



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Appendix 1

Social Services Engagement and Participation Annual Report 2023/2024

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Background

As a Local Authority it is important that we consistently capture and hear the voice of those we support. We want to ensure that we offer the best opportunity to listen and respond to people's views. Participation is an integral part of our planning and development of services. Therefore in Social Services we have a strategic lead for Engagement and Participation, and also a dedicated officer for both children and adult services to promote collaborative working. In Neath Port Talbot we work in an outcome focused way and ensure that we have 'what matters conversations' with those that we support. Across the Directorate it is a requirement that workers evidence that plans are being co-produced with the individual child, adult and their families to ensure that their voice is being heard and that meaningful and best outcomes can be achieved. There are Engagement and Participation Champions across the service who support this work within their teams.

This annual report will provide information from the last 12 months of the work undertaken by the Engagement and Participation Team to engage with those people who access our service, the report will also detail the priorities for team for the next 12 months across the Directorate.

National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales

The National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales are a set of ten principles for engaging with the public and service users. The principles aim to guide the way engagement is carried out to make sure it is good quality, open and consistent. The principles were developed by Participation Cymru and have been endorsed by the Welsh Government (www.participationcymru.org.uk)

1. Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference
2. Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose
3. Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way
4. Work with relevant partner organisations
5. The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable
6. Make it easier for people to take part

7. Enable people to take part effectively
8. Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective
9. People are told the impact of their contribution
10. Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement.

Engagement and Participation across Children and Young People's Services.

The Engagement & Participation Team works across Children's Services to embed children's rights into our daily practice. It provides opportunities for children and young people up to the age of 25 to develop the confidence and skills to understand and exercise their rights, co-produce services and have a voice in matters that affect them and aims to advance the education of duty bearers to understand their role in enabling children and young people to access their rights. The Engagement and Participation Team support a wide range of children and young people with different backgrounds, needs and experiences.

Throughout the last year, we have supported a wide range of activities, trips, projects, consultations, established groups and training to actively seek the voice of the child. This report outlines the work undertaken.

Children's Rights Champions

Children's Rights are everyone's responsibility and in order to embed children's rights into practice Children's Services committed to the concept of 'Children's Rights Champions'. In 2021 'Champions' were recruited and committed to a list of actions they set to embed children's rights into practice in their specific roles. Implementation of actions is overseen by the Quality Practice Group and the Practice Improvement Group, and we meet 'Champions' every six months to review progress and support with future plans. To further support the work of the Engagement and Participation Officer a Participation Champions group meets quarterly and is made up of staff from across the Service. It is an opportunity to share good practice, promote events and discuss common themes. The Engagement and Participation Team deliver an 'Introduction to Children's Rights' session during new staff's induction. The session also provides an opportunity to share the work of the Team and promote upcoming opportunities.

Children's Commissioner for Wales project 2024

The Engagement and Participation Team are participating in a project being led by the Children's Commissioner for Wales. The project is funded by ENYA (European Network of Young Advisors) and includes groups from across Europe. The project's focus is around the 'Protection and promotion of the rights of the child in alternative care'. We attended two workshops in March and there will be regular sessions throughout 2024, this will culminate in a trip to Slovakia where two young people will present findings on behalf of Hope.

Children's Rights Promises

Everyone working with children and young people should be aware of and consider children's rights in their practice and should consider themselves as 'duty-bearers', ensuring that they support children to access their rights. As the UNCRC states, children have many different rights, children should be aware of every one of them, and be able to understand and access them.

Throughout 2023 the Engagement and Participation Team with the support of Children's Rights Unit designed a Children's Rights Charter. The design was shared with professionals, foster carers and children and young people and was launched in the Autumn of 2023. The charter has been distributed to staff and will be shared at Children's Rights training.

