

Report title	Participation of Children and Young People Annual Report 2018-2019	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Children's Services	
Accountable employee	Alice Vickers Tel Email	Corporate Parenting Officer 01902 553010 Alice.Vickers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Children's Leadership Team	11 July 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Approve the annual report and the work of the young people in sharing their views on the services that support them.
2. Endorse the City's continued commitment to children and young people having influence over decisions that affect them and involved in co-producing services in the City.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the participation activities of children and young people over the past 12 months with the Council and its partners in line with the Participation Strategy 2016-2019.
- 1.2 To provide an outline of the planned activities for 2018-2019 with the addition of the review of the current strategy and co-production of a new revised strategy for 2019.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In September 2016, Cabinet approved the Council's three-year Participation Strategy for Children and Young People. This year was the final year of this strategy. A review of the effectiveness of the strategy was needed and consideration over the future of participation post 2019 was required.
- 2.2 Part of this review and evaluation included an understanding of the legislation that underpins the Council duty.
- 2.3 Children and Young Persons Act 2008 legislated for the recommendations in the Department for Education and Skills 2007 Care Matters white paper to provide high quality care and services for children in care. This Act laid out the expectation to all local authorities to put in place arrangements for a 'Children in Care Council', with direct links to the Director of Children's Services and Lead Cabinet Member.
- 2.4 The United Nations Council 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.
- 2.5 The City of Wolverhampton Council has a long and impressive history of effective participation of children and young people with the Youth Council (YC), Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF). All the forums and children and young people's participation activities are supported by 1.5 full-time equivalent Participation

Officers and managed by the Corporate Parenting Officer based in the Children and Young People in Care Service.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The CICC membership from April 2018-March 2019 consisted of 23 members with 11 females and 12 males with the meeting being held monthly on the last Wednesday of the month. All members of the group have a two-day induction covering terms of reference, roles of officers, elected members and regional groups, functional roles within the group (chair, etc) and levels of commitment. This induction included a behind the scenes tour of the Molineux organised by the Children's Commissioner Office.
- 3.2 The CiCC meetings are held at Red Lion Street, Youth Council room and the agenda for the meetings include the Corporate Parenting Board planned reports ensuring the young people on CiCC can share their views and opinions of those services delivered to children and young people in care and care leavers. Reports include Corporate Parenting Strategy Annual Review, Fostering Annual Report, Health Report for Children and Young People in Care, Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report, Independent Reviewing Officers Annual report and the Adoption reports.
- 3.3 In addition to these schedule items the CiCC have met with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Director of Children's Services twice through the year. The group at the end of this reporting year also have met the new Managing Director, Tim Johnson.
- 3.4 Throughout this year the CiCC have attend two Corporate Parenting Board meetings. The group helped plan and deliver the Children and Young People in Care I awards 2018 and the planning of 2019 awards planned to be held in early April 2019.
- 3.5 The CICC have heavily been involved with the opening of the Council's new residential assessment centre from choosing a name, Key to Inspiration (K2I) the décor and design of the building and recruiting the staff.
- 3.6 The Care Leavers Forum (CLF) has had nine members in this reporting period, three male and six females. The group meets monthly at the Youth Council offices in Red Lion Street on the first Wednesday of the month.
- 3.7 The group receive reports from services that support them in the same way the CiCC does which forms their year workplan this will also include reports from the Transition Team regarding service development.
- 3.8 In addition, the CLF has met twice in this year with the Corporate Parenting Board to explore issues and challenges of being a care leaver.
- 3.9 With the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the CLF co-produced the Local Offer for Care Leavers and supported its launch by having a bake sale to raise funds for an afternoon tea.

