

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 June 2016

Voice Influence and Participation

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report invites the Committee to be updated on what opportunities there are for future engagement opportunities with children and young people and make suggestions that will aid the development of a Promise 2 document.

2.0 Voice Influence and Participation: Member involvement

- 2.1 Instead of the scheduled Committee meeting on Monday 15 February 2016, the Committee arranged an informal workshop to consider what opportunities there are for future engagement opportunities with children and young people and make suggestions that will aid the development of a Promise 2 document.
- 2.2 The aim of the day was to have an open dialogue between the Councillors and the Children and Young People in a more informal way than a normal committee meeting. Going by the feedback received, this intention was largely met.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the Committee return to this topic at your June meeting so as to not just review progress, but as a way of prompting discussion on the role members as community leaders in the new structures. I have attached, for reference, the report which highlights the proposals and the notes of the meeting.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Committee is recommended to note the position.
- 3.2 Your Group Spokespersons would welcome your views

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Background Documents Nil

North Yorkshire County Council
Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 June 2016

Voice, Influence and Participation

1. Purpose of the Paper

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the work that has been done by the Council's Voice, Influence and Participation (VIP) team to develop opportunities at an individual and group level to genuinely engage and listen to the voice of young people and to set out the arrangements for this committee meeting to look at what further opportunities for engagement there are.

2. Background

- 2.1 The first principle within the North Yorkshire Children Trust Board's "Young and Yorkshire" is to involve children, young people and their families at all stages of planning, delivering and evaluating services. It is pointed out that, "We already consult children and young people through a variety of mechanisms. We need to ensure that this translates into regarding them as key partners in the design and delivery of services, and that we truly listen to their views and feedback. This principle is founded on proper respect for children's rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention."

- 2.2 An officer group was set up under the Children's Trust Board to co-ordinate work on voice, influence and participation of children and young people. It has a vision of capturing the voice of children and young people to influence change and to improve the experiences of children and young people. The group has met regularly with its biggest success being the launch of The Promise, to which all the Trust members have signed up. The Promise has 5 principles:

1. Involve children and young people in designing, developing and reviewing services which are provided for them.
2. Involve children and young people when making decisions on services which affect them.
3. Provide children and young people with opportunities to raise issues which are important to them, and ensure they are listened to.
4. Feedback to children and young people on what has been said and what is going to happen as a result.
5. Provide information which may be used by children and young people in accessible and appropriate formats. Gather information from children and young people using accessible and appropriate methods.

- 2.3 In April 2015 a Voice, Influence and Participation team was established from staff that had previously been in children's social care and the youth support service. They have been given the task of translating the Young and Yorkshire principle into action, bearing in mind what is expected from The Promise.

3. Successes over the Last Year

3.1 Over the last few years the young people who are involved in voice, influence and participation work and the officers that support them have had some notable successes. These include:

- i. The Young People's Council (i) increasing participants who are children in care (ii) being a national award winner (iii) leading on You Said: We Did for Children's Social Care (iv) introducing C-days with 82 different young people attending.
- ii. Organising the largest Youth Voice Summit to date with over 110 young people taking part. There was a debate with the Children's Commissioner, the Police and Crime Commissioner, NYCC Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services. Action plans are being developed from graffiti walls that were used to explore a variety of topics.
- iii. Engaging directly with Members.
- iv. Leading on the transition of Viewpoint to Your Voice for Children's Social Care and the Youth Justice Service. This gives us an online consultation tool accessible on all devices that we have control over what is asked, what it looks like and how information is fed back. Plans are already in place to use your Voice in the Prevention Service and for young carers.
- v. Managing the transition of youth councils as the Prevention Service has been created.
- vi. Establishing Young Advisors to bring a youth perspective to strategic and developmental work. There are already 6 Young Advisors who are undertaking commissions on a variety of issues.
- vii. Leading on the implementation of the Promise and auditing of services against the 5 principles.
- viii. Replacing the Keyfund with the Youth Community Fund, so there is more money that is available for young people from local businesses and the emphasis changes to funding projects to enhance the communities in which the young people live, rather than the young people themselves.

4. Current Situation

4.1 The main work of the VIP team is to support the network of youth councils that exist across the County. A summary of these is given below.

4.2 The **North Yorkshire Youth Council** (NYYC) is made up of young people from across the county. It meets six times a year, each time for a day in school holidays. In the meetings young people discuss issues that concern them and seek to find ways of progressing them locally and nationally. Three members of the NYYC are Members of the Youth Parliament, which is the national body that meets in London and has an annual sitting in the House of Commons.

