



Children's & Education Select Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday 8 September 2022

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF

Membership:

J Ward (Chairman), M Dormer (Vice-Chairman), S Adoh, K Bates, D Blamires, A Collingwood, N Hussain, S James, C Jones, S Kayani, Dr W Matthews, A Osibogun, D Summers, J Towns, P Turner, Z Williams and T Wilson

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Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	14:00	
2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN The Chairman will appoint the Vice-Chairman of the Select Committee for the forthcoming year.		
3 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE		

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

For Committee Members to disclose and Personal or Discloseable Pecuniary Interests.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Public Questions is an opportunity for people who live, work or study in Buckinghamshire to put a question to a Select Committee. The Committee will hear from members of the public who have submitted questions in advance relating to items on the agenda. The Cabinet Member, relevant key partners and responsible officers will be invited to respond. Further information on how to register can be found here:

[Scrutinising council policies and decisions \(Select Committees\) | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 5 - 10

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Select Committee held on 30th June 2022.

7 EARLY HELP STRATEGY & IMPACT OF THE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE 14:15 11 - 42

To receive a report detailing the positive impact on vulnerable families made by the Family Support Service since its introduction in 2019 and to note the work underway to deliver the ambitions of the revised Early Help Strategy 2022-2025.

Contributors:

Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Children's & Education

Gareth Morgan, Head of Early Help

8 PARTICIPATION STRATEGY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 2022-2025 15:00 43 - 116

For the Select Committee to receive an update on the Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-2025.

Contributors:

Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Children & Education

Krissie Hutton, Youth Participation Co-ordinator

Gareth Morgan, Head of Early Help

- 9 WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023** **15:45** **117 - 118**
To note the updated work programme and the progress made in relation to the planning of a proposed task and finish group.

Contributors:

All Members

Mrs Katie Dover, Senior Scrutiny Officer

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Select Committee will be held on Thursday 3rd November 2022 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Aylesbury at 2.00 p.m.

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Katie Dover on 01296 531339, email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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Agenda Item 6
Buckinghamshire Council
Children's & Education Select
Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2022 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.15 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Z Williams, S Adoh, K Bates, D Blamires, A Collingwood, M Dormer, N Hussain, S Kayani, Dr W Matthews, A Osibogun, D Summers, P Turner, J Baum and A Cranmer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

K Dover, S James, R Nash, Ms T Ironmonger, P Kudhail, Cartwright, T Charlton, S Hadwin and G Porter

Agenda Item

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THIS MEETING

The Senior Scrutiny Officer welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies for the Chairman, Councillor Julie Ward as she had tested positive for Covid and therefore was unable to attend the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that Councillor Mark Dormer be elected Chairman for this meeting of the Select Committee.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Tony Wilson and Councillors James, Jones and Towns.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the Select Committee to be held on 8th September 2022, to allow the elected Chairman, Councillor Julie Ward to make the appointment.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bates declared a personal interest as Chairman of Governors at the Growing Together Foundation

Councillor Blamires declared a personal interest as parent of a SEND child

Councillor Kayani declared interests as Chairman of the Dyspraxia Foundation and employee of the Bourne End Academy

Councillor Hussein declared a personal interest as a governor at Pebble Brook School

Councillor Osibogun declared a personal interest as a governor at Buckingham Primary School
Councillor Turner declared a personal interest as a Governor at Chiltern Wood School
Zoe Williams declared a personal interest as a parent governor.

Councillor Hussein requested information be brought back to the committee on the issues of the 11 plus examination.

The Chairman for the meeting agreed that the issue of how to include this in the work programme be brought back to the next committee meeting for the Chairman Councillor Ward to advise on.

Action: KD/RN/Cllr Ward

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Select Committee meetings held on 22nd March 2022 and 18th May 2022 were reviewed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the committee held on 22nd March and 18th May 2022 be AGREED as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were received in relation to this agenda of the Select Committee.

7 LOCAL AREA SEND INSPECTION OUTCOME

Councillor Dormer welcomed Tracey Ironmonger, Service Director; Gayle Porter and Tina Charlton from Buckinghamshire NHS Trust; Sue Hadwin from Oxford Health NHS Trust and Niki Cartwright from NHS Berkshire West CCG who attended the meeting to speak on this item.

Councillor Cranmer, Cabinet portfolio holder for Children's Services and Education introduced the report. It was noted that a thorough investigation of the local area SEND provision had taken place between 28th February and 11th March this year involving staff, service users and parents. The work had included a significant analysis of reported information from over 1000 parents. The review was the first of its kind on this service carried out jointly by the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted.

Councillor Cranmer noted that in the report was good overall and that the service was reported to know its area of work well and was aware of the areas that needed to improve as highlighted in the inspection report. These areas were already subject to improvement by both the council and the healthcare services who were working in partnership. The areas included the need for a cohesive area strategy on therapies, waiting times for autistic/ADHD reports and waiting times for appointments with community paediatricians.

Richard Nash noted that this was a local area inspection involving the health, education and departmental services which would work together to address the highlighted issues and ensure that all children requiring the services would receive what they required.

Simon James noted that there was a whole system approach to addressing the highlighted issues. The focus of the review of services had been on identifying needs; assessing and meeting needs and thirdly, identifying what the positive outcomes were for children and young people in the area. FACT (Families and Children Together) Bucks had taken evidence from parents and carers as well as speaking to parents within schools and this evidence was taken very seriously and was documented in the response letter from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

Much work had commenced on the three areas of work recommended for improvement which would be responded to in the written statement of action. The statement would be submitted to Ofsted via the Department for Education and NH S England no later than 8th August. The strengths currently found in the SEND service were detailed in the response letter as follows:-

- good SEND governance which included the Board co-chaired by Simon Jones and the chair of FACT Bucks,
- good leadership in local authority, health, social care and schools
- co-production was embedded in terms of strategic work
- effective joint commissioning especially relating to children's mental health needs
- Children are well prepared for school
- EHCPs are provided in a timely manner
- The independent board provided an added level of scrutiny
- Fortnightly planning meetings occurred to ensure the written statement of action was on track
- All elements formed the planned ongoing journey for the service
- Work would continue with parents to aid improvements

Tracey Ironmonger, noted that the overall responsibility for funding the SEND service lay with the CCGs. The council's integrated commissioning team undertake the procurement and contract monitoring of services via a section 75 partnership agreement and this was particularly useful where services are provided jointly. The area is complex with a wide range of providers delivering joined up services to children which included:

- Children's integrated therapies; delivered by Bucks Healthcare Trust and including community speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy to children registered with GP in or resident in Buckinghamshire
- The neurodevelopment pathway delivered with Oxford Health Foundation Trust and Bucks Healthcare Trust which provides pre-assessments for diagnostic assessment of autism and ADHD and post diagnostic support. This service provides a single point of access managed by Oxford Health. BHT is responsible for 0-11 year olds and Oxford Health is responsible for 11-18 year olds.
- The community paediatrics service which is provided by Bucks Healthcare Trust and which gives a specialist medical service from prevention through to identification, assessment, diagnosis and case management for children and young people with moderate and severe disabilities, special educational needs and those looked after or going through the adoption process.
- It was considered important to maintain a strong relationship with parents and carers through FACT Bucks
- Plans were developing via a system wide approach and co-production between services providers
- The written statement for action would be an opportunity to accelerate the service's progress
- From 1st July the CCGs for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, would merge and become an integrated care board which would look at the challenging area of improving consistency of service provision across the areas.

In response to questions from Councillors it was noted that:

- There is an existing improvement plan already in progress which included preparation for adulthood and early identification of children moving from primary to secondary school; and ensuring the quality of EHCPs remains high and that the experience of annual reviews of EHCPs remains good

- Care plans are a national issue. Both Berkshire West and Oxfordshire also have long wait times to access services. We have funding for a CAMHS academy and the service was assessing how to develop roles to supplement the workforce.

Action: Niki Cartwright to report back to committee with information on waiting times

- A different approach was required and as such, schools' meetings have discussed embedding health professionals in schools. Some schools are already employing specialists directly. The recommendation was for a hub and spoke model with expertise based in geographical regions so that specialists would get to know a particular school's culture more thoroughly and therefore be able to respond to the children's needs more effectively. Recommissioning as a whole system over the next 2-3 years was being assessed.
- The committee's attention was drawn to consider Birmingham and Camden which were areas with strong service level agreements and were good models to examine.
- The issues noted by the review were long-standing ones and the focus now was on mitigating the long wait times and secondly how to avoid these issues again in the future.
- Service level agreements were very detailed and the specifications would be reassessed to ensure that the whole system would work as well as possible
- The expertise for making a difference to children and young people once needs were identified, should be based in schools
- Waiting lists were being prioritised on the basis of clinical needs and measures were brought in to relieve pressure on the system
- Reports from private practitioners commissioned by parents were accepted as part of EHCPs and quality assured to save time in the assessment process
- Diagnoses were not the only requirement for assessment of a school place. Assessments were based on the needs of the child
- Specialists helping in schools, enabled the upskilling of staff in schools and this would be developed further as part of the whole school approach, with oversight from specialists in place.
- It was suggested that a task and finish group of councillors could be formed to look into a SEND related area.