The purpose of the Neath Port Talbot Children's Services Children's Rights Charter will be to:

- Raise awareness and inform children and young people of their rights
- Ensure children and young people feel supported and empowered
- Outline the help and support children and young people can expect
- Emphasise Neath Port Talbot's commitment to protect and respect children and young people's rights
- Ensure Neath Port Talbot Children's Services take their responsibilities seriously
- Improve service delivery through listening to children and young people



YoVo – Your Voice Matters

YoVo is a young person's action group open to children 11+ who are receiving support. This mixed group is another platform for children and young people to have a voice and improve their well-being. 2023's focus has been on mental health and well-being. Work has been delivered around emotional health and resilience in partnership with Action for Children and the Children's Rights Unit. They delivered Skills Plus which is a psychosocial-skills building intervention for young people leaving care aged between 14 and 24. The workshop helped the young people to understand thoughts, feelings and behaviour and provided tools to manage daily obstacles.

Members of YoVo were invited by Southwest Wales Connected and Transport for Wales to take part in their 'Joy of the Journey' initiative. The project is about arranging hosted train journeys across the region that show how wonderful - as well as easy - rail transport can be; bringing people together, tackling isolation and loneliness, along with promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel and tourism. Young people enjoyed a journey from Neath to Burry Port and were joined by Transport for Wales staff and British Transport Police.

In order to support YoVo to enjoy various activities and have their voices heard on issues that are important to them, an application to the 'Community Changemakers' grant scheme was submitted in late 2022. The application was successful and YoVo were awarded £800 for activities to improve their health and wellbeing.

Members of YoVo have made a list of the activities they would like to take part in throughout 2023/24. For their first activity, YoVo attended boxing/fitness sessions with Bulldogs Boxing in Port Talbot. The aim of the sessions is to challenge them to take part in something new, improve their fitness, build their confidence and improve their overall health and wellbeing.

The remaining Community Changemakers grant was used to fund art therapy workshops with local artist. Members of YoVo were able to spend a few sessions learning creative techniques whilst relaxing with friends and listening to music.

HOPE – care experienced girls' rights group

HOPE is a care experienced girls' rights group. Hope have concluded their Safer Spaces project raising awareness of sexual harassment. Hope received a £2000 grant to support their work and worked tirelessly throughout the year planning and delivering a variety of events and workshops. These included,

- Photography sessions to highlight the impact of sexual harassment. Hope produced a short video.
- Bushcraft workshop which included axe throwing and a fire pit. The girls recorded names and sexual harassment they have experienced and threw these into the fire.
- Self-defence classes – over 20 girls and women attended Krav Maga in order to build confidence, learn to be street safe and aware of dangers.
- Sexual Harassment workshops – Hope helped develop a 45-minute workshop to educate boys on sexual harassment and its consequences. The workshop has been delivered to over 120 boys in Neath Port Talbot Secondary Schools.
- At the start of April Hope put on wetsuits and braved the waterfalls of Pontneddfechan. Working in collaboration with outdoor activity company Anturfit the group painted sexual

harassment they have encountered on their suits and went under a waterfall to wash it off in a symbolic gesture. The event caught the attention of BBC Wales, and the girls were filmed and interviewed. Their story was a feature of the news and promoted the excellent work being undertaken in NPT by Social Services.

- Art Exhibition at Base 15. Guests met members of Hope and experienced the outstanding work they have achieved. The event was supported by the local police who regularly attend group meetings and a representative from the Crime Commissioners Office.
- To celebrate the work the group travelled to London to meet girls' rights groups from across Wales and share the great work they have been doing. Hope even enjoyed a trip on the London Eye. Furthermore, the Engagement and Participation Officer attended an event at the Senedd as a guest speaker to share the important message Hope are working to convey.



Members of Hope participated in a two-day creative research project with international charity Plan UK to look at issues that are important to girls and young women. Hope were the only voices from Wales to be included in the report which will be published in due course. Hope members received a qualification from the University of Dundee for their contributions.

The Hope 2023 Residential took place at the end of July. 15 girls spent 2 nights and 3 days at Call of the Wild. The group enjoyed hiking, team building, gorge walking, climbing and more significantly built friendships, confidence and memories. The residential included inspirational talks from women one of whom was singer songwriter and radio host Bronwen Lewis. This successful partnership with Call of the Wild has helped secure funding for a further group to experience this adventure in Autumn 2024.