4.3 The Youth Support Service supported **local youth councils** that with the advent of the Prevention Service were reorganised, so there is one youth council in each of the 12 Prevention Service areas. These are still being developed with, some like Eastfield and Scarborough, being very active whilst others have very little going on as yet.

- 4.4 There are specialist youth councils; namely the Young People’s Council, Flying High, a LGBT group and HMS Heroes. Young carers groups are being established and discussions have begun with Healthwatch North Yorkshire to create a route for children and young people’s voices to be heard in the health services.
- 4.5 The **Young People’s Council (YPC)** was established by Children’s Social Care to give looked after children and care leavers opportunities to say what they want to happen with their care and to talk directly to providers of services and policy makers. They meet regularly with the Corporate Director of CYPS and managers from the Children and Families Service. Good work, based on You Said: We Did, have produced changes in the way services are provided. The Council has met monthly in York. In the last six months 82 young people have been involved through four “C-days” that have been organised across the County.
- 4.6 **Flying High** is a council for young people aged 16-25 who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It was set up several years ago by the Council and Barnardo’s were commissioned to organise the work of the group. They tend to meet in Knaresborough and have been actively involved in consultation work around SEND services.
- 4.7 There is one **LGBT** group in Harrogate that has met for a while and one is being established in Scarborough. They are raising the profile for LGBT issues.
- 4.8 **HMS Heroes** is a national pupil voice initiative for the support of Service children and young people. In North Yorkshire we have more than 40 schools who are active members of HMS Heroes. Each school holds its own regular meetings, usually weekly, which are led by the Heroes. Two representatives from each HMS Heroes school are invited to half termly meeting. These meetings are chaired by HMS Heroes supported by a Service Pupils’ Champion and follow a structured meeting plan.
- 4.9 The Council commissions three organisations across the County to support **young carers** – Action for Children, Hambleton and Richmondshire Carers’ Centre and Scarborough and Ryedale Carers’ Resource. As part of their contract they are expected to provide a forum for young carers to express their views and to provide a platform for young carers to advocate for young carers interests.
- 4.10 There have been meetings with **Healthwatch North Yorkshire** (HWNY) on how we can work together to capture the voice of young people on health issues and feed concerns into the Health and Well Being Board, the CCGs and the Trusts.
- 4.11 Each school is expected to have a **school council**. Ofsted look specifically at judgements for pupils’ outcomes including “the extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community”. An effective School Council is the way to satisfy this. During an inspection, Ofsted Inspectors are also specifically tasked with talking with pupils including “those holding representative responsibilities, for example as members of the school council”.
- 4.12 Representatives from youth councils and school councils are invited to the annual **Youth Summit**. The most recent summit, held in October 2015, had 110 young people attending.

5 What is proposed for the future?

5.1 The VIP team are proud of what they've achieved but they are aware that there are several areas in which the work could be improved. They decided, therefore, to talk to the NYCC about how support could be improved. The first two points below emerged from a meeting with NYCC that was held in Richmond in the October half term.

1. Area-based Groups

The main issue is at present most of the groups cover the whole of the county, which means young people have to travel a long way and take up a lot of their time to participate in discussions and activities. We intend to create four groups for the main specialist youth councils that will meet in Scarborough, Northallerton/Richmond, Selby and Harrogate. This builds on the success of the YPC C-days, where there has been a significant increase in the number of young people attending sessions and will allow us to give more of local feel to meetings.

The YPC, Flying High, young carers and the LGBT groups would meet monthly (on different weeks of the month) and then every third month all groups would meet at the same time (along with reps from the youth councils and HMS Heroes) to discuss broader youth issues for their part of the County. These groups would be supported by part time workers and the VIP team.

There is also a need for the different interest groups to come together, so we would facilitate reps from each of the areas coming together on a termly basis to meet with each other and any decision makers they feel could help them. These groups would be supported by the VIP team.

2. The North Yorkshire Youth Council

The NYCC has had some success, notably in the past with concessionary bus fares, but we want the NYCC to have more of an impact. We intend to do this by having the NYCC made up from 8 reps from each of the areas. They will meet termly and will work through task and finish groups on three or four campaigns that have arisen from the annual "Make your Mark" surveys (that this year was completed by 6000 young people in North Yorkshire). Part of their work would be obtaining resources to take forward their campaigns.

