

Inquiry Progress Update on Recommendations after 6 months

Inquiry: Voice of the Child

Select Committee Inquiry Report Completion Date: Recommendations accepted by Cabinet on 9th January 2017

Date of this update: July 2017

Lead Officer responsible for this response: Carol Douch

Cabinet Member that has signed-off this update: Warren Whyte

Recommendation 1

That sufficient tools are readily available for all people working with children and young people to gather and record views for example books, pictures, games and toys and that purchasing cards are made available to buy additional items quickly.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Carol Douch

Action by date: End of February 2017 and ongoing

Original Response and Actions

- We have made a number of tools available to children's social workers and we will consider what other tools are available for other staff who work with children.
- Over the last 4 months there has been an increasing number of children and workers using the apps
- We will review with our commissioned providers to identify any gaps in access to relevant tools and review the ability to purchase new items within the scope of the commissioned service budget.
- We will review availability and use of purchasing cards by social work staff.

Progress Update After 6 months

There is clear evidence to demonstrate that Social Workers have increased their knowledge and application of using electronic applications and tools for obtaining children's wishes and feelings. This is evidenced through the Monthly Senior Management Audits that has demonstrated that a variety of tools are being used by Social Workers.

Social Workers evidence the children's wishes and feelings through their visits, meetings and written reports and are more able to articulate the children's journeys through Children's Social Care. The Tools Library is being upgraded on a regular basis (as and when new tools are being made available by other agencies, Social Workers, etc.)

Children are also able to use the MOMO (Mind of My Own) application. They can speak with their Social Workers, Managers and Practice Improvement Managers and share their views.

The electronic ePEP (electronic Personal Education Plan) for Looked After Children (LAC) is co-ordinated by The Virtual School in conjunction with the school, social

worker, carer and pupil. The vast majority of pupils attend their termly PEP and find the interactive platform user friendly and fun to use as it is adapted according to age and ability. (There is one specifically for Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils).

Using this information targets are set and the Pupil Premium is allocated accordingly. These targets are reviewed every term. This input allows pupils to request additional activities and educational games and resources.

Pupils are rewarded for their participation via a voucher scheme.

The Virtual School distributes age and interest appropriate books to all primary aged and Early Years Pupils and to any older pupils who request it. This is based on a detailed knowledge in relation to ability and interest. The pupils contribute to this via PEPs and letters from their carers. We have a huge number of compliments and letters of gratitude from carers and pupils for their books.

All social workers have access to a team purchasing card via their Business Support Officer to enable them to purchase appropriate resources to facilitate the child's voice.

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 2

That more innovative way are introduced to increase the amount of quality time workers within social care have to gather the views of children and young people, particularly within the children in need service.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Julie Davies

Action by date: January 2017

Original Response and Actions

- "Mind of My Own" app was introduced in early summer 2016 which is a means in which children and young people in our care can share their wishes and feelings in a secure way on line.
- The implementation has been successful and we are now developing the tool further to ensure it is accessible to children and young people with disabilities.
- We will consider the opportunities as part of the restructure of the children in need service and review its effectiveness.

Progress Update After 6 months

Mind of My Own (MOMO) was introduced in Buckinghamshire April 2016 with a specific application for children with disability available from December 2016.

For all child protection review conferences taking place on and after 1st July 2017, social workers will be expected to support the use of MoMo One (for children aged 8 years and above) and MOMO Express (for children under 8 years of age and disabled children) to gain children's views for all review child protection conferences at a statutory child protection visit during the 5 weeks before the conference takes place.

Buckinghamshire Children's Services were recently nominated and reached the final for an award at the national 'MOMO' event. Buckinghamshire County Council were nominated in two categories - fastest implementation and the highest number of children registered to use the app in our drive to improve the way we gather the views of children and young people.

As of 24th August 2017, 260 young people had MoMo accounts, 274 workers had downloaded MOMO onto their phones and 287 statements had been received from children and young people.

Social Workers attend the termly Personal Education Plan meetings for looked after children.