Care Experienced Mum's Group

Efforts were made to establish a care experienced mum's group. Working in partnership with Roots Foundation Swansea and Jig-So, our mums were invited to attend the incredible Roots venue to learn how to cook cheap, nutritious meals for their children, socialise and network with other mum's and access services from guests such as Action for Children. The group failed to attract the numbers needed to sustain it, we will review this again in 2024.

The Language We Use

Big Chat Events are an opportunity for our children and young people to have a voice and be listened to – Article 12 UNCRC. They are a significant event in the Engagement and Participation Officer's calendar and offer an opportunity for Children's Services Team's to engage with children and young people and further improve our service. Big Chat Easter 2023 collaborated with the Independent Reviewing Officers to scrutinise the Child Looked After Review Booklets. Children and Young People gave their views and opinions on the booklets, scrutinised the language used and better ways to communicate with them. For participating the children enjoyed a fun session in The Climbing Hangar, pizza and a voucher.

The children and young people we support have told us we need to communicate in a child and young person friendly manner that's inclusive to all. Over the past 12 months the Engagement and Participation Officer has consulted with children and young people along with professionals, carers and parents to ensure all documents and information leaflets are presented using clear, child friendly language that is free of corporate jargon and confusing acronyms. A working group has been set up made up of young people who attend Hope and YOVO. The Engagement and Participation Officer attended Parent Advocacy Network meetings to incorporate parents into the consultation and working alongside professionals in the Consultant Social Workers and Practice Improvement Groups. An additional event was organised to look at information booklets viewed by young people and supported by Circus Eruption, the group participated in tight rope walking, uni-cycles, juggling and more. The young people involved helped produce a report highlighting their work and promoting change. This report will be available in May 2024. Below outlines two projects undertaken to support this work.

Fashion Project

To challenge the language and terminology used in children's services, members of Hope were involved in a fashion project throughout the summer. The project aimed to raise awareness of the language used by professionals, foster carers and others when referring to care experienced children and young people by making the language used more child and young person friendly. The goal is to encourage everyone to use different language and to ensure all information, for example documents, reports and questionnaires are easy to understand and free from acronyms and corporate jargon.

Working with a local fashion designer a number of sessions were held throughout the Summer. The project was launched at the Consultant Social Worker conference in November.



“When I get stressed I block things out, I put up these walls. I shut everything out. It’s how I protect myself. When someone is in front of me talking about LAC Reviews, placements and meetings I just nod and say yes. When I walk away, I realise I haven’t understood anything. I get more confused and stressed. What does this mean for me? My mind goes in a whirlwind.” Amber

Children and Young People’s Consultation Event at Plantasia



In collaboration with the Looked After Children’s Team a consultation event was held at Plantasia to give children and young people the opportunity to re-name the LAC Team. As part of the ongoing ‘Language We Use’ work the children and young people highlighted the need for change. A friendlier name is needed to reflect the ethos of the Team. To facilitate the event, spoken word artist Duke Al Durham delivered a creative session to provoke thought and discussion and help find an appropriate name. Next steps include collating the ideas, sharing the outcome and with approval re-naming the Team. The wonderful location lent itself to some promotional opportunities for the new Comments Compliments & Complaints process for care experienced children and young people. Children and Young People’s Services have developed a leaflet, informative postcard and magnet to ensure all our children know how to contact us. Over the coming months the material will be promoted to Foster Carers, Staff, Children & Young People.

Let’s Keep Talking

With Children’s Rights at the heart of all activities the Engagement and Participation Officer provides opportunities for our children and young people to participate in Local Authority consultations. The Let’s Keep Talking consultation was promoted at events and activities for children & young people to have a voice in the future development of services. Pupil Voice Training has been delivered by the Children’s Rights Unit to members of the Junior Safeguarding Board. The training incorporates ‘how to be a board member’ and prepares young people to become involved in decision making. Our young people continue to be part of the recruitment process and form a young person interview panel.