Action: Simon James to look at possible areas for a SEND task and finish group

- Richard Nash noted that with regards to supported living, work was underway with the housing and commissioning teams to try to match young people to accommodation appropriately, taking into account their needs and wishes. Much progress had been made in this area so far and it would be business as usual to ensure the correct level of support here.
- John McCoughlin chaired the Improvement Board which would monitor progress and would also discuss potential solutions. The written statement of actions would go to the next meeting on 11th July for comment and approval. The board would have an on-going remit to monitor progress of this. Board work would dovetail with the other improvement work which was on-going.
- There is a requirement to report back to the Department of Education within 4-6 months.
- The CQC would return to reinspect the service within the next three years.
- All three areas for improvement were already in the improvement plan prior to inspection. Measures had already been put in place to make improvements such as the introduction of Speak Link in schools, and commissioning services from Helios -a

- partnership around diagnostic support and an evidence-based provider.
- Feedback from parents was sought via FACT, or via the feedback button on the local offer, via “You Said We Did” and analysis via any complaints.
 - Action: Data from Helios to be brought back to Select committee**
- The plan would give details of aims and when targets would be expected to be met and what the hoped impact would be for families.
 - Action: The Directors noted that they could consider areas that would be helpful to be reviewed by a task and finish group including areas of good practice.**
- Further to new legislation relating to the development of multi-academy trusts, schools were already considering potential structures and it was noted that the local authority would still have the same level of statutory oversight with a key role in engaging and ensuring strong outcomes for children in the future.
- The Side by Side project would also be used to help develop improvements

8 **RAPID REVIEW GROUP REPORT ON SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Councillor Mark Dormer introduced the report of the rapid review group on social worker recruitment and retention.

The work had initially covered the whole service but the group had re-focused their focus in the early stages of the review to the child protection and child assessment teams where there were additional challenges and problems.

The approach taken had covered holding meetings with directors; managers; front line social workers and undertaking research on the national picture. Focus groups with social workers were held in confidential sessions to allow employees to be open with their views on where improvements or changes could be made. Meetings were also held with finance and human resources (HR) officers to look at salaries, issues regarding leavers and to consider how the HR service aligned with the front-line staff.

Richard Nash noted that the issue of recruitment and retention of social workers was not a new issue but it had come under much greater pressure during the last 16 months when a 60 % increase in work in the child protection area had been experienced. As a statutory service, all calls on the service had to be addressed to ensure all children in Buckinghamshire were safe. Social workers often worked anti-social hours under pressure. Increasing the number of social workers was important and the social work academy would be increased this year to train 60 social workers. It was important to support and train the social workers well to equip them to deal with the difficult scenarios they might face. There was also a balance to be achieved between needs and resources.

In response to a question, Richard Nash detailed the timeline that social workers often had to follow in relation to a section 47 incident where the council had a statutory duty to respond. The timeline might include the teacher noticing a problem, the designated officer who would then contact the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) as soon as practically possible. A social worker would then be required to speak to the child at their home on the same day, possibly with police colleagues with the parent/carer. If a placement was required due to harm caused to a child, the social worker might be working till very late in the evening, to ensure the child was safe. The same social worker would be back into work the next morning to continue their work on the incident and having possibly been working under very stressful circumstances.

The review group had considered it their role to discover what the council could do to help social workers to carry on performing their role and be supported.

Richard Nash noted the recommendations regarding improving I.T. systems for supporting social workers and the challenges to do so in making them compatible with the current I.T. social care systems.

Palvinder Kudhail noted streamlining work had commenced on the redesign of forms and both

I.T. and business support. A report was expected to the Director next week with short term and longer term items.

Action: improvements to be reported back to the Select Committee

In response to further questions it was noted that:

- being an agency worker was preferred by some social workers due to role flexibility. In some high profile cases there had been a significant impact on permanent staff which had made agency working more attractive.

- Inks were good with local universities but the council's own social worker academy provided more social workers more immediately. Three apprentices of the ASYE academy would qualify next April and 6 more were starting in October. The social work academy runs the training programme for social workers with support from HR where required.

- retention bonuses would help to retain staff by showing the team they are valued. However, the cost of living in Buckinghamshire was relatively expensive compared to many areas of the country and this was a deterrent to working here.

- there were many examples of good management in the service e.g. in the stable care leaving team which if extended across the service would really help retain staff.

Action: the committee to write to thank all the social workers for their commitment and work

Councillor Dormer thanked the review group for their work and noted that the report would be taken to the Cabinet on 12th July and would respond to the recommendations thereon.

Action: Councillor Cranmer to report back to the committee in six and nine months' time on progress made in relation to the recommendations in the report.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

The Select committee received the draft work programme and made the following suggestions for consideration with the Chairman at the next meeting:-

- Councillor Collingwood noted the action plan on the Ofsted report and it was suggested that this come back to the next meeting of the committee.
- An update on the Sufficiency Strategy was requested to come back to the January committee meeting.
- An item was requested on vulnerable children missing from education.
- Information regarding the attainment gap would be included in the Education Standards report in January 2023 and would include the process of the 11 plus exam. This issue was being managed by the Risk Management and Audit Committee on 15th July.
- The issue of school transport would be discussed at the Transport, Environment and Climate Change Committee on 3rd November.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Select Committee would be held on Thursday 8th September 2022 at 2.00 p.m. in The Oculus, The Gateway, Aylesbury



Report to Children's & Education Select Committee

Date: Thursday 8 September 2022

Reference number: NA

Title: Early Help Strategy and Impact of the Family Support Service

Relevant councillor(s): Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member Education & Children's Services

Author and/or contact officer: Gareth Morgan, Head of Early Help

Ward(s) affected: none specific

1. Recommendations to the Committee

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the progress made by the Family Support Service (FSS) since its introduction in September 2019, recognising the inevitable impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the establishment and development of the service.
- 1.2 The Committee is asked to note the positive impact the FSS has achieved across all areas of its operation, despite the pandemic, as evidenced in this report.
- 1.3 The Committee is asked to recognise to significant role played by the FSS in supporting vulnerable families to become more self-reliant and resilient and in preventing the escalation of need.

2. Background and context

- 2.1 The Family Support Service launched in September 2019 as part of Children's Services response to the Ofsted inspection of 2017 and following public consultation. The service restructure sought to provide a more accessible, connected, and targeted response to the needs of families, by focussing resource and effort on those most in need, whilst retaining a universal offer to support the early identification of emerging need as well as delivering a £3.1m budget saving.

- 2.2 Soon after its launch, the service had to adapt quickly during the pandemic, moving a significant part of its operational activities to virtual support in line with Children's Services, and developing and enhancing self-help information through the website and directory.
- 2.3 Since its launch there has been an increase in demand for the service year on year, in line with social care. Despite the demand, performance has remained stable with improvements in many areas as monitored through regular reporting and audit activity. The service offer has continued to flex and increase in order to support the changing needs of families across the county. Ongoing audit activity has identified areas for service development and highlighted good practice for the service to build on.

3. How early help has developed since September 2019

- 3.1 The new service is focussed on working with partners to deliver the ambitions of the revised [Early Help Strategy 22-25](#). It has established a strong network of named, link family support workers aligned to every school in the County, providing a consistent offer of advice, information, and joint working with school staff to discuss emerging needs and concerns for children and families and identify the appropriate support to prevent matters getting worse.
- 3.2 A significant ambition of the newly designed service was to promote the partnership approach towards the delivery of early help, with partner agencies and community-based groups understanding their role within the early help partnership and how they can best support children and families, to prevent issues becoming worse and escalating. This is being achieved by the reinvigoration of the strategic partnership forum to drive collaboration and Strategy ambitions. The Early Help Strategy 22-25 has recently been signed off and governance is provided through the Children's Partnership Board, supported by a new Early Help Operational Sub-Group, which has been established to develop and own the action plan to deliver the aims of the strategy through a multi-agency group, reporting back on a regular basis to the Children's Partnership Board.
- 3.3 The new Partnership Early Help Strategy 2022-25 was launched in May and included a Partnership Marketplace and Learning event at The Gateway which was attended by over 200 practitioners and 25 agencies had stalls promoting their early help offer as part of our wider partnership which really illustrated the developing strength and breadth of the partnership and significantly, its potential in increasing our early help partnership offer.

