

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 15 October 2019

Dear Councillor

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL - TUESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 2019

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Tuesday, 15th October, 2019 meeting of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item
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9	<u>Youth Engagement Strategy (Pages 3 - 10)</u>
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Report of
The Panel is asked to note the following:

1. This item is being considered as pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive.

[Andrew Wolverson, Head of Service People, to present report]

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

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Youth Engagement Strategy #YES



Youth Engagement Strategy #YES

This Strategy is designed to improve the well-being of all children and young people living in the City of Wolverhampton. This vision is 'Happy Healthy Children and Young People'. It is the City of Wolverhampton's commitment to young people aged 8-18 (and up to 25 for those with a Learning Disability or Care Leavers) to support them in living a happy and rewarding life. It recognises the importance of young people's voice in shaping services, valuing their contribution in making the city a great place to bring up families.

We recognise that improving the lives of our children and young people will take consistent and sustained action over a long period of time. It is also not the responsibility of a single person, department or organisation; it will require everyone to work

together. This strategy, therefore, also seeks to outline we will promote co-operation amongst organisations and departments, recognising the role of communities and other service deliverers to ensure that we make a real impact on the lives of our children and young people.

It sets out a direction of travel for creating opportunities for children and young people to be their best. By agreeing mechanisms to support improved working practices and outlining the key outcomes we wish to achieve, we are taking the first step in making a real and lasting impact on the lives of children and young people. It will be a framework to guide organisations to ensure it makes the most of resources and opportunities to benefit local young people.



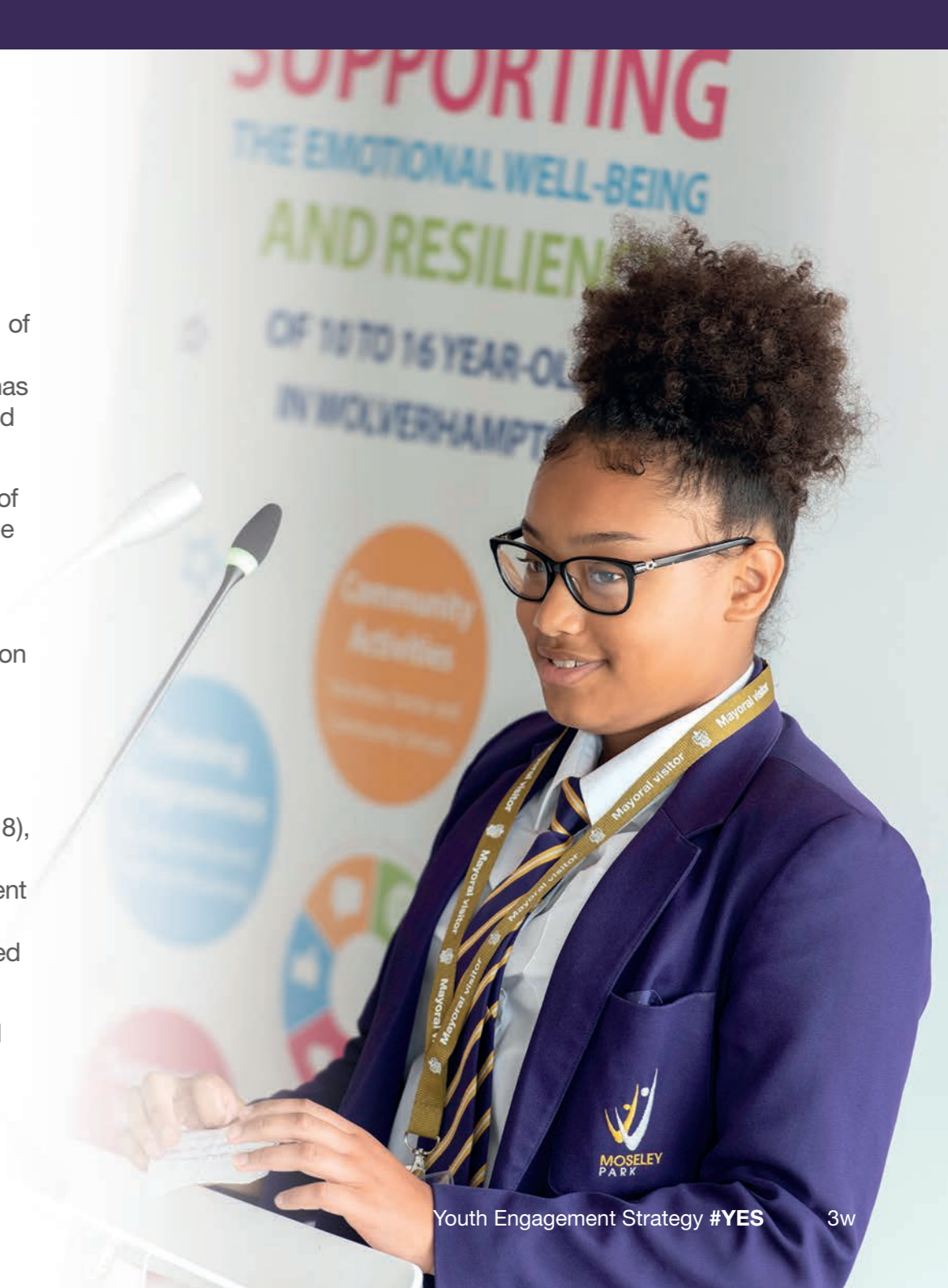
About Children and Young People in Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton has a population of 262,008 (2018), of this 25.6% of the population (67,003) are children and young people aged 0-19. Since 2015 the number of children aged 0-19 in Wolverhampton has risen by 2,427. Over the next five years the number of children and young people living in the city is likely to continue to rise.