Corporate Parenting Panel

The Engagement & Participation Team is working more closely with the Corporate Parenting Panel as part of our commitment to championing the voice of the child. Work has been undertaken to establish how children and young people would like to be engaged with access to Corporate Meetings. An event was held at Base 15 to improve communication between the Panel and our care experienced children and young people. Councillors enjoyed a Salsa Drumming session with young people and an afternoon of STEM challenges all to improve teamwork. Further events are planned for 2024.

West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board

The Junior Safeguarding Board meets every half term in order to determine safeguarding topics that the members would like to champion throughout the year. Meetings have been hosted by Secondary Schools and attract a healthy number of students from across Neath Port Talbot

. Schools are currently engaged in projects to raise awareness of Sexual Harassment. These projects will lead up to National Safeguarding Week 2024. During National Safeguarding Week in November

2023 a promotional event was held in Ysgol Maes Y Coed to launch the British Sign Language video and widget board to educate frontline emergency service staff to communicate with children and young people with communication difficulties. The event was attended by South Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance & M&WWF&R Service. The students enjoyed exploring the vehicles and services have committed to sharing the resources.

Events Planning

The Engagement and Participation Officer organised a programme of events for the summer holidays along with supporting other Teams with the planning and promotion of further activities. Events include weekly surf sessions at Aberavon Beach, Beaches 2 Beacons, Hope Fashion Project, Foster Wales recruitment, UASC programme and consultation work. The events calendar is shared via Padlet for all staff to access and share. Events give children and young people an opportunity to engage in consultations such as 'Let's Keep Talking'.



Beaches 2 Beacons Project (B2B)

The mental health and wellbeing benefits of the great outdoors is well documented and between Neath Port Talbot and Banau Brycheiniog National Park we have an abundance of natural beauty. The Beaches 2 Beacons Project enabled our Children and Young People to access these spaces and enjoy the wilderness, support the environment and have a lot of fun. In 2023, B2B have undertaken an intergenerational project with Men's Shed to produce bird boxes to be placed in Country Parks in Neath Port Talbot and Banau Brycheiniog. The Engagement and Participation Officer secured funding from LBS Builders Merchants to purchase timber, Men's Shed made templates and the children enjoyed a day of DIY building them and learning about the environment. A further event took B2B to the National Park Visitor Centre to learn how to make dead hedges, bug hotels, fire pits with marshmallows, woodland management and more with a John Muir Certificate to be awarded at the end of the year. The project supported 13 children. Further events included hiking in Waterfall Country supported by MAWWF&R Service and RNLI to teach the group water safety.

Weekly Surf Lessons

2023 saw another successful summer teaming up with Surf School Wales on Aberavon Beach. The school provided weekly 2hr surf sessions for our children and young people to enjoy. Groups of up to

12 attended every Monday and not only improved their surf skills but learnt water safety and teamwork.

Youth Justice & Early Intervention Service

In partnership with the Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service (YJEIS) the Engagement & Participation Team delivers a project with the aim of learning life skills such as cooking, money management, food hygiene & laundry. The Life Skills project focusses on Neath Port Talbot's commitment to giving our young people the tools to live independently. Weekly cooking sessions are delivered to care leavers, young people preparing for independent living and young offenders. The sessions also provide opportunities to signpost services and most significantly improve well-being. In 2024 this project has expanded to a full day and includes several sessions delivered by staff to include well-being sessions, substance misuse, fitness, guest speakers & educational opportunities. Young people working with the YJEIS are given the opportunity to complete an Exit Questionnaire to help glean their experiences and improve services going forward.

Outreach Team

A substantial amount of work has been undertaken by the Outreach Team to work in collaboration with partner agencies to safeguard our children and young people in the community. This work ranges from raising awareness with local businesses about sexual and criminal exploitation, focussing on areas within NPT that are ASB hotspots to working with schools to identify areas of need. The voice of the child and their family is captured at every opportunity. Events are organised to raise awareness and initiatives such as Forest School and local gym sessions are provided to create a more cohesive community.