3.4 The development of the partnership has been key to increasing the offer at Centres, helping partners to understand their role in early help and increasing capacity and available support for families. Some examples of partnership early help activity include:

- EH Partnership Forum – Regular Forum members come from 17 individual agencies. Each offer their specialist knowledge and resources to families who are brought for discussion. Each month professionals are able to bring families, children or peer groups to be discussed and the group take a problem-solving approach to come up with option/s for the professional to take back and try or offer to the family/child/group.
- Family Centre Advisory Groups – This is made up of a variety of statutory and Voluntary Sector agencies and parent representatives. The group members share local knowledge and as a collective they explore opportunities for the Family Centres and hold them to account as to whether they are meeting specific local need. These partnerships have also enabled collective responses to local issues. For example, one partner raised the issue of drug paraphernalia being found in Amersham skate park. This led to a joint piece of diversionary and education work being delivered by Amersham Youth Centre, the Community Safety Team and FSS.
- Community Boards - FSS is represented at these termly board meetings and various sub-groups by the Community Coordinators. Some boards have delivered partnership events in local areas. One example is the well-being event run at the Grange School in Aylesbury. The Community Coordinator played a significant part in organising partners to attend this event and speak with young people in an engaging way about what their service offered. Plans are now in place for this programme to be delivered in Mandeville School later this year.
- The VCS Community Youth Team lead on the relationship with the voluntary and community youth sector, promoting the early help offer to young people transitioning between targeted and universal provision and building the capacity of the Early Help partnership in the county by providing support for the 16 Buckinghamshire Council retained youth centres to ensure high quality provision and maximise opportunities, including a training offer and annual spot checks. They have worked within localities to develop, deliver and strengthen youth-focussed voluntary community sector organisations and support networks that enable stakeholders and young people to engage with and make informed use of voluntary community services and facilities whilst instigating behavioural change.

- 3.5 The FSS is working in partnership with the Oxford Health Trust and Commissioning teams, to jointly deliver the Mental Health Support Teams in Schools, with each team including a family support worker and a youth practitioner in them, to offer targeted support to young people with emerging mental health issues across an increasing number of settings in Buckinghamshire. The scheme has progressed from two to four teams in the last 18 months and provide an additional layer of support for young people in Buckinghamshire.
- 3.6 There are also jointly delivered parenting courses with FSS and CAMHS which have enabled us to offer a course aimed at parents of children with neuro-developmental issues. In addition, there are also a range of other joint interventions including:
- Case supervision support from CAMHS for FSS via small group peer support meetings.
 - Attending monthly team SPA meetings to develop better knowledge of FSS and support triage.
 - Re-design of NFA/Closure letter sent out by CAMHS teams so Early Help information is up-to-date and clear.
 - Bi-monthly meeting with senior managers to aid joint working and communication.
- 3.7 Partnership working is further supported through the core FSS offer and the teams within the service. The Participation Team gives young people a voice through Youth Voice Bucks, incorporating We Do Care and Shout Out for SEND who work closely with the virtual school and social care colleagues to increase youth participation, promote engagement and ensure young voices are heard.

Quotes from young people:

- “Before accessing the We Do Care activities I had very low self-esteem and no self-confidence. Now I am able to talk out for myself. I am no longer what others think or say about me. They have given me a voice. I’ve made lots of friends and I love it when I get to help the younger members, all the staff are lovely and friendly too.”
 - “We Do Care has helped me with my mental health and self-esteem. Also helped me make friends and I like the activities and staff.”
- 3.8 Family Support Locality teams delivering hands-on support to families with complex and enduring needs, but which are below the statutory threshold for social care. This core offer of support delivers targeted help alongside families to address their issues, build resilience and self-reliance and prevent escalation to social care. Locality teams also deliver individual and group work to support young people to improve self-esteem, safe decision-making, and socialisation as well as parenting groups to

enhance parenting skills and capacity at all ages. As part of the locality team practice, universal sessions are delivered at Family Centres across the county where, working with health, maternity and early years services are delivered on a regular basis. We have also established a network of school-linked family support workers, so that every school in the county has a named contact they can call to discuss concerns, work with families and access advice and guidance.

- 3.9 The Community Team is a dedicated resource focussed on expanding the volume and capacity of community led groups to deliver early help through family centres or other settings. This team also respond to calls into the early help duty line where families looking for support contact the team, who have an in-depth knowledge of the wide range of help available outside the council. Building good links creates a network which provides benefits to all. An example is a Community Coordinator being able to link one partner who had funding for BAME youth work to another who had identified a gap in provision. The result was a girls youth group now being run from Castlefield Family Centre by a VCS group.
- 3.10 The Digital team is responsible for the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS) social media and promotion of the FSS. BFIS provides both statutory information such as the Local Offer where SEND information on services, processes, and support for children with SEND is co-produced with parents and made available on-line.
- 3.11 On average BFIS received 4851 unique visitors to the website per month and a further 7156 visitors to the BFIS directory. BFIS maintain a strong social media presence with 16,603 followers across the service's social media platforms in March 21 which has grown by 11.5% to 18,539 followers in March 22.

Early years and childcare provision are also accessed via BFIS together with a huge listing of available community events, activities, and support information.

- 3.12 The Community and youth team lead the 'Bucks Inspired' traineeship for NEET young people which started in April 2020 and has since seen 6 cohorts run successfully. The offer has developed, increasing numbers and content to include work placements, life skills and reaching a wider range of young people. 118 young people started the traineeships with 75 successfully completing the course with support from the service where needed. 33 young people continued into a subsequent cohort.

4. Key Performance

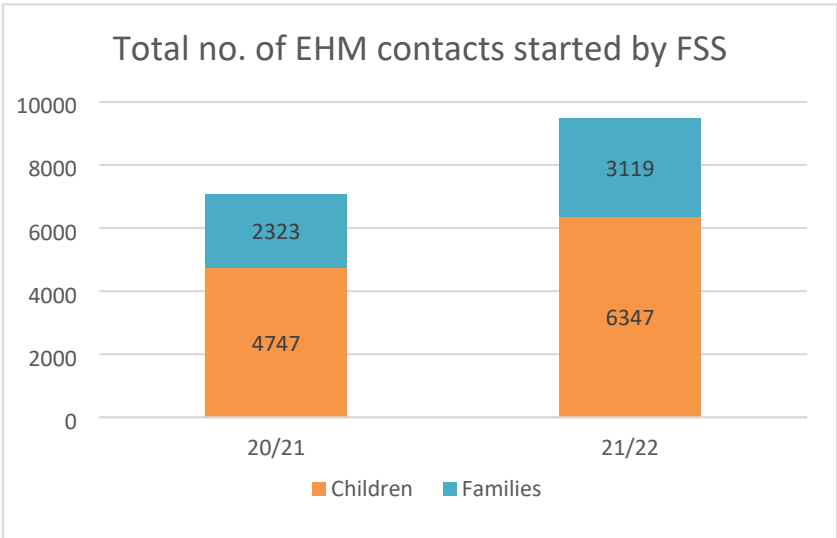
- 4.1 Early help and the FSS have seen demand continue to increase sharply in line with children's services but has continues to deliver strong performance. The internal

reporting and auditing processes that have been developed, provide strong management oversight and enable prompt responses to reported change in performance in key areas. Equally important, it enables the service to identify areas for improvement, understand the picture of need to drive service development and to increase and improve its provision and quality.

The total number of contacts to the Family Support Service has risen 33% in 21/22 compared to 20/21.

4.2 FSS staff continue to work alongside MASH colleagues to ensure that families access the right support at the right time. The increased partnership working and the development of a broader offer to families who need shorter term support (Level 2) has meant that while the number of contacts being supported by FSS overall has increased, the proportion of those contacts being supported by partners through groups and alternative provision has also increased, enabling the FSS to focus resources on families with complex issues where a longer-term support plan is required.

Table of EHM contacts started by FSS comparing 2020/21 with 2021/22



4.3 The FSS focusses resources consistently at those families in need of additional support and help, to prevent things getting worse and their impact was noted following to Ofsted Inspection in December 2021.

4.4 The Ofsted report following Inspection said, “The work carried out in targeted and universal early help services results in discernible improvements in many children’s circumstance.” and went on to state, “Several Family Centres and 3 Family Centre Plus sites offer a valuable range of community-based programmes to support parents.

.....these services prevent many children’s difficulties worsening and escalating requiring intervention from social care”.

- 4.5 Early help and the wider work of the Family Support Service, which includes the Participation team, Community Youth team and Buckinghamshire Adult Learning was also recognised during the recent Joint Area SEND Inspection in Buckinghamshire, where Inspectors wrote;

“The young people participating in the Shout Out for SEND group are rightly proud of what they have done to promote awareness of SEND to practitioners. Members rightly see the group as good preparation for 6 adulthoods, the world of work and participation in society. This aspect of coproduction is a real strength”.

“The 16 family centres across Buckinghamshire enhance the good quality of pre-school support available in the area”.