- 3.10 The National Care Leavers Covenant was launched this year and, as the City of Wolverhampton Council is a lead Local Authority, the CLF played a vital role in their Communication Strategy, support required and hosted the Launch at Birmingham's ICC.
- 3.11 As a result of the hard work and commitment of the Co-Chair of the CLF, Casey Gavin, won the High Sheriff's Award.
- 3.12 The Youth Council has had 67 young people as members over 2018-2019, 25 males and 42 female members. This group meets monthly and has a two-day induction process following the declaration in November 2018. Schools nominate members on to the YC and all, but three schools are represented.
- 3.13 To generate the interest in schools and community groups represented on the YC, the participation team complete direct work and presentation with staff and young people. In this year twelve groups and schools were supported individually with meetings, assemblies and literature to encourage membership of YC.
- 3.14 The YC has two permanent seats on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel and assist in the scrutiny of service that support children and young people in the City. The Youth Council have attended Scrutiny Board to update Councillors.
- 3.15 The YC has as part of their induction contributed to the consultation of the Financial Challenge as well as involvement in the development of the new Council Plan 2019-2024.
- 3.16 Members of the Youth Council represented young people of Wolverhampton at the Key Cities Conference with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet member for regeneration, to discuss the future of city centres. They were the only Youth Council present and during the visit met Bill Grimsey - Business Leader and author of the first and second Grimsey Review.
- 3.17 All groups this year participated and contributed to the Take Over Challenge 2018. This year's events included consultation on The Westside Link Project, Knife Crime with the Community Safety Team and Partners and Children Services Practice Week Feedback. The event saw 23 members of the Youth Council, seven members of the CiCC and two members of the CLF attend.
- 3.18 The Westside Link Project which is a major public realm improvement scheme in the City centre and young people learnt about it as the consultation process which has commenced, and it is becoming apparent that the main sectors of the public that are engaging in the consultation are the older population in the City who have specific issues with accessibility. It is envisaged that the project will offer young people an exciting new era for the City centre as a place to meet as well as attracting new activities and events.
- 3.19 The Young People met with the Community Safety Team and Partners in the City to talk about the issues and challenges around knife crime. They completed a Mentimeter exercise capturing their views on Knife Crime in the City and influencing key officers. The

City's young people have just completed their Make Your Mark Vote and the number one issue they have raised is 'Put an end to Knife crime - Too many young people's lives are lost to knife crime; the Government need to do more to help end the knife crime epidemic'.

- 3.20 Heads of Service from Children Services gave feedback on their findings during the Practice Week in Children's Social Care. They shared their approach in ensuring a more consistent, effective and efficient service that ensure interventions improve outcomes for children and young people. The Director, Heads of Service and Service Managers spent a full week in teams completing audits, observing practice and talking to frontline workers and will use this event to feedback to the young people representing the City's children and young people.
- 3.21 The groups feedback on these areas has been included in the consultation process as part of the developments of the individual service areas, as well as being recorded by the Scrutiny Team.
- 3.22 All Groups have supported the process of interview for frontline and key strategic personnel in the Council including:
- Managing Director of the Council Social Work Unit managers
 - Social Workers
 - Young Person Advisors
 - Looked After Children Nurse
 - Family Support Worker
 - Housing Support Staff
- 3.23 The Youth Voice Groups have been involved in key consultations for the Council, regionally and nationally and this has included:
- Early Help Strategy
 - Young Carers
 - West Side Development
 - The Council Plan
 - Youth Violence Strategy
 - Care Leavers Covenant
 - Library Transformation
 - Sexual Health Curriculum with Public Health
 - Waste and Recycling Services
 - Work Experience and Work Box
 - Mental Health green paper
 - Children's Commissioner report on Neglect
- 3.24 CiCC and CLF members are Total Respect Trained. This training is to enable direct workers with children and young people in care and care leavers to get an insight of what it must be to be in the care of the local authority. This year the young people have delivered training to:
- West Midlands Police (Frontline and specialist teams)

- Staff from Prisons
- Social Work Students from the City of Wolverhampton University
- YMCA
- Social Worker
- Councillors
- Foster Carers (including Family and Friend Carers)

3.25 All groups meet up at events and collectively are called Wolverhampton's Youth Voice and as a collective they have had a joint residential to Condover. Over the past year, this group's successes for Wolverhampton's Youth Voice in 2018-2019 have included:

- Member of the Youth Council has been recognised as Young Citizen of the Year with runner up
- A Care Leaver winning the High Sheriff's Award
- Equalities Inspection work will now be recognised for the next level
- All members of the CiCC and CLF receiving an I-Award.
- A record turnout for Make Your Mark
- A Youth MP in the House of Commons
- Wolverhampton's Youth Council and Children in Care Council have each been recognised as one of the best in the country

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

4.2 The activities and support for the young people were funded through the approved budget for 2018-2019 for Corporate Parenting Service of £150,000.
[NM/03072019/R]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
[TC/02072019/W]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the involvement of children and young people in decisions about them to mitigate against any inequalities.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications as a result of this report.

9.0 Corporate Landlord implications

9.1 There are no Corporate Landlord implications as a result of this report.

10.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

10.1 There are no Health and wellbeing implications as a result of this report.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 None