Hillside Children's Secure Home

The Engagement & Participation Officer collaborates with Hillside staff to ensure Children who reside there have equal opportunity to have a voice and be listened too. Children are encouraged to complete questionnaires at the start and end of their stay to help improve services. A young person's action group called LOVE has been established by Hillside staff to promote children's rights. In November 2023 young people worked with a Spoken Word Artist to share their thoughts and feelings and enjoy a number of fun challenges. Staff at Hillside prioritise wellbeing through fun and engaging events. More recently all the staff and young people dressed up to celebrate World Book Day.

Care Leavers

Young people attended a ministerial visit where they voiced their opinions regarding the Basic information Pilot (BIP) also young people attended two events held at Merthyr and Cardiff to gain their views regarding BIP. The Team have liaised with Voices from Care Cymru and young people have participated in the development of Independence Journals which have gone to print. Furthermore, the Team have held consultations to shape the new Mosaic IT system.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children & Young People (UASC)

As part of Neath Port Talbot's commitment to UASC as part of the National Transfer Scheme; activities and experiences have been organised throughout the summer in order to help the young people settle in to their new environment, improve their language, look after their well-being and educate them on Welsh culture and explore the area. Working closely with the UASC Team and established partners in the community the Engagement and Participation Officer organised weekly events throughout the

summer holidays. These included rock climbing at Dinas Rock, gorge walking, canyoning, coasteering on the Gower and paddle boarding. There have been arranged visits to Bulldogs Community Gym to engage in activities and emotional and well-being support offered by the Bulldogs Team. All activities helped build rapport with staff and going forward the UASC Team and Engagement and Participation Officer will be facilitating young person consultations to give our UASC a voice and improve services and assist us with developing our practice guide.

Children with Additional Learning Needs

All engagement groups and activities are inclusive of all abilities and needs where appropriate and safe. The Engagement and Participation Officer supports a weekly group at Ysgol Hendrefelin. Thursday Club is for a group of children with additional needs that receive support from the Local Authority. Circus Eruption attend and also music lessons are delivered. The group have enjoyed ju-jitsu lessons and were part of the Gorseinon Christmas Parade.

Foster Wales Neath Port Talbot

An event was held at Base 15 to recognise and support the contributions of Foster Carers Sons and Daughters. The event included lots of craft-based activities, face painting, games and pizza making. The event was an opportunity to build relationships with Foster Carers and their families.

Care experienced young people from across Neath Port Talbot worked alongside Foster Wales and Rewise Learning to develop promotional material to help recruit new Foster Carers. The four day project included writing poetry, learning IT skills such as animation, script writing and music production. The young people shared their positive experiences of life in care and what they think it takes to be a Foster Carer. The completed animated video along with their poetry will form part of the upcoming promotional campaign. Below is an extract of one poem:



Soothing Balm by Ruby.

All I wanted was a hug, but you just dug and dug
You kicked me out. And all you ever did was shout and
shout.

You were so loud that you filled me with doubt.

You always silenced everything I said
And you made me emotionally dead.

When no one would listen, I'd talk to the stars as they
glistened.

Realising that my first home wasn't meant to be.

Child Protection Rapid Review Survey

The Engagement and Participation Team conducted the Child Protection Rapid Review Survey with the Parents/Guardians of children on the child protection register. The aim of the National Survey was to gather a multi-disciplinary perspective on child protection arrangements. Care Inspectorate Wales will consider responses alongside other review activities to support the completion of a national report.

Care and Support Project

Throughout Autumn 2023 the Engagement and Participation Team have worked in collaboration with a Colleague who has been seconded to conduct research project within Children's Services focused on Care and Support. In a support capacity, the Team has attended all focus groups with relevant Stakeholders. The Team has also designed, built and managed the accompanying surveys within the project.

