

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING CABINET BOARD
8th March 2018**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
SERVICES – KERI WARREN**

MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

**PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG
PEOPLE REPORT**

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on the work of the Engagement and Participation Officer for Children and Young People's Services.

2. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work carried out by the Engagement and Participation Officer for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Children and Young People's Services since commencing the post in January 2017. The majority of the direct work for the period of time covered in this report relates to children and young people who are looked after by the Local Authority.

3. Background

Participation Working Group

The first meeting of the Participation Working Group was held on February 17th and meet on a monthly basis. The group is made up of professional staff from across Children and Young People's Services. The group aims to ensure through pro-active participation and engagement children and young people receiving a service are given the opportunity to have a say in developing future service provision. The

group use their knowledge and resources to plan events and consultations for children and young people. This is also an opportunity to network with a range of agencies.

Looked after children celebration of achievements and success evening

An event was held on the 25th April 2017 to celebrate the achievements and successes of looked after children in NPT. Children aged between 12-14 years were nominated by social workers, parents/carers and teachers. The event was staged to improve community inclusion and social wellbeing. Partner agencies involved were; South Wales Police, Mid and West Wales Fire Brigade, Voices from Care, Children's Rights Unit, Barnardos, Children's Services and Ysgol Bae Baglan Community School.

The event was compered by Mr Andrew Wallsgrove from the Children's Commissioner's Office. Supporting the evening was a local dance school TDM, Welsh Netball, Swansea City FC and Ospreys RFC. 29 children received awards and were publicly celebrated for their achievements. Tata Steel sponsored the evening to the amount of £500 and agreed to sponsor future events which will include a Tata Steel award. Other local businesses offered support; Boots, Gwyn Hall Neath. The event was publicised in the Evening Post and 'In the Loop' NPT magazine.

Children's Rights

Training has been undertaken to provide new employees up to date and relevant information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). UNCRC training to be given during the induction period. 'Train the trainer' training provided by Children's Rights Unit. Previous work surrounding Children's Rights started by the previous Engagement & Participation Officer during 2016 has been concluded. Artwork produced during a Children's Rights graffiti art workshop have been publicly displayed in Fairway Family Resource Centre, Sandfields. The Art was promoted in 'In the Loop'.

LAC Review Booklets, Child Protection Conference: Information for Parents/Carers and CYP Leaflet, Information about being in care booklet.

Parent/carers, children and young people informative material has been reviewed and updated. Young people have been consulted in order to

make the material more appealing and relevant to children and young people. Leaflets and booklets are accessible through the medium of Welsh and are in various editions to cater for children and young people with additional learning needs. Mrs T. Jones Deputy Head Teacher Ysgol Hendreflin was consulted during the development of the ALN (additional learning needs) booklets.

Looked after Children Youth Council

During May 2017 CYPS established the Looked After Children's Youth Council. The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child is a core value in CYPS and listening to the voice of the child or young person in everything we do is principal. The council was formed to empower young people aged between 11-18 years to influence and inform the decisions that affect their lives. CYPS support young people to get involved in their communities, making a difference as volunteers, campaigners, decision-makers and leaders. A recruitment day was held with the support of Bulldogs Gym. The council meet monthly and currently has 15 members. The council have designed their logo with the support of NPTCBC web designers. Looked after children across the county were asked to choose their favourite design. The council is called YOVO – YOur VOice Matters. Children and young people determine the agenda and issues the group tackle. Children Services work in partnership with the Children's Rights Unit to support YoVo. Yovo have partnered with Lliesiau Bach, Wales Observatory Swansea University to carry out research on agendas chosen by the yp's. Yovo have visited the Senedd to gain an understanding of Welsh politics and their rights as young people, rock climbing, tenpin bowling, trampolining, cycling to raise awareness of UNCRC Article 15 & 31 – the right to meet friends, join groups and relax and play.

