

16 January 2015**Agenda Item: 2****CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD SPONSOR: DEREK HIGTON, SERVICE
DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE****UPDATE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST PARTICIPATION
STRATEGY 2014 - 2016**

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Board on the implementation of Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Participation Strategy for 2014 – 2016.

Information and Advice

1. The right of children and young people to participate is enshrined in the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, and there is a strong expectation in regulatory frameworks such as that used by Ofsted, that local authorities and their partners evidence the effective involvement of children and young people both in individual decisions which affect their lives and in wider service design.
2. Nottinghamshire Children's Trust has continued to demonstrate its commitment to the participation of children and young people in the development of services through the approval of its 2014-2016 strategy in January 2014.
3. A Delivery Plan has been developed to support the implementation of the Participation Strategy by the Children and Young People's Participation and Positive Activities Group. The Delivery Plan identifies a number of themes:
 - How services are able to demonstrate the involvement of children, young people and families have impacted on the development of their service, and improved outcomes
 - How services demonstrate how they recognise and celebrate the valuable contributions that all children, young people and families bring to their services
 - How services engage children and young people (particularly those least likely to feel empowered) in inclusive decision-making processes and ensure their voices are heard and acted upon in a variety of ways
 - All services have in place processes to share best practice and enable effective communication between children, young people and families and the Children's Trust

- All services have a shared understanding and commitment to the value of participation and will work together to support each other in achieving the Children's Trust's priorities in the Children, Young People's and Families Plan.
4. The key barrier identified in the implementation of the strategy has been the difficulty of embedding new practices at a time many services are undergoing re-organisation and in some cases considerable reductions in resources. In addition, to ensure the successful delivery of the strategy there is a need for a more senior champion for participation in some services. These barriers will be addressed through the implementation of the Delivery Plan during 2015-16.
 5. The key change to this strategy from the previous iteration was in the inclusion of families within the scope of the strategy, in recognition of the important role that parents and carers can play in shaping services. The following are two examples of how this change in strategy is being implemented:
 - a. The key mechanism for parent participation in Children's Centres is the Local Advisory Groups. The Local Advisory Group (LAG) is made up of a variety of service providers, community representatives and parents. Through this parents are able to scrutinise and challenge centre performance, plan activities and programmes and ensure that the centre meets the needs of local parents and children. There are currently twenty-nine LAGs in operation across the County.
 - b. The Nottinghamshire Participation Hub (NPH) was established in March 2014, and is the county-wide forum for parents/carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). There is a steering group of parent/carer representatives from across the whole county who link with a network of locality hubs covering areas in the north, middle, east and south of the county. Recent work of NPH has included; raising the awareness with local support groups and individual parents on the implications of the SEN reforms, which became law on 1st September 2014 and the participation in the review of independent information, advice and support services, and the development of the Personal Budgets Policy, in particular, the Personal Budgets Leaflet which is aimed at both parents and young people.
 5. The strategy also identifies a number of other areas for development for improving children, young people and families' participation, the following progress has been made:
 - a. The strategic commitment to the participation of children and young people is now embedded in the Nottinghamshire Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014-2016.
 - b. Building on our current strengths of consultation and evaluation of services to create regular opportunities for children, young people and their families to participate in designing services. One example of this is Children's Social Care's regular consultation with 'No Labels' Children in Care Council on changes in how their formal assessments are designed and implemented.
 - c. Ensuring we have a workforce which regularly creates environments for children, young people and their families to be offered the opportunity to participate. One example of this is the development of multi-disciplinary training workshops to take

place in 15/16 to further equip staff with tools to cascade for the effective delivery of participation.

- d. Derek Higton, Service Director, Youth, Families and Culture, has been appointed to champion participation in the work of Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Board

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the Children's Trust Board notes the content of this report

Derek Higton
Service Director, Youth, Families & Culture

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