

To: Children and Young People Thematic Board

On: 31 March 2016

Report by:

Dorothy Hawthorn, Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice

Establishment of the Children and Young People Participation Group

1. Summary

- 1.1 Our Participation Strategy sets out the key principles of participation and how we ensure that the right to participate is realised for all of our young people and is extended to more children and young people across Renfrewshire through changing and adapting our approaches to practice, planning and policy development.
- 1.2 In response to the recommendation of the Children's Services Inspection and to ensure a co-ordinated partnership approach to participation, it is recommended that a multi agency partnership group be established.
- 1.3 The Children and Young People Participation Group will be responsible for reviewing the Participation Strategy and developing a Participation Action Plan. The group will also play a key role in coordinating the planning and reporting around Children's Rights as detailed within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board

- a) Agrees to establish a Children and Young People Participation Group
- b) Agrees that a role and remit of the group be presented to the next meeting of this thematic board

3. Background

- 3.1 Renfrewshire's Participation Strategy for Integrated Children's Services vision is that:
'Every child and young person in Renfrewshire will have the opportunity to express their views, be listened to and have their opinions respected. All our services will listen and respond honestly to what children and young people have to say'.

3.2 The strategy aims to:

1. Establish a shared understanding of what participation means amongst children, young people and service providers.
2. Increase opportunities for children and young people to participate in existing structures/processes within children's services in Renfrewshire.
3. Increase opportunities for children and young people to participate within planning processes for children's services.
4. Establish methods to evidence how the views of children and young people have been listened to, respected and acted upon

3.3 Our Participation Strategy sets out the key principles of participation and how we ensure that the right to participate is realised for all of our young people and is extended to more children and young people across Renfrewshire through changing and adapting our approaches to practice, planning and policy development.

3.4 As part of the Children's Services Inspection undertaken during December 2014 and February 2015 the extent to which children, young people, families and other stakeholders are involved in policy, planning and service development was examined. As part of the pre-inspection process the partnership was required to provide a 'Participation Position Statement' which was informed by the Participation Strategy.

3.5 The inspection report highlighted that Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership has

'a very strong ethos in how partners meaningfully involved children, young people and families in shaping policy, planning and service development. The views of children, young people and families were fully evident within joint plans and strategies' including the Integrated Children's Services Plan and were being used to helpfully shape policies and inform planning processes. There were many outstanding examples of innovative and meaningful ways of consulting effectively and involving young people in service development through a wide range of activities and planning forums. Services were strongly committed to promoting children's rights. Partners should now build on this very good practice to extend these opportunities to younger children and other minority stakeholder groups'

3.6 In response to the recommendation and also to ensure a more co-ordinated approach to participation, it is recommended that a multi agency partnership group be established. The Children and Young People Participation Group will be responsible for reviewing the Participation Strategy and developing a Participation Action Plan. The group will play a key role in coordinating the planning and reporting around Children's Rights as detailed within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

- 3.7 In addition, the group will support partners to undertake consultation and participation events and activities. The group will also have responsibility for ensuring that children and young people's views are listened to, acted upon and responded to within the community planning partnership environment. Good practice will be shared and partners will be encouraged to utilise the tools outlined within the strategy.
- 3.8 Strategic Leadership of the group will be provided by the Children's Services Partnership Group.
- 3.9 Following agreement of the establishment of the group, a role and remit will be provided to the next meeting of the Children and Young People Board.

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