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 3

That participation group for children and young people with disabilities is established so that their collective voice can be heard and disseminated to Commissioners, Youth Service and Social Care to act upon.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Lead Officer: James Fowler

Action by date: February 2017

Original Response and Actions	Progress Update After 6 months
<p>This has recently been established in the Youth Service as part of our disability participation work. We can liaise with our commissioned providers to help disseminate details about this group and help identify potentially interested young people to take part.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Terms of Reference more widely across commissioners and Social Care • Share/add to existing work plan for the group • Develop process for sharing outcomes to relevant parties. 	<p>There is a Special Educational Needs / Disabilities (SEND) youth forum, young people age ranges from 15-19 with a variety of disabilities.</p> <p>SEND youth forum priorities are led by the young people of the forum and last year's topic was mental health. This year the SEND youth forum have chosen the topic – 'raise disability awareness to help prevent bullying'. The forum will be working in partnership with Alfriston School on this priority.</p> <p>The disability work plan priorities 17/18 were agreed by the Head of Service for SEND. The set priorities were agreed following young people recommendations along with information and additional gaps identified by other services such as, SEND IAS (SEND Information, Advice and Support) , Adult Social Care Transitions Team and Change for Children SEND lead.</p> <p>Young people from the SEND youth forum, special schools/colleges, post-19 provision, Talkback and Macintyre are currently being engaged to complete priorities from the work plan.</p> <p>All services and young people involved in the work plan priorities are regularly updated with progress and outcomes. The voice of the child is shared with key partners including SEND Team, Transitions Team, and Schools. As well as included in Change for Children Programme, Local Offer working group etc.</p> <p>The SEND Youth Forum has produced a booklet called 'MY Education, Health & Care Plan' which is sent out when the Local Authority agrees to carry out an Education Health Care (EHC) needs assessment. This advises the young person what to expect from the process, what things mean and what to do if they are unhappy with the EHC plan (if one is issued).</p>

The ePEP has a section for children with disabilities with a Makaton symbol pupils part.

Feedback to key professionals and other relevant parties is shared as a matter of course as part of the work completed on each priority of the Work Plan 2017/18. In addition key partners/ individuals are invited to attend SEND Youth Forum.

Young people have helped to produce SEND Youth Forum promotional material including young people's flyer and promotional video.

Current SEND Youth Forum campaign priorities identified by young people include:

1. Young people felt it was important to raise other children and young people's awareness of disability to prevent bullying of vulnerable young people.

The forum have created a poster for the MASKS (Make A Special Kid Smile) charity exhibition and are now working on a project to introduce students from mainstream schools to their local SEN schools and placements. The forum will be working in partnership with Alfriston school for this work.

2. Young people felt there needed to be more information for young people on supporting transitions into adulthood.

Young people from the SEND Youth Forum helped create and appeared in 6 short information films about SEND post 16 provision. The films include a young person's tour of a college, therapies available on site, community provision by Macintyre and Talkback and residential placements with Aster Lodge. The films show SEND post 16 provision we currently offer and help young people and their families better understand the Local Offer and how the different services support can support young people with disabilities transition into adult services.
(<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/advice.page?id=GIVSsf4UkOq>)

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 4

That a specific Voice of the Child and Young Person website hub is developed to :

- Publicise prominently the relevant email addresses, phone numbers and social media for children and young people to give their views.
- Provide links to all relevant BCC and partners' website pages that focus on and provide a way for children and young people to give their views.
- Let children and young people know what has happened as a result of their feedback. (You said, we did)
- Clearly signpost services for children and young people in a way that is easy to understand.
- Publicise the rights of children and young people to be heard

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Carol Douch

Action by date: End of January 2017

Original Response and Actions**Progress Update After 6 months**

- A specific website area has been designed with children and young people to ensure key information is accessible to them. The final technical details are being completed and the website will go live at the end of January 2017.
- Buckinghamshire CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health) have recently re-launched their website following significant input from young people which addresses a number of the inquiry recommendations for this group of service users:
<http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/fresh/bucks/>
- The Bucks Family Information Service (BFIS) website has sections dedicated to young people, including a section for young people to share their own views, vlogs etc (Your Space). There is also a Youth Space section that could be developed further with rights etc. BFIS is managed by Anna Ellis.
- The Youth Service also has a LAC website linked to the Children in Care Council called kidsincare.org.uk

- The specific website area for children to understand their journey through social care system went live as planned, with an interactive tool so that they can access key information about what will happen at different points of the child's journey. The information has been co-produced and is in accessible language for children and young people.
- We do Care website clearly outlines the rights of children in care and aftercare and the pledge from the County Council and there is a link to this from the BFIS website.
- Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Board has a specific area with key information for children to understand what to do to keep safe