Young Carers Strategy

NPTCBC Young Carers Strategy aims to improve the lives of young carers and their families in Neath Port Talbot. We want to ensure that every young carer achieves their full potential and has positive emotional and physical wellbeing. It is therefore crucial that partner organisations in NPT work together to recognise, value and support our young carers. Consultation with young carers was undertaken during the Young Carers Event held in April. The proposed strategy was discussed and CYP gave their opinions and shared their experiences. Further consultation took place in Wauncierch Youth Club. Consultation initiated a CYP friendly document, promotional material to advertise services and identify young

carers and support services to be reviewed. In October a fun day and consultation was organised for young carers to have their views on the CYP document and be part of the marketing campaign to highlight young carers and promote services to this group. In April 2018 a programme of awareness will be delivered to schools via school assemblies & PSE lessons.

Public Service Board - Citizens Engagement Scheme

The Public Service Board (PSB) has produced this Scheme for all partners to collaborate more effectively, focus resources and avoid duplication. It is intended that this Scheme will contribute to providing a 'one public service' and bring citizen engagement central to the purpose of the PSB. Such improved collaboration will provide a more comprehensive and inclusive assessment of need, recognise aspirations of the future, encourage participation and result in more efficient and cost effective decisions and services. The Engagement & Participation Officer attended this group to ensure the voice of the child was a key part of the scheme. NPTCBC consulted the public on the Welsh Government well-being objectives and as part of this consultation produced a children and young people friendly questionnaire to gather the views of children and young people in relation to the 'The Well-being of Future Generations Act'.

Circus Eruption

Children's Services collaborated with Circus Eruption to engage children with behavioural issues to improve their team building, confidence, communication skills and behaviour. 20 looked after children of primary school age participated in fun circus skills based activities over two days. A range of fun activities from human towers, unicycles to juggling were learnt. All this accumulated in a circus show in front of an audience at the end of day two. Children even took on roles of responsibility and managed the production along with those who chose to perform. Values such as caring for others, openness, supporting friends and trying new things were at the core of all activities. The aim of such events is to engage with children in a productive and meaningful way to build relationships which has a positive impact on behaviour at home with their carer/parent. This results in less intervention from services.

CSE awareness & website

As part of the Engagement & Participation Officer's Action Plan young people in secondary schools across NPT were to be approached to support the development of a Child Sex Exploitation website. The Engagement & Participation Officer visited secondary schools and gave a CSE awareness workshop and consulted with young people on the design and content of the proposed website. Adults were also consulted via the Foster Carer Association to give their input on the Parent/Carer section of the site. The Risky Behaviour Panel was attended, chaired by Ali Davies (Principal Officer at the time), to network with partner agencies and the police. Further work in this area was undertaken in partnership with Bulldogs Community Gym. A Community Response Group was formed and vulnerable young people attended a half day workshop for 5 weeks to educate them on a range of safeguarding issues. Young people attending were consulted regarding the website and participated in the CSE awareness workshop. Consultation will now take place to implement a marketing strategy to raise awareness of the site. Working in collaboration with South Wales Police, Cynydd and NPT secondary schools, the Engagement Officer will be facilitating a programme of CSE awareness to vulnerable groups to commence in April 2018.

Children and young people's website

A looked after children's website is in its development stages. The website will be used to advertise and promote events and services to children and young people and contain important contact details. Social worker teams will have access to the site to promote initiatives. Social media sites will be available on the website also.

Pen y Fan walk to raise awareness of Children's Rights

On the 15th August 2017 Children's Services walked to the summit of Pen Y Fan in the Brecon Beacons to raise awareness of the UNCRC at the highest point in southern Britain. 17 young people and 9 NPTCBC staff attended. Primary schools across NPT participated by decorating flags with UNCRC rights on. These flags were displayed at the top of the mountain in a Tibetan prayer flag fashion. The event was supported by 4 MAWWF Service staff and the Brecon Beacons National Park. Further outdoor activities have included a 4 hour hike around Tor Y Foel which targeted 16 key stage 2 & 3 children and a woodland caretakers and survival skills day in Craig Y Nos Country Park for primary aged children. In February 2018 10 young people enjoyed Geocaching in the Brecon Beacons.