Engagement and Participation across Adult services

Bird Boxes Inter-generational project

The NPTCBC Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 outlines priority 5:2 – our communities will enjoy increased social and community cohesion. Since December 2022 the Engagement and Participation Officers have attended the Men's Shed project in Skewen on a regular basis. The Team identified the opportunity to conduct an inter-generational project between the Men's Shed and Looked After Children in the existing 'Beaches 2 Beacons' project which includes placing Bird Boxes in nature around Neath Port Talbot. The Men's Shed cut wood that the Engagement and Participation Team provided to size so that the Children and Young People who attend the Beaches to Beacon events could construct them, resulting in a Bird Box constructed by both Elderly and Young people that were later placed within various areas around the Local Authority. This contributed to a sense of shared achievement, belonging and community cohesion.



Substance Use Transformation Programme

The Substance Use Transformation Manager is currently leading on a Transformation Programme which will aim to re-commission drug and alcohol services. Western Bay Area Planning Board are aiming to develop an 'Alliance' across the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

A key part of the programme is to pursue an outcomes-based commissioning approach supported by co-production. It is vital that the outcomes are decided by the people they belong to. For this reason we have been undertaking a number of workshops (from January to April) with people who will be supported by the substance use services and the development of the outcomes that matter to them. These workshops have been facilitated to co-design the future service model with all the stakeholders, including commissioners, providers and people with lived experience using a tried and tested interactive approach based on the appreciative inquiry process. This enables providers to play an integral part in creating the services they will be delivering and begin the process of collaborating and building strong, trusting relationships so that when procurement opens, they are already in a good position to create an alliance.

Service User Engagement Officer for the Area Planning Board

The Council receives a grant from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (via the Home Office) which pays for a Service User Engagement Officer (SUEO) for the Area Planning Board to increase participation with people who use substance use services in Western Bay (Swansea and NPT). Our officer commenced work in September 23 and will be in post until Mar 25. The SUEO coordinates the Peer Interventions Project that delivers all three specialist harm reduction interventions across the region to provide advice support and guidance and distribute naloxone kits and needle and syringe kits and carry out dry blood spot testing for Blood Borne Viruses. They also coordinate the Service User Involvement Groups across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. The SUI Groups (due to be renamed Co-Production Forums) run monthly in both Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. The groups have developed appropriate governance arrangements so people with lived and living experience can engage with the Area Planning Board in line with co-production guidelines. The

forums are looking at work plans in going forward and these will help shape the ongoing work. The forums are working to the mantra of “nothing about us, without us”.

Engagement with Community Groups/Organisations

NPTCBC strategic equality plan 20-4 priority 5:2 – our communities will enjoy increased social and community cohesion. Action 4.5.4.54

Throughout 2023 the Engagement Officer continued to develop strong links with a range of groups and organisations for Adults within Neath Port Talbot to remain visible and approachable. These groups include:

- Skewen Men’s Shed
- Skewen OAP Ladies Group
- Your Voice Advocacy
- Sunflower Café Dementia Group
- Chai and Chat Neath
- Chai and Chat Port Talbot

Engagement and Participation across the Directorate

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.

Co-production Training

The Engagement and Participation Team acknowledge the importance of Co-production and how it can equip and encourage individuals to engage in the democratic processes that affect them. In light of this, the Team deliver regular training sessions on Co-production to the Teams within Children and Adult Services and sessions during the directorate’s induction sessions. The Co-production training ensures that the directorate continues involving people in the decision making processes that affect them; one of the 5 ways of working enshrined within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board – Co-Production

Throughout 2023 the Engagement and Participation Team attended both the weekly Task and Finish Groups of the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board Co-production group alongside the Full Co-production meetings, representing Neath Port Talbot Council. The meetings are an opportunity for Stakeholders and Volunteer Representatives from across the RPB to Co-produce pieces of work, requested by Welsh Government.

SNAP XMP Software

Throughout 2023-4 the Engagement and Participation Team continued to hold the SNAP XMP Software license for the Directorate and be the officers responsible for the design, building and management of

surveys for colleagues across the Directorate, particularly the Contract and Commissioning Team and Conference and Review Service. Currently, there are around 50 live surveys.

