



To: **Joint Meeting of Children and Young People Thematic Board & Jobs & the Economy Thematic Board**

On: **9th November 2015**

Report by:
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Children and Young People Engagement Event

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to give feedback on the recent Children and Young People Board Youth Engagement Event on Monday 31st August 2015.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board approves the action points that came out of the participation event (contained in Appendix 1) and notes the schedule of further consultation youth events (contained in appendix 2) in order to continue the process of engagement with children and young people.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Children and Young People's Thematic Board had identified the need to consult with young people. Youth Services facilitated a youth engagement event with young people from Gleniffer High School enabling them to meet Board members and share with them issues of concern for young people.
- 3.2 Youth Services supported twenty senior pupils from Gleniffer High School to identify issues of concern and prepare presentations to share with the Board at a meeting on the 31st of August 2015. Young people were supported to express their views and explore, in discussion with Board members, possible ideas and solutions to combat those concerns.
- 3.3 Key themes identified included youth voice, health and wellbeing, jobs and training, employment; access to community facilities, social isolation and impact of poverty. A summary of the issues identified and action points are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Feedback from young people who participated in this event was very positive and they recommended that similar opportunities be offered to young people across Renfrewshire in the future.

4. Community Involvement/Engagement

- 4.1 An integral part of the Youth Services Service Plan is supporting the development and delivery of Youth Voice initiatives, and is recognised nationally as sector leading.
- 4.2 Youth Services supports young people in taking action to bring about changes in their communities. Young people are supported to express their views, take part in decision making bodies and campaign on issues that affect them through on-going initiatives; community based youth forums, pupil council/youth leadership training in schools, Renfrewshire Youth Voice, Scottish Youth Parliament,
- 4.3 Youth Services has been committed to support young people to attend and participate in community planning conferences in recent years, and will continue to work in partnership with Community Planning to break down barriers to help young people access decision-making structures and in working towards addressing raised issues and concerns and identified need in their communities.
- 4.4 Youth Services will continue to support the Board to engage with young people, and view this youth participation model as part of a wider strategy that Youth Services has in planning and developing the forthcoming Renfrewshire wide Youth Assembly. (Appendix 2)

Appendix 1: Children & Young People Board Youth Engagement Event – Monday 31st August 2015

Key Themes presented by young people:

YOUTH VOICE

- Young people raised the issue of lack of youth representation and called for greater opportunities and access to decision-making structures.
- Young people asked for better communication and in particular being listened to when asked for their opinions, and receiving feedback after consultation.
- Young people felt there is a need to consult with younger people as well.
- Young people suggested the Thematic Board could ask young people to be part of the Board by giving young people more information about it.

Actions

- The Children & Young People Thematic Board will seek representation from school pupils.
- In order to increase the dialogue between each of the High Schools and the Children and Young People Thematic Board, the Board will consider matching a member(s) of the Board to a High School. The members will be responsible for meeting a small group of S6 pupils who will act as advocates for all year groups within the school.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Young people are feeling the effects of pressure to achieve and this is having a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing.
- Young people recognised that drugs and alcohol use is becoming more acceptable in some circles and increased ease of access is causing concern.
- Young people are sometimes affected by the lack of motivation to exercise; barriers to healthy lifestyle include pressurised time, access to facilities including costs and location of facilities.

Actions:

- Following agreement of the Tackling Poverty Commission funding for the school counselling service, pupils from Gleniffer High School will be involved in the design of the new service.
- The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership will arrange an informal event with S6 pupils to discuss their issues and concerns.
- The Thematic Board will consider a paper on possible solutions to the issues raised.

JOBS & TRAINING

- Young people expressed concern about the lack of support and access to appropriate work experience, practical work training, and the need for improved careers advice and skills for entering the workplace.
- Young people would welcome more contact from real students from courses they intend to study, to get some insight into their personal experiences.
- Young people asked for more work experience opportunities, not just at S4 but later on in senior phase in S5 and S6 when more mature and focussed on life beyond school.

Actions:

- Following the issues highlighted by the pupils in relation to work experience and careers service, it was agreed that a focus group would be arranged between senior pupils and the appropriate community planning partners.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Young people feel there is the need to promote face to face communication skills, especially with the increased use of technology.
- Young people expressed the view that there was a lack of good shops and cafes and places for socialising in Paisley.
- This lack of opportunity for young people to socialise safely can impact on young people, resulting in anxiety, lack of confidence and emotional stress.

Actions:

- Social Isolation and social inclusion will be one of the themes at the forthcoming Youth Assembly.
- Young people will be involved in developing the bid for the UK City of Culture 2021.
- A calendar of youth engagement activity will be produced.

TRANSPORT

- Young people shared their experiences of public transport in Renfrewshire, and raised questions about the cost for young adults, the availability of discounts and limited routes and access in the evenings.
- Young people raised the issue of pricing for young people when they become young adults, and raised questions around discounted fares

Actions:

- The Young Scot card will be rolled out across Renfrewshire in the coming months to ensure that young people can utilise the benefits and discounts available, particularly in relation to public transport.
- Representatives from the Thematic Board and young people will meet with local transport companies.

COST OF LIVING

- Young people highlighted concern relating to poverty and how it impacts on children and families; how it can cause conflict and stress.
- Young people felt that single parents don't receive enough support from the council; school clothing grants are not enough to cover the costs of uniforms.

Actions:

- The community planning partnership to share ideas with young people about reducing the cost of the school day.
- A focus group on parenting to be established that will consider links with the curriculum

Appendix 2: Youth Services and the Wider Strategy of Youth Consultation in Renfrewshire

There are a number of youth work initiatives that Youth Services is planning that offer other opportunities to engage with young people.

- Youth Services staff will be supporting the young people from Gleniffer High School to give a presentation at the forthcoming **Children's Services Conference** in November 2015. This will provide young people an opportunity to discuss with front-line staff the practical impact on service delivery across council departments.
- Youth Services support a number of community based youth forums that are active in their communities. These forums will be encouraged to participate in a Renfrewshire wide **Youth Assembly** in February 2016, promoting youth representation on a local level and devising a strategic response to identified youth issues. The Assembly will seek to bring together young people involved in youth forums, pupil councils, MSYPs and other representative groups to share what they feel are issues of concern and to propose action.
- Youth Services will support MSYPs to undertake consultation with young people as part of the process of developing a **Scottish Youth Parliament manifesto**. Led by the Scottish Parliament the manifesto is intended to highlight the most important issues affecting young people in Scotland. It is to be published in the run up to the Scottish parliament elections in May 2016. Youth Services will support MSYPS to draw out the issues raised by young people from Renfrewshire.
- In partnership with Legal and Democratic Services and the Joint Valuation Board, Youth Services will run **Voter registration workshops** for 16 year olds in schools across Renfrewshire. These workshops will support young people to become registered to vote in the readiness for the Scottish Parliament Elections in May 2016. The workshops will also highlight the importance of expressing your views and participating in democratic elections.