

# Dudley Children's Services

## Active Involvement

### Strategy 2017



# Vision and Scope

There is a strong commitment in Dudley Children's Services to the active involvement of children and young people. This can be seen within the current strategies that guide the work of Children's Services and their partners, including the Early Help Strategy, the Corporate Parenting Strategy, The Children and Young People's Alliance Participation Strategy, The Commissioning Strategy and the Improvement Plan that guides the work of Children's Services.

There is currently no single strategy for Participation work across Children's Services and the development of this strategy will be used to:

- create a shared vision for working with children and young people in participative ways
- provide a summary of what workers and managers will do to enable the participation of children and young people
- identify priorities for change
- create a performance framework to monitor our progress

## Vision

Dudley is a Borough where in co-production with children and young people's their rights are realised, and their views shape decisions made about their lives and those of their families.



# Purpose

We are required by Law to involve children and young people in our work and to protect their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Eileen Munroe in her review of Child Protection focused sharply on the need for a child-centred system to ensure better outcomes:

The system should be child-centred: everyone involved in child protection should pursue child-centred working and recognise children and young people as individuals with rights, including their right to participation in decisions about them in line with their age and maturity. <sup>1</sup>

It is a principle of our work that every provider of services to children, young people and their families, directly or indirectly, has a responsibility to ensure that the views of their service users are actively sought, listened to and acted upon. This includes children and young people with disabilities, and the recent Viper<sup>2</sup> research project found that:

Disabled children and young people have a key role in developing proposals and designing more inclusive services that meet their needs. While there has been some progress made in disabled young people's participation locally, our findings show it is still not embedded in strategic, service level or individual decision-making.

We know that many workers engage effectively with children and young people and do it well. However, the quality and consistency of engagement with children, young people and their families is variable. This strategy aims to address this inconsistency and sets the course of action necessary to ensure that children, young people and their families are influential in the design and delivery of their services to ensure better outcomes.

# Scope

This strategy applies to all teams within Children's Services in Dudley and to the all services we commission for Children and Young People. It also applies to elected members and those with responsibility for scrutiny of the quality of work with Children undertaken by Council employees and by commissioned partners. It will be owned by the Departmental Managers Team (DMT) in Children's Services and will be monitored through monthly performance reporting and spotlight reports.

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1 - Munroe Review of Child Protection – Final report 2011

2 - VIPER, Hear Us Out – Council for Disabled Children June 2016



# Principles of Participation in Dudley

The following principles have been developed following an initial conversation with the Children in Care Council and the Youth Council in Dudley and are part of the Children's Services improvement plan.

They underpin what we are aiming to achieve in Dudley and we will collect feedback from children and young people to find out how well we are achieving these principles:

- I am listened to
- My worker knows me and understands my needs
- I am involved in decisions about me
- Professionals do what they say they are going to do and keep me informed of developments
- The service or support I receive is good and meets my needs
- I have been listened to about how services could be made better

## Priorities for Dudley Children's Services

We are pleased with the progress we have made to improve our performance. The needs of children are being assessed more quickly and social workers are seeing children more often. Reviews are taking place more regularly with children and their families, but we know we need to do more.

We now want to focus on how well we are listening to children and young people who are supported by our Early Help, Children's Social Work and Children's Disability services. To continue with our improvement journey we have set three strategic priorities to make sure that we are more child centred in all our work. Our priorities are:

1. Children and Young People Influence Decision Making in Children's Services
2. All workers listen and respond to the views of children and young people
3. We support our workforce to actively involve children and young people

We will collect feedback from children and young people who are in contact with Children's Services, asking them to rate their satisfaction in each of the priorities we have listed above. We are exploring the best way to collect this feedback. We will also gather feedback through our quality assurance process, which includes auditing by managers and we will develop a programme of training so that young people will also be part of the audit work we do.