The 2011 census provides information about the ethnic make-up of the population of children and young people aged 0-19 living in the city. Most are of White ethnicity (59%), with the next highest proportion being those of Asian/ Asian British ethnicity (20%), followed by Mixed heritage (11%) and Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British heritage (8%). 2% of 0-19-year olds in Wolverhampton are of 'other' ethnicity. Over recent years the city has seen an increase in arrivals from Roma communities from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania.

According to the 2018 annual population survey there are 31,400 households in the city that have dependent children (aged up to 18), of this 12,300 (39%) are lone parent households, compared to a national average of 22%. 58% of households containing dependent children in Wolverhampton are 'couple households', compared to 75% in England. In 2016 25.9% of children in the city were classed as living in child poverty, this compares to 17% for England.

In 2018 1256 pupils (2.7%) attending Wolverhampton schools had either a Statement or Education Health & Care Plan. The national average is 2.9% for England.



How we developed this Strategy

Co-Production

Co-production is a simple idea. It's about individuals, communities and organisations, pooling their skills, knowledge and experiences and working together to improve the quality of life for people and communities.

It's a shift in a way of working, sharing responsibility and power - 'doing with' people, rather than 'doing to' people. It changes people from being 'voices' to partners and is underpinned by a belief that that people who access services, their families and carers, have the expertise and skills to help innovate and improve services they receive. Using co-production in this manner, particularly for the transformation of how services are designed and delivered, leads to better outcomes because the support and services that are put in place do hit the mark.

Adopting the co-production ethos, we worked with young people in developing in developing the questions for the surveys. This included online and paper-based copies, over 1800 surveys were completed.

Over the summer, locally commissioned providers engaged with and collated the views of 258 young people (aged 8-17) on 31 occasions at 27 different locations in groups of 1 - 14 participants over timescales ranging from approximately 5-10 minutes to up to 2 hours. Local artists were commissioned to encourage further group discussions and feedback was presented through are, videos and music. Full details are available on the website.

We also looked at the existing work in the city to ensure that #YES complements existing strategies and plans. This includes; Children Young People & Families Plan, Early Help Plan, Violence and Exploitation Strategy, Community Safety and Harm Reduction Strategy; Tackling Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Including Violence Against Women and Girls, CAMHS Transformation Plan, HeadStart National Lottery funded Programme, The Vision for Public Health 2030, Public Health Annual Report 2017.