“There are some positive examples of the successful use of internship programmes as a gateway to employment. As part of the area’s preparation for adulthood strategy, leaders are working proactively with potential employers to expand the amount of available provision”.

- 4.6 The biggest increase in the source of contacts to FSS for the year 2021/22 (April – March) was seen in Education, which increased by 50% (897 from 599) and from Individuals which increased by 91% (773 from 404), which demonstrates both the increasing strength of our relationship with school settings who are increasingly confident of the FSS’s ability to provide effective support, and also the visibility of the early help offer, its accessibility and ease of access for individuals to reach out when they need advice, guidance or support.
- 4.7 The promotion of the FSS to partners has meant that contacts increasingly come through the right route, demonstrated by the increased number of contacts directly to BFIS and FSS which has contributed to the proportion of contacts received in Social Care via MASH that are subsequently allocated to FSS, which has remained stable at around 5%.
- 4.8 The FSS focusses heavily on talking directly to families quickly as we know this provides the best opportunity for meaningful engagement and supporting families to achieve positive outcomes. It also contributes to reducing unnecessary demand in children’s social care by ensuring families who need help have access to appropriate services or advice.

We continue to improve our performance in this area from the very first contact:

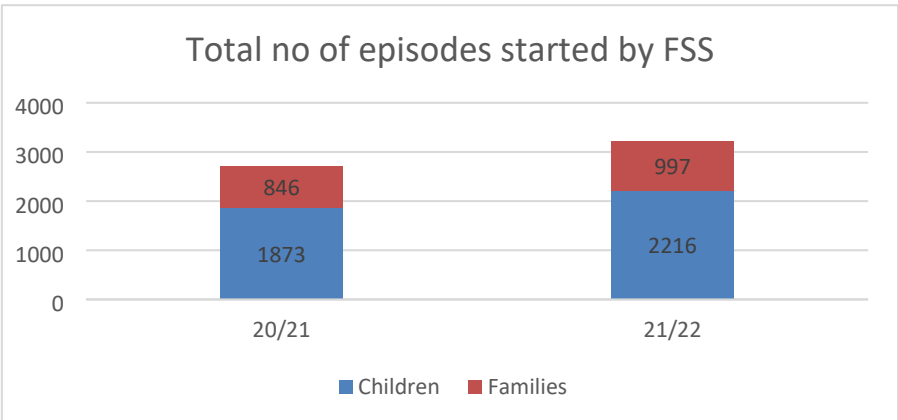
79% of contacts were actioned by FSS within 72hrs between April 21 – Mar 22, compared with 63% for 20/21. An increase of 16% despite significantly higher volumes.

4.9 The FSS focusses most of its resources on those in highest need (Level 3) in order to prevent escalation and support families to overcome the issues they face. It is of note that when looking at areas of concern for families (reasons for seeking support); 40% of families being supported come from areas with a high index of deprivation (IOD). On average, these families average of 5.5 areas of concern, 10% higher than the number of concerns for families in less deprived areas.

4.10 The number of families receiving support from FSS has increased by 52% since its introduction in 2019/20 and 15% since 2020/21.

In 20/21 33% of the total contacts to FSS progressed to episode increasing to 37% in 21/22.

Total number of episodes started by FSS in 2020/21 and 2021/22



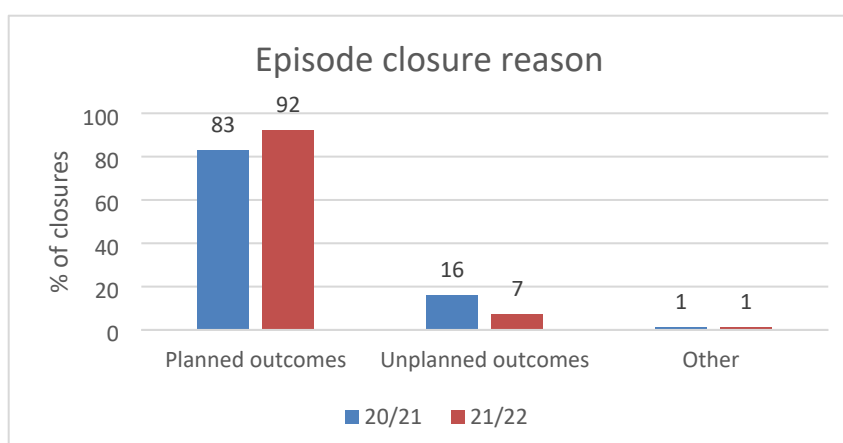
4.11 The FSS aims to support families to overcome issues that they are facing before things get worse, wherever possible. We believe the key to effective engagement is timeliness in terms of engagement with families and regular reporting allows management oversight of prompt contact, early face to face meetings, active engagement, and an increase in planned outcomes.

In 21/22, 92% of families were contacted within 24 hrs from case allocation, an increase of 6% compared with 20/21 (86%).

In 21/22, 93% of Initial Plans have been completed within 31 working days of episode start which is 8 percentage points above the 85% target. (New target in 2021)

In 21/22, a total of 730 cases closed with planned outcomes, which was 92% of closures. An increase of 9% compared to 83% planned closures in 20/21.

FSS case closure by reason in 2020/21 and 2021/22



- 4.12 Step up and step down: Ensuring children are receiving the right support inevitably means that some children’s cases have to be escalated and moved into statutory support when the threshold has been met in relation to the risk of significant harm. In this performance year this has been the case in 47 cases (19%) of FSS case closures, a reduction from 22% in 2021/22.

Similarly, to effectively support children and families when a statutory plan comes to an end, or where following assessment, the threshold is not met for statutory involvement, children have their cases stepped down to FSS who can continue to provide identified support, enabling families to continue to benefit from support while establishing their independence once again. In the current performance year, 188 families have been stepped down from statutory support to FSS.

- 4.13 Re-referrals: It is always the ambition for children and families who have been effectively supported by services, to be sufficiently resilient to be able to cope with issues that arise in the future. Unfortunately, either due to a reoccurrence or a new incident, some families and children get re-referred back into children’s services for support. Transitioning cases from statutory care through the FSS has a marked impact on the re-referral rate and the evidence indicates that planned transition for children coming off Children in Need plans provides the best opportunity for future independence for the family.

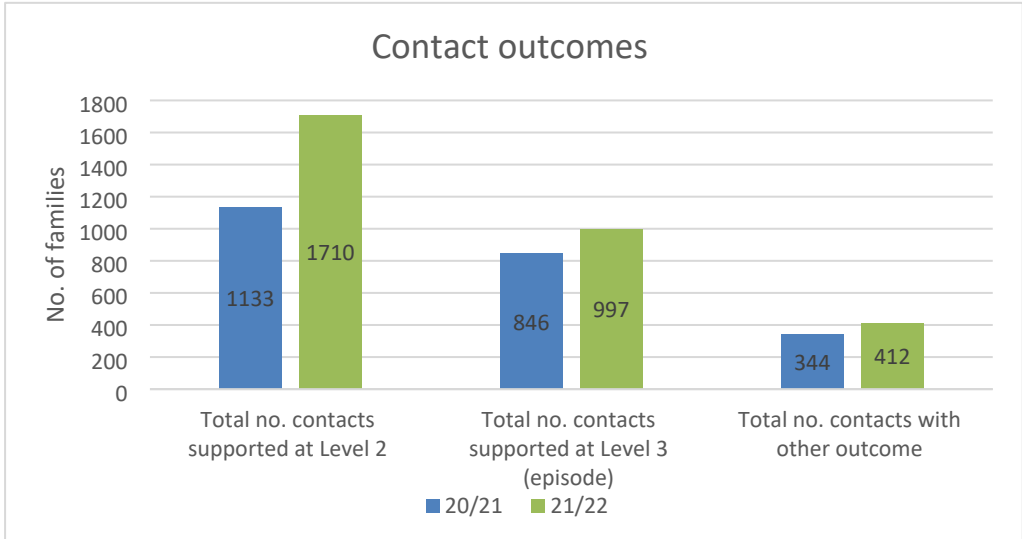
As an average across 21/22, 13.5% of cases previously closed to social care which then had subsequent or ongoing support from FSS were then re-referred to social care within 12 months from the previous referral start. This compared to 21% where closure had occurred without FSS involvement and support.

Families returning to the FSS In 20/21 within 12 months of a previous episode closing was a rate of 15.75%. This has been reduced to 9.25% in 21/22 (source: quarterly

report), through greater focus on quality assessment and planning with families, to leave them more resilient following FSS intervention.

4.14 Earlier intervention and group support: In 20/21 49% of all contacts to FSS were supported at Level 2, compared with 55% in 21/22. The number of contacts being supported at Level 2 in 21/22 has increased by 51% since 20/21. This earlier intervention prevents escalation and demonstrates the increase in breadth of the Level 2 offer provides more options for families to be supported by targeted and appropriate services, enabling FSS to focus resources on more complex, longer-term family support plans.