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 5

That the recording and discussion of children and young people's views are strengthened by:

- Work with staff across each business area to draw up a good practice guidance document on the process of recording and discussing the views of children and young people to improve consistency.
- Making discussion at social care supervision meetings & recording on the supervision template of children's and young people's views obligatory.
- Investigating whether the field within the ICS system to record the views of children and young people can be made mandatory to complete.
- As part of the Business Unit's work on Business Intelligence, look to set up a data hub in which all views gathered and recorded, from whichever service, can be stored, accessed and analysed from one place by multiple users.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Carol Douch

Action by date: June 2017

Original Response and Actions	Progress Update After 6 months
<p>Good practice guidance on recording children's views currently exists for children's social care and is currently specific to this service area. The quality of this is audited on a regular basis through supervision and through regular auditing. Guidance will be shared across the business unit through management and team meetings over the next 4 months.</p> <p>It is currently a requirement in supervision and group supervision to consider the views of children and young people when decisions are made about assessment, effective planning and reviewing. It is monitored through supervision and file auditing.</p> <p>There is a mandatory field in LCS about detailing when a child has been seen.</p> <p>Some of the views of children and young people are confidential to that child and their circumstance. Information is already analysed in relation to themes about complaints and compliments. We will investigate the possibility of the BI Service finding a solution and essentially if we can achieve this without compromising</p>	<p>The monthly case file audits undertaken across Children's Services evidence that the voice of the child is consistently being considered in assessments, interventions, planning and review. The child's voice is at the centre of what children's social care do. The guidance and regular management oversight has ensured this area of improvement has moved forward.</p> <p>The supervision procedure and template has been reviewed and updated and formally launched in June 2017. The template now includes a prompt for the manager to discuss with the social worker a specific children's journey and this is then recorded on the child's record in LCS (the case recording system). (This will include Aftercare once all of the records have been transferred over)</p> <p>The Rights to Information Team in Children's Services share anonymised outcomes and lessons learnt from individual complaints (both Stage 1 and Stage 2) in a thematic way that does not compromise confidentiality. For example, themes are included in the Getting to Good newsletters, form the basis of broader practice discussions at the regular County Manager meetings and Practice Improvement Managers encourage sharing by their Team Managers at their team meetings.</p>

The Good Practice Guidance document to highlight examples of good practice in schools currently that enables the voice of the child to be shared including:

- Responsive marking
- Target setting sessions
- School reports
- School Council
- Pupil Form/Class Reps
- Clubs and participation groups
- Via PTA activities
- Pupil surveys
- (via Autumn Term 2017 Liaison Groups)

Committee RAG Rating:




Recommendation 6

To strengthen the strategic approach:

- a. Ensure that the voice of the child and young person is an overarching priority within Business Unit strategies, for example the Children’s Strategy and its associated implementation plan, to include specific actions and performance measures.
- b. Make sure children and young people are part of the recruitment panel for appointments supporting children and young people

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Lead Officer: James Fowler. Action by date: June 2017

Original Response and Actions	Progress Update After 6 months
<p>a) It is already one of the overarching priorities as set out in the Children’s Strategy that Children are at the heart of Buckinghamshire County Council’s strategic priorities. We will consider how we monitor the voice of the child across our contract management function from a commissioned services perspective and look to embed an appropriate mechanism. We will ask BI to develop a possible solution to assist us in gathering the views of the children we work with by June 2017.</p> <p>b) The Youth Service has a pool of trained young people who can be available for recruitment processes. Action: Ensure the inclusion of C&YP from the trained pool of young people are involved in recruitment process, and the process to access them through HR and the Youth service is reviewed by June 2017.</p>	<p>a) The voice of the child and young person is an overarching priority within Children’s Services, and Safeguarding our Vulnerable is one of three overarching priorities for the Council.</p> <p>How a provider captures the voice of the child is key question in commissioning of new services and in monitoring and challenging providers in contract management.</p> <p>b) The Youth Service has a pool of trained young people and will continue to provide training and support for young people to enable them to participate in recruitment processes. Recent sessions delivered in April and May 2017. Planned session in October half-term specifically targeting Children Looked After and Care Leaver’s. Additional plans to incorporate interview training in YS existing employability programmes to increase number of trained young people.</p> <p>Liaising with HR to include process for requesting young people’s interview panels added to existing ‘Recruitment Journey’ guidance.</p> <p>Young people from Youth Voice, We Do Care and SEND Youth Forum to support refresh of young people’s interview panels recruitment material.</p> <p>Young people’s interview panels were recently involved in the recruitment of the DCS and ‘Step up to Social Work’ interviews</p> <p>A young people panel has been involved in the recruitment of all SEN Offices and Managers over the last 2 years.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Committee RAG Rating: </p>