# Delivery Plan 2017-18

## Priority One

### **Children and Young People Influence Decision Making in Children's Services**

- To involve young people in the recruitment of new staff and managers in Children's Services
- To involve young people in the commissioning of services for children and young people
- To make public what we have done to change the way we work as a result of the complaints and feedback from children and young people
- To ensure that our Youth Council, Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forums are strong and are listened to by Corporate Parents and Councillors
- To develop a representative forum for Children and Young People with Disabilities

## Priority Two

### **All workers listen and respond to the views of children and young people**

- Children and young people are actively involved in all assessments of their needs
- Children and young people are actively involved in all plans that are developed with them
- Children and young people take part in reviews and tell us how effective help and support has been
- Children and young people are supported to chair their own meetings

## Priority Three

### **We support our workforce to actively involve children and young people**

- To train all our staff in effective ways to communicate and engage with young people
- To train staff to use and promote MoMo, Care & Share and Chatterbox to record the voice of children and young people
- To create Youth Participation Champions in all our Social Work and Early Help teams

The table below shows the timescales for implementation of these actions and how they will be monitored. The first period of this strategy will need baseline data to be collected in many areas, from which future targets can be set. We are also developing a new child's feedback dashboard for recording and monitoring feedback from children at the assessment, plan and review stages of their involvement with Children's Services. This will be rolled out with all children looked after from October 2017 supported by the MoMo system and will be piloted with other teams in Children's Services in the autumn to identify the most effective way to capture their views.

Priority One: Children and Young People Influence Decision Making in Children's Services	Aim	Responsible	Actions	Output	Child Measure
	To ensure that our Youth Council, Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forums are strong and are listened to by Corporate Parents and Councillors	Dudley Youth Council	Strengthen links to Scrutiny with regular reporting to ensure view of children and young people are central to Council Plans	Identify elected Member as Participation Champion Agree annual reporting framework with elected member	I have been listened to about how services could be made better and evidence has been provided to show my views have been heard
		Siobhan Lloyd	Children in Care Council to gather feedback on implementation of the Pledge	Annual Feedback presented by CiCC to Corporate Parenting Board More young people know about and are part of the Care Council.	
		Darren Foley	Care leavers Forum To be established with good representation	Corporate Parenting Board establish regular engagement with Care Leaver Forum	
		Children with Disabilities Service Manager	To develop a representative forum for Children and Young People with Disabilities	Consultation with Children and Young People – November 2017 Proposal for Participatory Forum March 2108	

<p>Priority One: Children and Young People Influence Decision Making in Children's Services</p>	<p>To involve young people in the recruitment of new staff and managers in Children's Services</p>	<p>Siobhan Lloyd</p>	<p>To develop a comprehensive plan to involve children and young people in recruitment of new staff</p>	<p>Recruitment Plan devised and training delivered. Target: Completed Number of staff interviews with cyp involvement</p>	<p>I have been listened to about how services could be made better</p>
	<p>To involve young people in the commissioning of services for children and young people</p>	<p>Laura Smith</p>	<p>To recruit and train care experienced and other young people in the development of commissioning specification and tender evaluation</p>	<p>Young Commissioners Model to be established in Dudley during 2018.</p>	
	<p>To make public what we have done to change the way we work as a result of the complaints feedback e.g. via MOMO/ feedback to SWs/QA Officers etc. from children and young people</p>	<p>Darren Nicklin</p>	<p>To monitor a sample of complaints from children, and share thematic learning for children's services</p>	<p>Bi-annual learning report to Managers Forum and whole staff briefing</p>	