We would also create a NYCC Executive with 2 reps from each of the areas that can meet with decision makers on a regular basis. This has been very successful for the YPC. The reps would be chosen to ensure there is representation from each of the specialist groups. This would include the NYCC Executive meeting with the two Executive Members and the Corporate Director for Children and Young People Services, at least half termly. It is also hoped there would be meetings with leaders from local councils, the police, health and local companies. Some of these meetings will be face-to-face but we would also explore the use of video conferencing and Skype. It is hoped that a young person's version of Young and Yorkshire's action plan will be produced that will be an item on the agenda of these meetings. The meetings would be organised by the VIP team.

3. Flying High

Flying High has successfully promoted the needs of young people with SEND but as described above for all groups there is a problem with travel and the number of young people who can participate. There has also been the added challenge that most of the young people with SEND that are supported are over the age of 16. We intend to create area groups that cater for the older young people and in addition area groups for younger children with SEND. These will be based on the Flying High model and will complement the work of the Flying High groups for older young people. They will be called Flying Start. The new groups will be developed with current members of the Flying High group.

4. Children and Young People

Looking at the list of groups described above, it can be seen that at the moment, other than school councils, they have one thing in common – they presume that only young people have a voice and can influence and participate in the work of organisations. Yet through Young and Yorkshire there are amazing quotes from children in our primary schools. Primary phase schools have also proved it is possible to give children a voice and influence and participate in the work of the school. They have active school councils that have led to changes being made on such things as the management of school meals, toilets, breaks and school uniform. The challenge to primary schools, which they are starting to address, is how to widen the conversations to look at issues within their local communities. We already have a youth summit: we intend to have a children's summit. We will also look at ways of decision makers talking to groups of children, similar to that described above for the NYCC.

5. VIP Network

Unfortunately the VIP network meetings have become briefing meetings rather than serving as a task group. It is intended that the group will have strategic discussions on VIP but will also have an action plan that is agreed annually with the Children's Trust Board. They will also establish a link with the revamped NYCC, so they help the NYCC to deliver on their priorities.

6. The Promise

The Promise was a major step forward but we need to consider a Promise 2 that moves all organisations towards proper involvement and participation of children and young people. From the audits received on The Promise we can see good examples of children and young people being consulted on issues but they are often on matters that concern adults. We have a few superb examples, such as children's social care, of actions being taken and feedback being given – but the examples are few and far between. Only in schools can we see good examples of children and young people being part of the development work and working alongside adults. In the Promise 2 we will promote a nationally established model called Hart's Ladder of Participation and we will expect all partner organisations, and especially those that are members of the Children's Trust Board, to move up the ladder. SMART action plans will be reviewed annually and reports brought to the Children's Trust Board to show what impact has been made by involving children and young people.

6. Approach for the Committee Meeting

- 6.1 The Committee is being asked to consider what opportunities there are for future engagement opportunities with children and young people and make suggestions that will aid the development of a Promise 2 document.
- 6.2 To do this the representatives from the North Yorkshire Youth Council, local youth councils, Young People's Council, Flying High, LGBT group, young carers and HMS Heroes have been invited to the meeting.
- 6.3 Each of these Children and Young People groups will be asked to give a verbal update on the work that they are currently undertaking. Everyone will then be split into groups with the groups being made up of Councillors and Young People to work on the principles currently within the Promise (detailed in paragraph 2.2 above). Each group will be asked to spend 10 minutes on each of the principles and to be asked what opportunities are there to develop the engagement the council has with young people in these areas.
- 6.4 The aim of the groups is to have an open dialogue between the Councillors and the Children and Young People in a more informal way than a normal committee meeting. This would meet the commitment in the Promise that states that there should be an equal partnership between adults and young people. Indeed, members are encouraged to wear less formal attire than for normal committee meeting to aid this dialogue.
- 6.5 The proposed timings are:
- 1000 - Introductions on the work that is currently being done by Children and Young People's Groups and short presentation on Overview and Scrutiny and what the purpose of the meeting is.
- 1040 - Groups to work through the principles in the promise. Each group will have an officer to help aid the discussions if it is needed and there will also be copies of the key issues raised at the recent Youth Summit on each table to give some context to the discussions.
- 1140 - The groups to then feedback to the other groups on their suggestions.
- 1200-1300 - Lunch

7.0 Recommendation

The committee is asked through this workshop progress to develop future engagement opportunities with the Children and Young People that could be used in the development of a Promise 2.

