



# Report to Cabinet

<b>Report Date:</b>	10 May 2022
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Richard Nash, Corporate Director Children's Services
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All Wards</b>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>For Cabinet to (a) agree the Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25 and (b) note the ambitions set out within the Strategy.</b>

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In Buckinghamshire, our ambition is to provide the best services possible to support children and young people and their families. In doing so we strive to continually develop our services and how we deliver them, so they are relevant and appropriate to those we work with. Our children and young people have valuable contributions to make in helping us to understand what they need.
- 1.2 Supporting active participation is key to us improving services which are truly effective and make a positive difference to those who experience them first-hand. This strategy provides a clear framework for Children's Services to use in an inclusive manner, actively listening, acting and responding to the issues which children and young people tell us are important to them, and involving them in identifying and providing creative solutions.
- 1.3 During the December 2021 Ofsted re-inspection, inspectors commented that the inclusion and participation of children in helping to shape improved practice and services is underdeveloped. The implementation of this Strategy forms part of our response to this finding.

- 1.4 This is the first Participation Strategy for Buckinghamshire and signals our intent to ensure we provide opportunities to engage with children and young people so that their voices are heard, responded to and acted upon.

## **2. Content of report**

- 2.1 This Strategy was co-produced with young people and The Care Leaders, a social enterprise led by experts by experience. The strategy brings together all areas of engagement and participation for young people, including the We Do Care Council, for children and young people in care, and Shout Out For SEND, the forum for young people with SEND. In addition to groups and forums, the strategy includes wider engagement through Youth Councils and the Youth Voice Executive.
- 2.2 The strategy promotes new ways of engaging with and listening to young people to ensure their voices are heard and can have genuine impact on services, practice and policy. This significant range of activities is Championed by colleagues across children's services, who are supported by specialist staff and a Participation Coordinator, within the Family Support Service.
- 2.3 In Buckinghamshire, we want to promote and simplify pathways for young people to participate in services by developing opportunities for young people to have a say about things that are meaningful to them. We know it's important for young people to have ownership of the things they speak about and what happens as a result and that we have a duty to build a system that can enable this. Furthermore, we recognise that we do not always need to suggest what young people should consult on, our focus must be to create opportunities for young people to talk about what matters to them. We hold the belief that if we do this honestly, maximising ownership, being clear about the power young people have, providing transparent feedback we can better meet the needs of young people in Buckinghamshire.
- 2.4 We recognise that to ensure young people receive the very best services we need to engage them in conversations that help us understand their views, opinions and ideas about what we can do. We know that without young people's views, we will not know what they need, how best to support them or how our services should be developed.
- 2.5 We are ambitious to ensure we engage with all young people, especially those who have special educational needs, disabilities, those who are considered vulnerable and in need of extra support. We believe that by listening to young people and acting on their views we can ensure every young person can be enabled to realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.
- 2.6 This strategy sets out how we plan to listen to young people, respond to them and act on their views, ensuring they know we value their knowledge and work with them to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

### **3. Other options considered**

3.1 N/A

### **4. Legal and financial implications**

4.1 N/A

### **5. Corporate implications**

N/A

### **6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

6.1 N/A

### **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

7.1 N/A

### **8. Next steps and review**

8.1 Strategy review in 2025

### **9. Background papers**

BC Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25

BC Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25 - Young People's Version

### **10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone [01296 382343] or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