Outcomes survey

The Directorate continues to operate within an outcomes-focused framework, placing emphasis on the desired outcomes of individuals they work with. The Engagement and Participation Team undertook the completion of an Outcomes Survey on two occasions in January and June 2023. The survey was a telephone survey conducted with Children and Adults who receive care and support from Children's or Adult services. The survey was an optional opportunity for individuals to provide feedback on their experience with Social Services, with particular focus on their individual outcomes and What Matters conversations. The survey questions explored whether they felt that these outcomes were being met and whether their strengths were recognised.

What Matters Youth Housing Consultation – Phase 2

Over the last year, the Engagement and Participation Team assisted colleagues within the Contract and Commissioning Team on a consultation on Youth Homelessness and Housing. This included conducting interviews with Young People who were homeless and living within one of the commissioned Housing Providers within the Local Authority and was considered Phase 1 of the consultation process. The Engagement and Participation Officer held workshops with Stakeholders and Young People across the Dewis and Clarewood provisions to further explore the themes identified in Phase One. The findings of all three workshops were presented in reports and informed the next phase of the consultation.

Dewis Cymru

The Engagement and Participation Team are Editors of Dewis Cymru; responsible for both approving new resources and monitoring existing resources, ensuring that services listed are accurate and appropriate. The Team also facilitate the delivery of presentations to Teams within the Directorate and Community Councils to outline the opportunities and benefits that Dewis Cymru can offer.



Completion of the Continuum of Need document

The Engagement and Participation Team completed the Continuum of Need document, a piece of work requested by Principal Officer Chris-Frey Davies to aid multi-agency professionals in decision making by outlining the processes and services of the Directorate. The purpose of the document is to act as an Early Intervention and Prevention toolkit, signposting professionals on the course of action that would be safe and proportionate when concerns arise. The document will be published in due course and disseminated across relevant bodies.

Most Significant Change Interviews

From May 2023 the Engagement and Participation Team conducted Most Significant Change interviews that focused on the transition of Young People from Children's to Adult Services. The interviews reflected the Most Significant Change template and training that the Team attended with Nick Andrews of Swansea University. The interview process continued throughout the course of the year with varying

topics of focus and culminated with the Most Significant Change Panel, held in December 2023. The Panel was comprised of The Director of Social Services, Health and Housing, The Heads of Children’s and Adult Services, representatives from the PAN Parent Network, Consultant Social Workers and the Engagement and Participation Officer. The panel was an opportunity to explore the stories and engage in dialogue to identify which Story individuals thought was Most Significant and why; sharing good practice and success stories.

Engagement with Private Landlords in Housing & Communities

Housing & Communities recently held a Private Landlord Forum Meeting in partnership with Environmental Health. The event was held to engage with private landlords within NPT and a number of guest speakers (National Residential Landlords Association, Rent Smart Wales, Welsh Government) attended. We held the event at Neath Civic Centre, and we worked on a collaborative approach with the NRLA and Rent Smart Wales to publicise the event. The event was very well attended with over 100 attendees, an increase from the 6 that attended a similar event a few years back. The private rented sector has a crucial role to play in us delivering our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and this event has provided us with a platform to engage with landlords in a way they want to be engaged with and the next steps are to adopt a co-production/design phase with landlords.

Priorities for 2024/2025

1	Supporting the consultation in respect of the Neuro Divergent Strategic Plan	Children and Adult Services
2	Supported Accommodation – capturing the voice of service users to improve experiences in supported accommodation.	Children’s services
3	Voice of care experienced children and young people – provide ongoing opportunities and platforms for Child and young people to have a voice in improving service delivery. Deliver Children’s Rights and Co-Production training to staff.	Children’s services

4	Early intervention and prevention – working with community teams to support children and families in the community. Working closely with education to capture the voice of the child.	Children’s services
5	YJES – embed the voice of the child in Youth Justice Services	Children’s services
6	Capture the voice of the young person and their parent/carers going through the process of transition.	Children and Adult Services