Recommendation 7

That at each meeting of the wider leadership team there is a standing agenda item on the voice of the child and young person to focus on:

- Ensuring the voice of the child and young person is included in key strategies and plans
- Understanding the themes and lessons that can be learned from analysing the views of children and young people from across the different service areas.
- Using analysis of children and young people's views to identify gaps and duplication in service provision and ensure effective and efficient use of resources.
- Feeding back on key issues to the Senior Management Team meeting and Business Unit Board.

And that once a year, a wider leadership team meeting is devoted to the voice of the child and young person

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Gladys Rhodes-White

Action by date: February 2017

Original Response and Actions

The agenda will be changed to ensure that this is considered at each WLT meeting. Once a year the meeting will be dedicated to the Voice of the Child.

Key themes identified from children's voices will help to amend and develop children's services policies and procedures and will be included in an annual review.

Progress Update After 6 months

Wider Leadership Team across children services has had 2 facilitated sessions by Local Government Association focussed on the cross cutting themes in children's services and ensuring the voice of the child is central to the work that is completed. The next WLT meeting is scheduled for November and the theme will be Voice of Child.

Key themes are used to amend and develop children's services policies an example is Buckinghamshire Looked after Children and Placement Sufficiency strategy which is focussed on ensuring that there are placements in Buckinghamshire which enables children to be maintained in their school and keep contact with their family friend and community.

Another recent example of co-production of work with young people is the revised Pathway way plan which is now user friendly and enables the child and young person's voice to be central to the planning.

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 8

That Voice of the Child and Young Person Leaders in the CSCL Business Unit and throughout the organisation are identified and whose role is to maintain a high profile for this area of work, share good practice and ensure that the voice of the child and young person becomes a more detailed cross cutting theme in strategies, plans and projects.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Gladys Rhodes-White

Action by date: Ongoing

Original Response and Actions**Progress Update After 6 months**

This is the responsibility of all staff and is one of the overarching priorities of the Council as identified in the Children's Strategy.

- Also it is the specific role of the Principal Children's Social Worker to ensure to maintain the profile and to challenge where this is not evident
- Simon Billenness and Theresa Carlyle lead on our Youth voice work in the Youth Service.


A report from the Principal Social Worker was considered at the senior leadership team and One Council Board. A newly appointed Principal Social Worker has been appointed and will check the progress of the annual report and to be the champion for children's social work and the voice of the child. He has met with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services in his first few weeks in post.

The Youth Service delivers Youth Voice work including the Children in Care Council and SEND Youth Forum. The Youth Voice initiatives provide a mechanism for the Council to consult with young people on a regular basis and maintain open dialogue. Both the Children in Care Council and SEND Youth Forum have an annual work plan that includes key priorities identified by young people and officers and link to priorities for BCC.





In addition Youth Voice feed into wider strategies and plans for example planned consultation as part of the current Change for Children Programme.

Sarah Barnett leads on Youth Voice. James Fowler oversees Children in Care and SEND YV work.

Current approach to broaden contributions to Youth Service Youth Voice events include building an online community to enable children and young people to participate anytime and anywhere, ongoing engagement with key partners such as schools and other youth sector organisations to promote the Youth Voice opportunities. Developing young people as Youth Voice Ambassadors to recruit other young people to the Youth Voice community and promote streams of work

	<p>and outcomes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Committee RAG Rating: </p>
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RAG Status Guidance (For the Select Committee's Assessment)

	<i>Recommendation implemented to the satisfaction of the committee.</i>		<i>Committee have concerns the recommendation may not be fully delivered to its satisfaction</i>
	<i>Recommendation on track to be completed to the satisfaction of the committee.</i>		<i>Committee consider the recommendation to have not been delivered/implemented</i>