	Aim	Responsible	Actions	Output	Child's View
<p>Priority Two: All workers listen and respond to the views of children and young people</p>	<p>To ensure that all workers engage children and young people in assessment, planning direct work and reviews</p>	<p>Principal Social Worker</p>	<p>Comprehensive Case File Auditing in Early Help and Social Care to ensure Voice of Child is a focus in all work</p>	<p>Target: 65% case file audit rated good or better for Voice of Child March 2018</p>	<p>People know what my needs are and I receive help at the right time; the support I received was good and met my needs</p>
		<p>Darren Shaw</p>	<p>To develop a scorecard to measure the 6 principles of active involvement in case work in Early Help, Children with Disabilities, Children in Need, Child Protection and Children Looked After</p>	<p>Baseline data March 2018 (See below)</p>	
		<p>Howard Woolfenden</p>	<p>To create monthly MOMO Service Reports to monitor 6 principles</p>	<p>Baseline data March 2018 (See below)</p>	
		<p>Darren Shaw Darren Foley</p>	<p>To recruit and train a group of care experienced young people to carry out voice of the child audits of review meetings</p>	<p>Young Assessors trained and completed first case file audits by March 2018</p>	

	Aim	Responsible	Actions	Output	Child's View
<p>Priority Three: We support our workforce to actively involve children and young people</p>	<p>To ensure that all workers understand how to engage children and young people in assessment, planning direct work and reviews</p>	<p>Principal Social Worker</p>	<p>Revised Back to Basics training and Induction training for all staff, compulsory Social Work Briefing Events for all staff on Voice of the Child</p>	<p>100% staff working with children and young people complete 'voice of the child' training March 2018 Social workers participate in Briefing Event November 2017</p>	<p>People know what my needs are and I receive help at the right time; the support I received was good and met my needs</p>
	<p>Establish reliable social media ways to report the views of children and young people</p>	<p>Martine McFadden Darren Shaw</p>	<p>To ensure MoMo, and 'Care &amp; Share' are used across the Department to enable the views of children and young people to be communicated directly to their Workers, managers, and partners in the Children's Alliance</p>	<p>All Social Workers trained in use of MOMO April 2018 Care &amp; Share</p>	
	<p>Implement Children and Young Persons Participation Strategy</p>	<p>Children and YP Alliance</p>	<p>There is an annual report of issues raised by children and young people and actions taken</p>	<p>Annual Report to Corporate Parenting Board, DSCB, Children's Alliance March 2018</p>	
<p>Improved communication and understanding of participatory forums in Children's Service Team</p>	<p>DMT</p>	<p>Participation Champions identified in each team to improve communication and build best practice</p>	<p>Target: x champions in place March 2018</p>		

# Appendix A Performance Measures for Voice of the Child Data Gathering Dashboard

This is a first draft of the Dashboard, which requires the development of accurate and reliable ways to record the data. Some information can be gathered through audit processes, MOMO can draw management reports for some of the indicators, shown below in the CLA column, however this will not yet provide a comprehensive data set.

Principle	Early Help	CP	CLA	Care Leavers	Children with Disabilities
I am listened to (linked to whether child has been seen alone?)	Assessment	Assessment Initial Conference	Assessment % of children being offered / accessing MOMO Number of YP with MOMO accounts and are accessing the website	Pathway Plan	EHC Plan
My worker knows me and understands my needs	Review	Review	Review No of statements received - MOMO (You will also be able to draw some data out of service MOMO to get a better understanding of how young people think about different topics using the 'selections tab')	Review	Review

I am involved in decisions about me	Plan Review	Plan Review	Plan Review Number of statements created in preparation for meetings e.g. CP conference / looked after reviews/foster care support meeting (MOMO)	Plan Review	Plan Review
Professionals do what they say they are going to do	Review	Review	Review % of YP that actually contribute to their reviews and CP conferences You will need to audit case files for actions being taken due to child's voice being heard through MOMO	Review	Review
The service or support I receive is good and meets my needs	Review	Review	Review You will be able to draw some data out of service MOMO to get a better understanding of this e.g., complaints / children being happy in placement etc	Review	Review

I have been listened to about how services could be made better	Youth Council	Complaints	CiCC Could ask young people to provide feedback by completing the scenario statements on MOMO 'sort a problem' or 'change something'	Care Leavers Forum	Review
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We need to be able to include how this will be collected and who is responsible the biggest focus will be on capturing the direct voice of children and young people but will require support from workers E.g. IRO's, independent advocates, team managers, social workers, residential care workers, early help workers, foster carers.