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Background Documents: None

Annex: Appendix 1: The Promise – North Yorkshire Children's Trust

<p><u>Good things</u> 5 new members to Council - more people to have a say & help - we are listened to - views coming together & working with good debates - £1-00 bus ticket (SS) within Scarb. Easfield/town Media awareness - Fun days/Christmas/Community</p>	<p><u>Questions one</u></p>	<p>Community involvement - Remembrance Working with schools</p>	<p>Somewhere to go where someone understands you.</p>	<p>We wasn't aware to the promise</p>	<p><u>YPS</u> - we are supporting LGBT & pleased that their DVD was well received & got on the Executive Agenda @ NYCC - they think more groups needed to support mentally & Emotionally- confidence</p>	<p>Young Carers + LGBT</p>	<p>HMS Heroes November Service</p>	<p><u>Promise 2</u> - areas to include</p>	<p>App - 12k. Trying to raise funds. CARE Experience entitlements EAM Means Contact numbers</p>	<p>More people to talk to.</p>
<p><u>HMS Heroes</u> - buddy system to help integrate into friends groups. Opportunities to allow ?? To, trips, fun days</p>	<p>* not much at RGS for the Principles</p>	<p>Plan + prepare for meetings</p>	<p>Takes time and luck to get things changed.</p>	<p>Making young people more aware of promise 1 before Promise 2</p>	<p>Our Young Carers feel they are listened to & have support - very helpful - can talk things through - Young Careers vital in their lives</p>	<p>Feedback: - was it given - was it a fair reflection of the situation - last minute invitations desitions take a long time by time get round to them they are gone - school toilets</p>	<p>Younger children - more support *</p>	<p>CSE Not in</p>	<p>Take over DAY - useful - need more up to 3 a year. - councillor as well.</p>	<p>We need to be more consistant.</p>
<p><u>Promise</u> - Consultation documents too long & not young people friendly - not always consulted on matters of importance with group + documents not everybody friendly Decisions made without Y.P. input - often last to know</p>	<p>* Trips = are a good thing to do.</p>	<p>Support + help - not just listening</p>	<p>Decision makers need to empathise with the needs of young people.</p>	<p>Make it > straight to the point > get more young people involved in the design/structure > include young people in today's things > ice breakers > more youth clubs for 15+ > make consultation documents easier to read > engage in events</p>	<p>More groups throughout NY needed more support needed in schools</p>	<p>Awareness of teachers know our situations</p>	<p>Directories for children</p>	<p>Prevent agenda</p>	<p>Scarborough Rans for £1 - not Sat or Sun - timings is a problem - very restrictive.</p>	<p>Keep the promise.</p>
<p><u>Problems</u>- moving away from friends/family - separation from parents Hard to make new friends.</p>	<p>* Trips = more in RGS to get to know more people in there situation</p>	<p>Voice and contribution to running of group.</p>			<p>More awareness within Young People as to what an important role they play</p>	<p>Awareness of young carers</p>	<p>Transport for young carers</p>	<p>Social media - earlier intervention Good support servies when intervention doesn't work - schools involved- need to be dealt with here - case study - schools ignored - more info - re age groups - lobby government - re Facebook</p>	<p>Social media campaign involve the police NYCC staff support ↑ - bullying - escalated via social media how to deal with - parents included in this - how to police this</p>	<p>Emotional & mental health Y.P. → No 1 issue → anxiety, peer support needed, awareness.</p>
<p>Dylan, Jennie, Sam, Aimee</p>	<p>* not aware of persific help from councial</p>	<p>DELIVER ON PROMISE: - space to go/meet * NURTURE ROOM - communication + understanding needs - mentoring/friendships</p>				<p>Awareness of situations</p>	<p>Blue cards - pass to help young carers</p>	<p>Facebook security - training - age appropriate</p>	<p>Lifeskills project - day based on safety issues - Police, RNIB, Fire - crime beat nominated for award</p>	<p>Communication, promotion, distributing - re promise → how have we communicated the promise. Gaps identified.</p>
	<p>* Transport</p>						<p>The Promise - more distribution and ↓ awareness - more availability * Poster for younger children</p>		<p>Lot more engagement with NYCC staff Youth Summit Question Time</p>	
	<p>* children not having facilities outside of school in holidays</p>						<p>More frequent groups</p>		<p>LEGO film - health assement to encourage YP's to take part.</p>	
	<p>* more help for primary school children</p>						<p>Emergency procedures - phone numbers etc. *</p>			
							<p>Prominent help figures in school</p>			