Outcomes for contacts received by FSS in 2020/21 and 2021/22
(see chart overleaf)



The FSS performance framework tracks and monitors performance across a range of key indicators enabling management oversight and service development.

5. Progress and Service Development

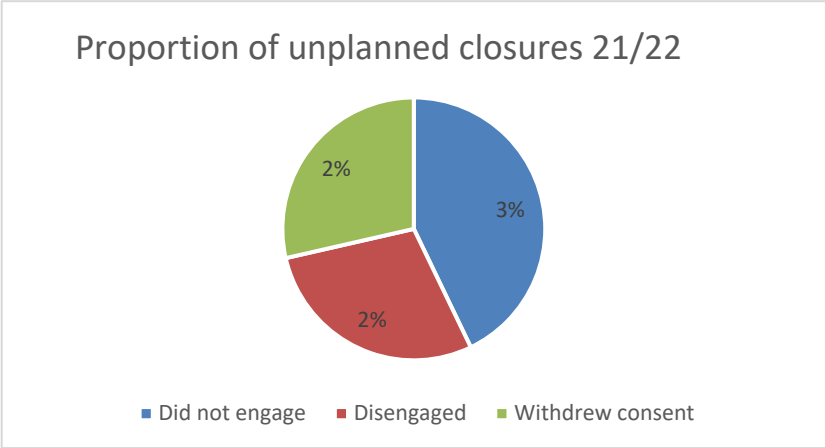
In the last impact report presented to the Select Committee some key areas of focus and improvement were identified, all of which have progressed well.

5.1 Clear improvements have been demonstrated through regular audit activity, training and support provided to staff in key areas. FSS case audits are usually carried out monthly, based on a theme agreed with Social Care. Thirteen cases are selected to be audited by Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers.

5.2 The monthly reporting has shown a reduction in disengagement from 13% of closures in 20/21, to 7% of closures in 21/22, which were due to families not engaging in order

to start a support plan or disengagement/ withdrawing consent once a plan had been started.

Unplanned closures of FSS cases during 2021/22



5.3 The activities taking place at Family Centres have increased post-pandemic with a focus on increasing provision for over 5s and joint delivery with partners, as well as offering space for our many EH partners to deliver in.

Family centres continue to provide both universal and targeted activities in local communities, led by the FSS and partner agencies and community groups. We have seen growth of 36% in attendance at family centres, moving from 20/21 when 4,381 people attended 626 sessions run by the FSS (including groups, individual work, parenting, virtual and youth), to 5,952 people attending 630 sessions in 21/22. Take up of Parenting groups (including Little Talkers, Talking Teens, Nurture Programme, Incredible Years, Stepping Stones, Triple P) has seen the greatest growth with 1,045 attendees in 20/21 compared with 2,135 in 21/22 (a 104% increase). The growth in attendance at these sessions supports early intervention and builds confidence and parenting skills amongst attendees.

In the summers of 21 and 22 Open Days were held at the Family Centres, with multi-agency representation to encourage families to access the centre and make connections with local support services.

5.4 The service has mechanisms in place to capture feedback from families to understand their experience of support provided and this is being further developed to ensure a consistent approach is adopted for level 3 work, group and individual work at levels 2 (using the 'Life Path Model format used by YOS), family centre attendees and partners who deliver from the centres.

In addition, the service has feedback forms available on the website to capture user experience and ongoing participation work to capture the voice of children and young people, which is also a key requirement in the direct work with families

6. Future direction, focus and next steps for early help

- 6.1 Our vision is to be an exemplar early help provider within an outstanding children's services. To achieve this, we need to ensure we retain our focus on prioritising support for families who, without support may need statutory intervention. Working closely with children's social care and education colleagues to understand demand drivers and how, through targeting FSS support, strengthening and expanding our early help partnership and continually reviewing practice we can continue to improve service effectiveness. In addition, continuing to promote early intervention and prevention through our family centre programmes and wider partnership early help offer.
- 6.2 Increasing opportunities for peer-led provision operated by volunteers and local families is also a key objective for the coming months, increasingly accessing and supporting the development of community-led support. We would also like to offer an increased number of short-term workshops for parents based on evidence of local need together with increased on-line resources to enable parents and young people to access support virtually. A key focus of the Children's Partnership Board Operational sub-group is the research into options for the development of a Partnership Family Hub model in line with current national thinking, to provide truly integrated services to families at a local level.
- 6.3 Priorities going forward include:
- Delivering the Early Help Partnership Strategy 22-25 - developing the early help partnership, promoting whole family working with all partners recognising the part they play in the system.
 - Focussing resources toward those most in need.
 - Working towards a family hub model with truly integrated delivery from partners.
 - Using family feedback and local data to develop a responsive service through the universal and partnership offer.
 - Deliver and embed the Participation Strategy to ensure the voice of children and young people are at the heart of decision making and service development.



Early Help Partnership Strategy

2022 – 2025



**Buckinghamshire
Children & Young
People's Partnership**

Working together to reach our goals



Foreword

This is Buckinghamshire's second Early Help Partnership Strategy, and it reflects both the progress we have made together in supporting families and communities, but also the changing context and how we operate within it, in order to effectively meet the challenges faced by individuals and families who have additional support needs. We believe this strategy shows the development of our partnership early help approach and how with increased collaboration and a shared commitment to providing the right support at the right time, we are and can continue to make a real difference to our communities.

The themes from our last strategy – Pro-active, Targeted and Connected – remain our focus, underpinned by the principles agreed across the partnership following a comprehensive review of our early help services. Our evaluation highlighted the success from the point of view of families engaged with early help and the Supporting Families programme and showed the needs of families and the areas we need to concentrate on improving. This self-assessment was wide-reaching across the partnership and has shaped the priorities set out in this refreshed strategy.

Since launching our first early help partnership strategy alongside the introduction of a new, integrated Family Support Service, we have built new and effective relationships with a range of partners. As we emerge from the additional challenges of the Pandemic, we recognise now more than ever that we must build on this positive start, be responsive and flexible in finding the best way to help families at the earliest opportunity to prevent things getting worse and enable them to become more resilient as they move away from longer-term, high cost and statutory services. We believe that this strategy recognises the progress made in the last three years, acknowledges that there remains work to be done and provides direction and focus to enable those in need to easily access appropriate support from partners who work increasingly closely together. This includes sharing skills, knowledge and understanding to support children, young people and families to stay safe, achieve their potential and be more resilient and self-reliant, within supportive communities.

Richard Nash - Chair, Buckinghamshire Childrens Partnership Board and Corporate Director, Children's Services, Buckinghamshire Council.

CLlr Anita Cranmer - Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Buckinghamshire Council.

Robert Majilton - Vice-Chair, Buckinghamshire Children's Partnership Board and Deputy Chief Executive, Clinical Commissioning Group



Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to present what we know about the need for early help, why it is important and what action will be taken to make progress and deliver our vision for children, young people and families in Buckinghamshire. It is jointly produced and owned by the Children's Partnership Board and all its member organisations and sets out what we are already doing and plan to develop together in Buckinghamshire to ensure that children and their families get early help when they need it. This document will steer and enable the priorities detailed in this strategy to be delivered, while also reflecting the priorities set out by Children's Services.

Children's Services priorities for 2022/23:

Children's Social Care:

1. Service improvement.
2. Responding to the growing and unpredictable demand as a result of COVID 19.
3. Recruitment and retention of social care workforce.
4. Recruitment of in-house foster carers.

Education:

1. SEND delivery and improvements.
2. Improving education provision and educational outcomes.
3. Work with schools to ensure that young people have access to good mental health support
4. Early help.



Our Vision

Our partnership vision, as set out in Buckinghamshire's Children and Young People's Plan, is:

To build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is. We will ensure children and young people:

- **Are safe.**
- **Live fulfilling lives.**
- **Are healthy.**
- **Reach their potential in education and other aspects of their lives.**
- **Together with their families are resilient and can identify their own solutions.**
- **Make a positive contribution to their community.**

Within Early Help, we want all children and young people in Buckinghamshire to live in resilient families, to be happy, safe and healthy, and to grow up with skills, knowledge and attributes to be confident and independent, ready for adult life. As partners we will work together, including with volunteers and communities to provide a seamless service for children and families. We aim to prevent escalation of need and ensure targeted, timely interventions that achieve positive outcomes for children and families, supported by effective multi-agency practices.