About the Strategy

The City of Wolverhampton wants to ensure that every child and young person has the self-esteem, resilience and social skills they need to succeed in life.

There is already a lot of initiatives in the city and it has been recognised that youth provision in the city is fragmented and better coordination is needed.

As part of the Growing up in Wolverhampton consultation, a large proportion of children and young people stated that they enjoy living in Wolverhampton because their friends and family live here. Children and young people reported that spending time with family and friends, playing sports and taking part in outdoor activities made them happy. Similarly, parents reported that spending time together, eating well, getting outdoors and socialising with friends helps their family stay happy and healthy. Majority of parents stated Wolverhampton is a good place for families with responses stating it's a 'lovely city with diverse people'.

The consultation has highlighted a need to provide provision and support that is open access rather than referral. Many existing strategies already cite early intervention and prevention, but these focus on a targeted cohort and based on existing risk factors. There is a clear need for earlier interventions, rather than waiting for risk factors to surface.

Key themes have emerged through our understanding of need, current service provision, service performance and

the outcomes experienced by children and young people in Wolverhampton. We have identified the following areas where we believe earlier support will have the greatest impact on outcomes. The three areas the strategy will focus on is:

Being Healthy

Being Connected

Being You

VISION

'Happy Healthy Children and Young People'.

OBJECTIVES

Being Healthy

Children's and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health are vitally important and underpin positive outcomes in childhood and successes as an adult.

What did the analysis tell us?

Crime and the fear of crime remains an important issue affecting the well-being of young people in their community. Many young people feel safe in the city, but there is still the perception among some that the streets are not safe, and some groups of young people are experiencing more incidents of crime than others.



Young people have identified mental health at the top of the list that require action.

The recent Health Related Belief Survey (HRBS, 2018) found that secondary aged girls are also less likely to rate their emotional and mental health as good or excellent compared with secondary aged boys. More than half of all mental health conditions in adulthood begin before the age of 14.

Data from HeadStart highlighted that on average young people are more likely to show signs of aggression or ‘act out’ more than others. It was also reported that young people are less able to interact successfully with peers. Children especially in year 8 are less able to understand another’s feelings. Further to this, young people across HeadStart schools reported that they participate in fewer activities outside of school and home than others.

Wellbeing was a common theme for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities when they were consulted on an ordinary life. Further to this, children and young people with needs and disabilities stated access to leisure centres and parks acted as a barrier for them to become active.

Young people have stated that parents are the main source of information about issues, suggesting a whole family approach should be included as a method of raising health awareness.

Stakeholders reported wellbeing, resilience and empathy needs to be promoted. Workforce was fundamental in supporting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing. By equipping staff in schools and the city’s voluntary and community sector with a better understanding of emotional and mental health and how to respond, young people can develop a range of strategies and the resilience to cope with the challenges that come their way. Young people should not first learn about mental health problems when they or their family or friends have emerging problems or are in crisis.

What are we going to do about it?

- We will work through the Emotional Wellbeing Mental Health Partnership to develop services for young people.
- We will promote positive stories about young people to help redress negativity sometimes shown towards young people in the media.
- Raise awareness of emotional and mental ill-health and its manifestations; the connection between physical and mental health.
- Support the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing with young people.
- Building a confident, accessible and responsive workforce who share a common language and common approaches through a transformed system of cross-disciplinary, multi-agency and multi-layered services.
- Develop a specific strategy and action plan on emotional wellbeing of children and young people.



Being Connected

Sense of community or being connected comes in many forms. It can be simply walking down the street and hearing friendly “hellos” from passersby; meeting up with new friends and chatting for hours; joining a club or a community event and feeling welcomed immediately and attending school.

For some young people their connection is to the online world. Facebook groups, video game parties and online forums are just a few examples of the many ways people can connect by using the Internet. As technology is evolving fast and new developments are allowing for a blend to occur between physical and digital spaces.

What did the analysis tell us?

What is apparent throughout the survey is that young people and parents feel that they do not receive enough information and generally don't know what services and activities are available. How providers market their services and facilities must consider various social media platforms and reach young people in a format and language they associate with. Co-ordination of local marketing needs to be addressed.

