jargon, culturally appropriate and accessible. Policies and standards for participation should be provided, evaluated and continuously improved.
- Services should say from the beginning how they will know if they are doing a good job of listening to children and young people.
- Children and young people should be involved in reviewing lessons learned.
- The participation strategy should be considered in partnership contracts and service level agreements with providers, whenever possible.

3.2 Each of the participation groups and forums has direct lines of governance as outlined in the diagram below. This ensures that members and officers can support children and young people in having their opinions heard at a corporate and strategic level.



4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 The Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy ensures that the Council is compliant with statutory requirements.

5.0 Reasons for decision

- 5.1 The previous Strategy expires in 2019 and therefore a revision and development of the Strategy is now required.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 Any costs associated with the strategy will be contained within the approved budget for 2019-2020 of £122,000 from Children and Young People's Corporate Parenting Service.

[NM/21032019/A]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 The relevant legislation is set out in the body of the report. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

[TC/01042019/A]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 An initial equalities analysis has been completed and is available to view on request.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0 Human resources implications

- 10.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

- 12.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

13.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Children and Young People’s Participation and Co-Production Strategy
2019 - 2021