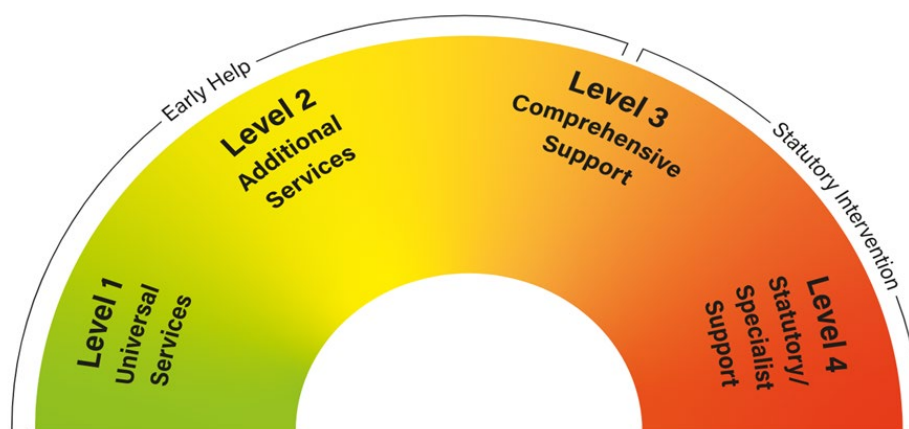
What is Early Help?

Early help is an approach that supports the identification of and response to emerging problems that children, young people and their families face at any point in their lives. It is a way of working that supports families to overcome these challenges and avoids things becoming worse and having long-lasting, negative consequences that are harder to resolve. Timely and flexible support is evidentially better for children and families, it prevents escalation and is as a result, more cost effective. Early help is provided through a range of different services: universal (which are open to all), targeted provision, and specialist services. It is also embedded in communities where provision is available to families through informal support, local networks and voluntary activity which add real capacity and value to our collective early help offer.

Effective early help relies on a partnership approach with local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Reflect the Government guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children document.
- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help.
- Undertake an assessment of the family or child's needs for early help.
- Provide appropriate targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Early help in Buckinghamshire consists of all the support available to children and families at levels 1, 2 and 3 of the Buckinghamshire Children safeguarding Partnership's Continuum of Need document. It also enables children and young people moving away from statutory support (level 4), to sustain the progress they have achieved and promote their increasing independence.



- **Level 1** – children whose needs are met within universal services. May need limited intervention to prevent needs arising (universal – available to all).
- **Level 2** – children with additional needs identified that can be met through a single agency response and partnership working (early help).
- **Level 3** – children with multiple needs requiring a multi-agency coordinated response with a lead professional (targeted early help provision).
- **Level 4** – children with a high level of unmet and complex needs or a child in need of protection (statutory intervention).

The partnership approach enables support to be provided at all levels of this continuum, from universal and preventative services to more targeted work with families with identified need or who are already known to Services. The different organisations making up the Early Help Partnership enable a varied offer to be provided to children and families in Buckinghamshire. These organisations include voluntary and community sector partners as well as Council, Health, Police and other community services.



Local Context

Buckinghamshire has a total population of approximately 545,900. 29% of the population is aged 0-24 years. Figures from 2018 projected that the population in Buckinghamshire will increase to 579,109 (approx. 6%) by 2043. Approximately 126,400 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Buckinghamshire. This is 23% of the total population in the area (ONS Subnational population projections – local authorities, [ONS website](#)).

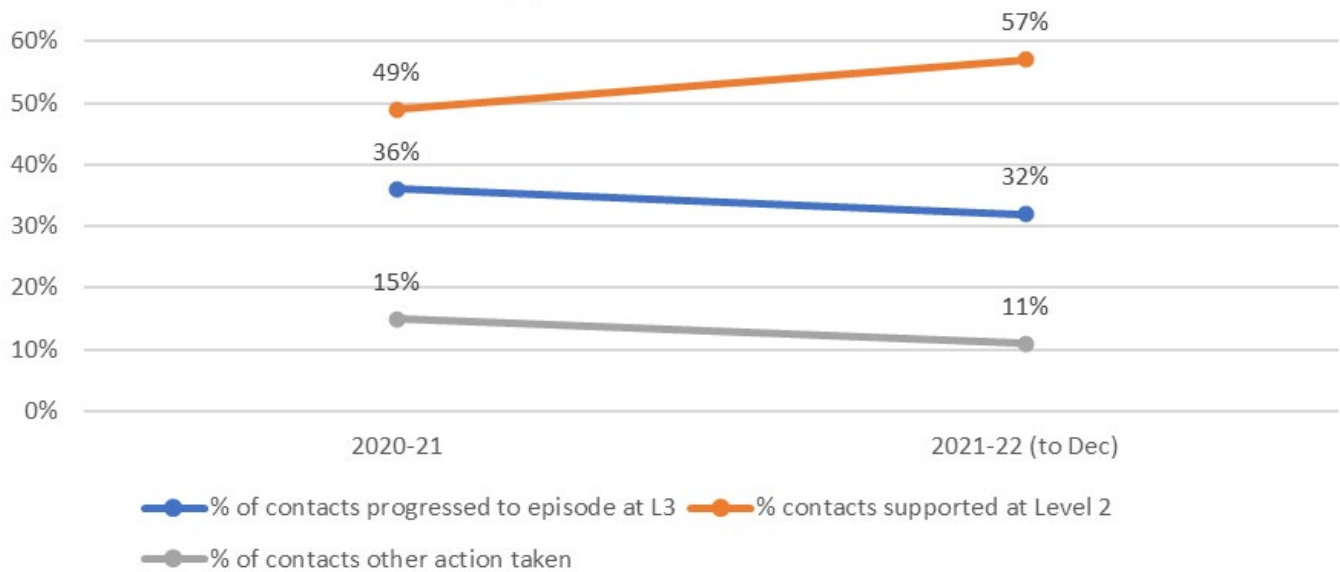
Buckinghamshire is home to an increasingly diverse population. 38% of the pupils attending Buckinghamshire schools in January 2021 were from an ethnic minority (Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), compared to the England average of 36% (January 2021 School Census).

Demand

There has been a significant increase in demand for Early Help Services both within the council and across the partnership. For example, there were 4781 contacts (children) to the Family Support Service in 2020/21 compared to 3481 in 2018/19. On average 29% of contacts are from schools and while there was a dip in 2020-21, this is likely to be linked to the impact of the pandemic when less children were able to attend, potentially resulting in some early intervention opportunities being missed. If the numbers continue at the same pace in 2021-22 then contact numbers will exceed those seen in 2019-20. There have been 4430 contacts in 2021/22 to December.

The table overleaf shows that more families have been supported at level 2 in 2020/21 and 2021/22, reflecting an increased offer of support, including parenting courses, youth groups, wellbeing support for young people, drop-in sessions and targeted 1:1 support. This has meant that families have more opportunity to be supported at an appropriate level and shows a shift towards earlier intervention and a reducing demand against longer-term and potentially statutory intervention.

% of contacts to the Family Support Service that were supported at Level 2 or 3



The table below shows the Areas of Concern for contacts that progressed to an episode during 2020-2021 with a comparison between April – December in each year. Concerns relating to Education have seen a 28% increase between April – December 21 compared to the same period in 2020. Support for young people demonstrating school avoidance has been introduced to address increased anxieties about returning to schools, as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Area of concern	April 20 - Mar 21	April 20 - Dec 20	April 21 - Dec 21	% change comparing April-Dec
Home, family and parenting	2483	1836	2042	11%
Health	1398	1031	1148	11%
Education	725	518	665	28%
Affected by abuse/exploitation	385	294	288	-2%
Finance	163	121	106	-12%
Crime	109	87	56	-36%