Snow Camp

11 looked after children attended a Snow Camp on the 17th & 18th August 2017. The purpose of the event was to learn how to ski or snowboard, engage with new friends and learn life skills. The sessions built confidence, encouraged team work, perseverance, communication and listening skills to name but a few. The 2 day event was a taster course for future courses in order to gain qualifications in Ski instruction. The event was funded by the Foster Carer Association. One young person from the group has enrolled on the Snow Camp Graduation School to become a competent skier and instructor.

Sailing with Challenge Wales

Looked after young people became part of the crew of the round the world yacht Challenge Wales. The crew sailed the yacht for a full day in the Bristol Channel taking on full responsibilities of sailing. The activity promoted teamwork, leadership, communication along with building self-confidence. All crew members worked towards a teamwork qualification which is accredited by Agored Cymru and contributes to an NVQ.

Listen up

Yovo attend various events organised by the Children's Commissioners Office and Voices from Care to learn about their rights and get their voice heard. Topics range from barriers to participation to bullying.

iClub

The Engagement Officer has teamed up with the telecommunication company 3 to deliver online safety to children and young people. The safety training is delivered to children during iClub. iClub is a computer club set up for LAC children & young people in order to enhance their computer skills and be safe online in a safe and sociable setting. The children learn how to code, create movies, produce music and more. The next iClub will commence in April and the target group is children with disabilities, based in Ysgol Hendre Felin.

Parent/child cooking classes

12 parent/carers and their child attended a cooking lesson with a focus on building relationships and preparing wholesome, nutritious meals on a budget. The event was planned in collaboration with Team around the Family (TAF) to help families in crisis. Play activities were organised for siblings.

Margam Park Event

15 children and young people visited Margam Park open day in February 2018. The trip focused on children and young people from teams across the service and encouraged parents and carers to participate. The event included outdoor activities and team building, confidence activities.

Bulldogs Boxing and Community Centre

The Engagement & Participation Officer works closely with Bulldogs Boxing and Community Centre to provide children and young people with meaningful social activities. The Centre aims to promote healthy lifestyles and social skills through fun games and sporting activities. Together, the Engagement Officer and Bulldogs have set up fusion@bulldogs. The youth club is held twice a week targeting children and young people who receive services.

Consultations

Consultations have been held to listen to the voice of children and young people. These have included Supporting People Service Users consultation, Young Carers consultation, looked after children and their placement and Pendarvis contact centre. Work has been undertaken to gather the views of children and young people in order to improve services. The Supporting People and Young Carer consultations have provided Commissioning with a valuable insight to planning future services. The latter two have prompted two projects which are currently being undertaken. Looked after children are researching placement experiences and developing material to inform children and young people of their placement prior to arriving. The Engagement and Participation Officer is capitalising on links with local colleges to decorate the Pendarvis contact centre with animation drawings chosen by service users.

Networking & Fundraising

Meeting with various agencies including Mid and West Wales Fire Service, South Wales Police, Children's Rights Unit, Youth Service, Barnardos, NPT Education, Swansea City FC, Ospreys Community, Voices From Care, NPTC Group to name but a few.

£1,850 has been raised through community support donations and grants. Tata Steel have sponsored 3 Celebration Evenings to the amount of £500 each and Yovo were awarded a £350 grant from the NPT Council for Voluntary Service. A £600 'play' grant has been applied for.

Proposed future events

Further Celebration Events are being planned for 2018. A grant has been applied for to buy 6 GPS units to organise Geocaching events. The events will promote wellbeing and improve relationships. A focus will be on father/child sessions, children with disabilities and behavioural issues to begin with. Further collaboration with the Brecon Beacons National Park is already underway in order to increase engagement and participation through outdoor activities. Links with the National Museum and Fire Service are being capitalised on. A proposed environment club is in the making with plans to protect NPT's outstanding parks and beaches by beach cleaning etc. and awareness work.

4. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Members note the work of the Engagement and Participation Officer for Children and Young People's Services.

5. Equality impact assessment

There is no requirement for an equality impact assessment.

6. Workforce impacts

There are no workforce impacts arising from this report.

7. Legal impacts

There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

8. Financial impacts

There are no financial impacts arising from this report.

9. Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

10. Risk Management

There are no risk management requirements arising from this report.

11. Appendices

Not applicable.

12. Background Papers

None

13. Officer Contact

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