The consultation showed that young people and parents use local facilities. The Summer Squad programme evaluation showed that over 16,000 children and young people attended activities over the summer holidays. These ranged from family fun days, play in the park, dancing, artwork and targeted provision for some more vulnerable young people. Overall, the summer squad

received some positive feedback. In addition to this, there was a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour.

The consultation response showed young people and families liked to spend time outdoors and valued 'family time'.

Many respondents viewed school in a largely positive light. Although one group viewed it as simply “work, work, work”, another notable opinion cited school as “kind of a family. They support me”, 'Education' in its widest sense was valued as something you “need for success in life”.

According to a recent Special Education Needs and Disabilities consultation, children and young people generally provided positive responses about their aspirations for the future. Children reported that as part of an ordinary life, they engage in a mixture of fun activities, happy home lives and have daily routine activities with most stating that they would like more things to do and places to go that are SEND friendly.

Organisations reported that they need to be more aware of the provision and activities that are available for children and young people especially with activities that involves the family.

How will we respond?

- We will build on the success of Summer Squad and pledge to provide activities during the school holidays.
- We will create a website detailing the activities available throughout the year.
- We will invest in the local community to encourage local ownership, identifying funding opportunities and working together on local solutions.
- Provide training and support to community-based organisations to develop their capacity for increasing membership and participation by young people.
- Encourage more inter-generational communication to broaden awareness of the needs of and opportunities for young people in communities.
- We will undertake a needs analysis thereby putting the City in a stronger position to accessing alternative funding opportunities that often require a quick turn around on bids.



Being You

Wolverhampton has a strong track record of young people engagement and co-production. The approach underpinning co-production is in line with Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2016-2019 (City of Wolverhampton Council, 2016).

The City of Wolverhampton Council is proud to already have a Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy 2019 – 2021. The Strategy commits to children and young people;

- having an equal opportunity to meaningfully participate
- being involved in designing services of the future
- contributing to and benefit from involvement in their local communities
- feeling that they are being heard and valued
- being able to make a difference
- improving their education and skills through participation opportunities

Current groups involved are the Youth Council, Children in Care Council, Care leavers forum B-Safe and HeadStart ambassadors. The aspiration is to include broader groups. The Children Young People and Families Together Board endorsed a Citywide Coproduction Charter. Building on the work with young people, the charter also includes parents and carers.

What did the analysis tell us?

The 'Growing up in Wolverhampton' consultation findings found that our children and young people are ambitious as they wish to learn and get involved in activities.

Young people have said they want more than just to be asked opinions and views. There is a strong desire for active participation in decisions, implementation and monitoring of services. The lottery funded HeadStart programme showed the added value of young people in the commissioning process to ensure services reflected need and was 'right' for the locality and the young people.

Professionals who work with SEND children and young people described a lack of opportunity for children and young people to achieve the future goals they aspired to. It was reported that this was due to a mixture of poor coordination across the system and a lack of focus on individual skill development in the context of realistic future career options.

How will we respond?

- Young people who want to be involved in co-production will be given the opportunity to have their voices heard and valued.
- Young people's views will be heard, valued and respected. They will be able to make a real difference, by challenging and informing change.

- We will establish a participation hub designed by young people. It will provide consultancy support to organisations who want to adopt the co-production ethos.
- We will work with organisations and departments on embedding the co-production charter.
- We will monitor and review organisations and departments co-production.
- We will thrive to make the City of Wolverhampton a youthful child friendly city.

What will success look like?

Children and young people:

- are physically and mentally healthy
- are respected and their opinions valued
- learn and achieve
- live in safety and stability

How will success be measured

1. Increase numbers of young people participating and engaging effectively in their communities.
2. Improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability.
3. Encourage physical activity and healthy eating.
4. Ensure young people and their families have access to the right information and advice to make their own choices.
5. Improve social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people.
6. Increase engagement and participation, voice and influence of "all" young people.

What next?

The City of Wolverhampton Council and its key partners will develop an action plan to accompany the Strategy, setting out the actions for which it will be responsible over the next three years.



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