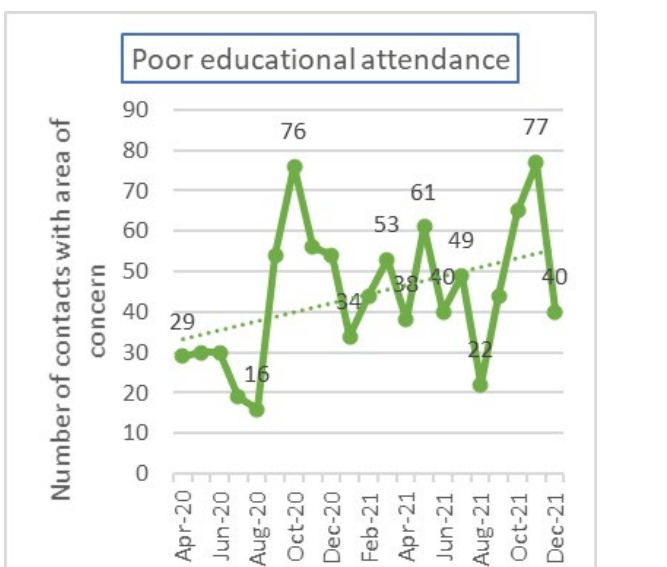
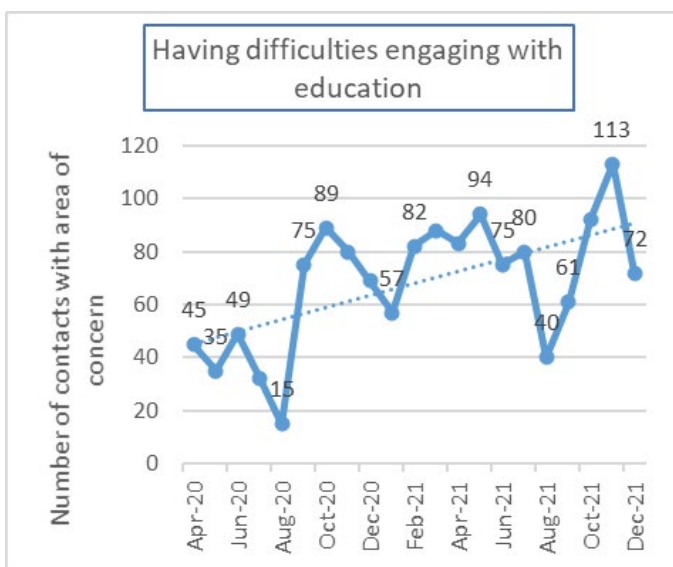
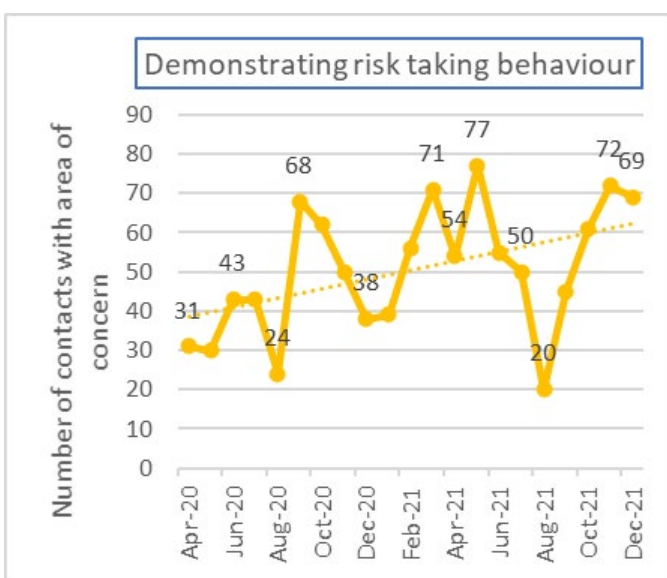
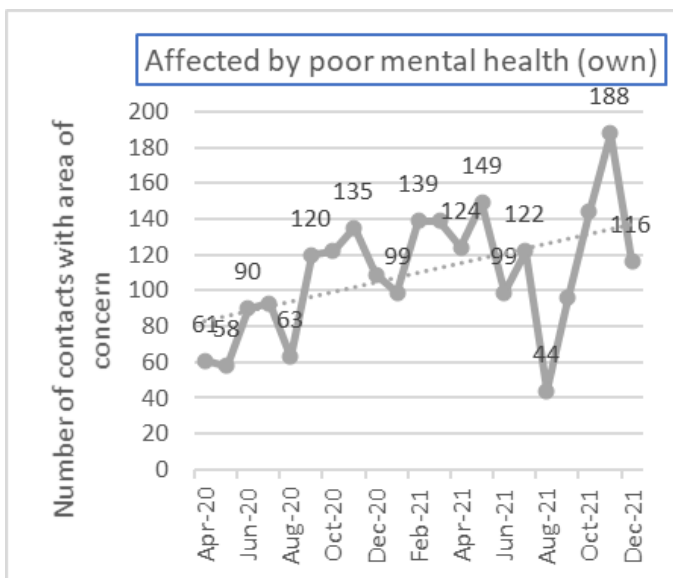
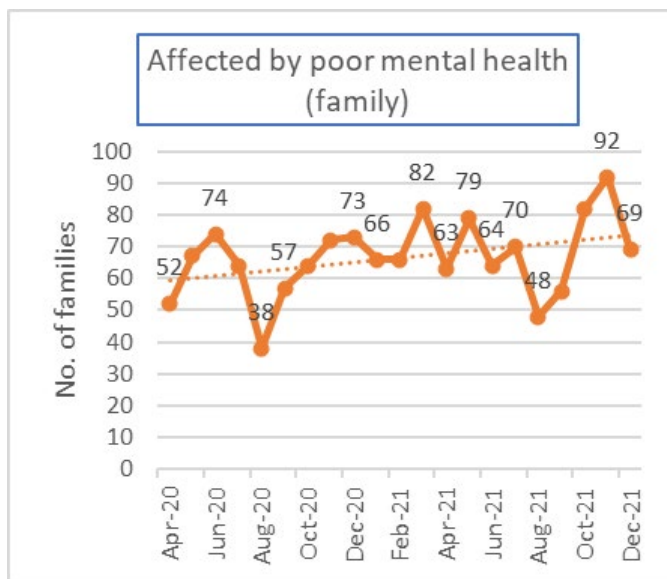
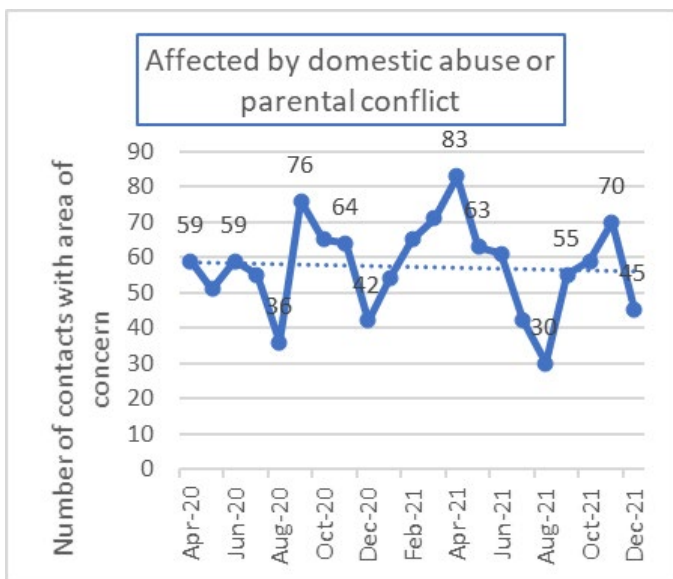
Data extracted from Early Help Module (EHM) data management system

The impact of the pandemic is seen in other areas too. Contacts remain consistently high for:

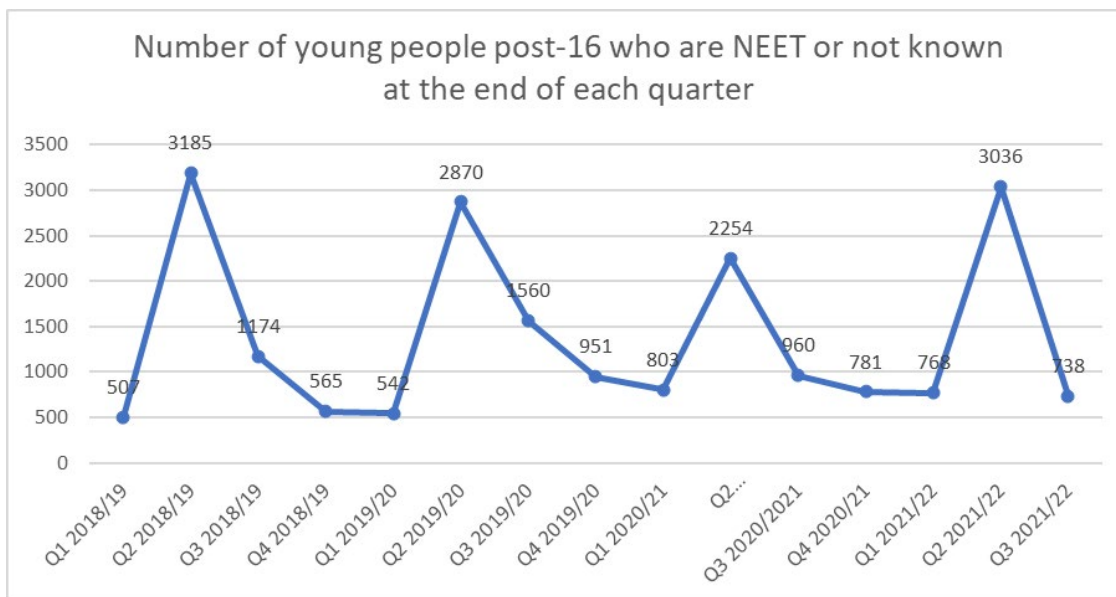
- Families and children with a range of health problems.
- Having difficulty maintaining boundaries and expectations within the home.
- Having difficulty parenting in a consistent way.
- Home environment is impacting on the health and wellbeing of the child.

Within Early Help, parenting course requests continue to be in demand particularly in Aylesbury where at least twice as many courses were delivered to parents of teenagers than for primary age, reflecting the impacts from the pandemic as shown above.

While numbers continue to fluctuate, influenced by the stages of the pandemic and associated restrictions, increases over time remain likely. Priority 2 aims to mitigate the long-term impact that is not yet apparent in the data.



The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has remained relatively stable.



The number of students shown as NEET or Not Known fluctuates in line with the academic year, with an annual peak in Quarter 2 each year. Based on the DfE target period of Dec 20 – Feb 21, Buckinghamshire has a higher proportion of 16 and 17-year-olds who are NEET or whose activity is not known compared to both the South East and England, however this figure is improved to date for Dec 2021. It is anticipated that numbers of NEET young people will increase because of the impact of the pandemic on employment and training opportunities.

	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Dec 21
Buckinghamshire NEET and not known	7.7%	6.9%	6.5%	5.9%
South East NEET and not known	7.6%	6%	5.7%	6.4%
National NEET and not known	6.3%	5.2%	4.9%	5.3%

The increase in demand for Early Help Services is mirrored by an increase in need and requests for statutory services. The volume and complexity of cases in children’s social care has increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions and impact of the pandemic has resulted in spikes in demand after restrictions eased. Alongside this, there has been a rise in the complexity in the needs of families requiring an assessment, particularly for families and children with needs relating to mental health, self-harm and sexual abuse which reflect some of the presenting issues seen in Early Help.

The need for early help support from the partnership is seen across the county and the benefit of timely early intervention is well evidenced locally and nationally. In Buckinghamshire demand continues to grow and correlates broadly with areas of higher deprivation. As a partnership we will monitor and use all relevant data to ensure that services are targeted towards areas and communities in highest need and which are tailored and accessible to all residents. We will focus our use of the Supporting Families Grant to further our contribution to the levelling up agenda, working more collaboratively and sharing key information across the partnership to ensure we make best use of our collective resources to support the most vulnerable children and families.



Early help – delivered in partnership

Buckinghamshire's early help model

Our early help partnership offer is delivered through our integrated network of providers including but not limited to Council services, schools, other education settings including early years, health services and the voluntary and community sector. This partnership approach adds strength and variety to the early help offer and enables flexibility in our approach to supporting families. Our partnership activity must be coordinated, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.

We are committed to using our network of 16 family centres to support the identification of emerging needs and provide informal and peer support at a universal level. Teams across organisations provide direct, practical support for children, young people and families and/or advice, guidance and signposting. Lead practitioners coordinate agreed support plans that are developed through a clear understanding of the family context, needs and support priorities. By working together with the family, we all contribute towards achieving the outcomes agreed with the families we are supporting.

Our early help offer aims to be timely and responsive, available to those in need, when they need it. By building on our partnership approach, we will continue to increase our ability to work together for the benefit of the children and families who need our support.

Governance

The governance and oversight of Buckinghamshire's Early Help Partnership Strategy recognises that the delivery of our offer is not the responsibility of a single agency but is owned by all partners that work with children, young people and families. Governance is provided by Buckinghamshire's Children's Partnership Board, via the Early Help Operational sub-group. Scrutiny and challenge are provided by Buckinghamshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership. Membership of each of these Boards is broad and involves statutory, voluntary and community sector partners. Organisations and services currently represented on these boards include:

- Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership Board
- Buckinghamshire Council: Children's Social Care, Public Health, Education, Integrated Special Educational Needs Service (iSEND)
- Aspire
- Families and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks
- Leap
- Thames Valley Police
- Action4Youth
- Oxford Health
- School representatives
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue
- Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

In Buckinghamshire, early help is a collaboration between Council services and the wide range of organisations who work with children and families. Early help services cannot be viewed in isolation, but instead as a complimentary, constituent element of the continuum of support, from universal services through to statutory or acute provision (where required), all of which are focussed on improving the lives of children at the earliest opportunity.

The delivery of our early help strategy is founded on a joint commitment to shared outcomes, which will evidence the impact we make for families by intervening early and providing the right support at the right time, enabling sustainable outcomes and building family resilience.

A critical ingredient to successful working is the partnership with families, and their commitment to make changes in their lives. All our work is child and family-centred, consent-based and focussed on working collaboratively with families to overcome the issues they face, build their resilience and leave them better able to manage future challenges.



Our principles

The early help partnership has adopted the following shared principles:

1. **Work to families' strengths** – recognising and developing existing strengths of children, parents and carers and take the time to understand their needs fully.
2. **Focus on preventing problems** before they occur and offer timely, flexible and responsive support when and where it is required.
3. **Build the resilience** of children, young people, parents and communities to support each other.
4. **Work together across the whole system** aligning resources to best support families to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.
5. **Base all that we do on evidence of what works**, what is needed and what will be effective for families. We must be brave enough to innovate and honest enough to stop things that are not working as well as we want.
6. **Be clear and consistent about the outcomes** we expect and measure our performance against them.

Achievements since 2019

The Covid 19 pandemic impacted on delivery, however all services contributing to early help, adapted and maintained provision in a range of ways to ensure families continued to be supported wherever possible. Achievements since 2019 are numerous and include the following examples.

Together with health partners we have:

- Continued to deliver the Healthy Child Programme and supported those in care to have their health needs met.
- Delivered health advice clinics in secondary schools, providing support on a range of topics.
- Engaged parents of children under two in Walk the Talk activities to reduce isolation and provide support to new parents.
- Continued to work collaboratively with therapies services, including delivering Little Talkers to support parents of early year children, to provide early help support for speech, language and communication needs.

Together with the voluntary and community sector we have:

- Delivered a comprehensive youth offer, including for those with SEND. This has included programmes supporting employability, wellbeing, transition to adulthood and has included the National Citizen Service, DofE Award, and the Inspiration programme.
- Identified more young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) who have then been supported to re-engage.
- Worked with Heart of Bucks to provide financial support for families and Care Leavers who suffered hardship due to the pandemic.

Together with education partners we have:

- Engaged 565 families with parenting provision and supported 72% of families to achieve sustained positive outcomes following targeted support.
- Provided school link workers to all schools within the county, helping to provide appropriate support to children and young people when they need it.
- Expanded our Mental Health Support Teams, building on the success of an initial pilot enabling families to access multidisciplinary support in schools.
- Delivered prevention programmes including activities for young people open to Youth Offending.
- Increased our trainee and apprenticeship offer, enabling more young people to access employment.

Together with statutory services we have:

- Worked collaboratively in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure children received the right support at the right time through allocating the appropriate level of intervention and escalating to Social Care as appropriate to needs.
- Developed a pilot using Family Group Conferencing to support families experiencing parental conflict which was impacting on the child's mental health.
- Developed closer working and integration between statutory and non-statutory services to provide the right support to families.



Refreshing our strategy

An extensive period of engagement has taken place to ensure that our Early Help Strategy (2022 - 2025) is co-designed. The engagement process allowed for a significant period of reflection; we wanted to fully understand where our previous Early Help Strategy (2019-2022) had taken us, what it had achieved and, most importantly, what life is like for those receiving support in Buckinghamshire in 2021. We also needed to understand the full extent of our collective resources and strengths. The principles that were developed for our first strategy remain relevant and will continue to drive our approach to Early Help over the next three years. This strategy builds upon and further develops the good work which resulted from the 2019-22 Early Help Partnership Strategy.

What are children, young people and families telling us?

Families using early help services generally give very positive feedback about their experiences and feel they have been supported to resolve concerns, overcome issues and cope with their own personal circumstances. Comments have included:

"Overall great, helpful course, helping to change our lives to positive and well-being."

"Great facilitators who ensured a safe and open space for the attendees to open up. Provided useful tips, advice and empathy...The format is very good."

(Parents of children with SEND attending a nurture parenting group)

Children and young people who have attended courses and groups have found them engaging and fun, creating an environment in which they felt safe and listened to and therefore able to learn.

"I really enjoyed the sessions and I started to open up with the help! It was and is the highlight of my week and I'm going to miss seeing everyone!"

"I have learnt helpful coping mechanisms to deal with my anxiety and know that help is available should I need it."

"My self-esteem and confidence boosted drastically in such a short amount of time."

(Young people commenting on Family Support Service courses)

Families have also identified areas where they would like to see more provision or receive more support. These areas include:

- Support for new parents: *"I don't know what to expect my child to be doing, I haven't had the chance to discuss their development or compare to other children, which is difficult as he is my first child."*
- Support for parents/carers of children returning to school following closures due to the pandemic, so they know how best to support those who are finding the return difficult.
- Support for parents/carers of children with SEND. A parenting course specifically for this group was successful and feedback suggested more were needed: *"Definitely been worthwhile. It's a shame there isn't an opportunity for more parents to attend."*
- Opportunities for parents/carers with shared experiences to meet to support each other.

Parent/carers have also fed back the need to promote the early help offer more widely, including promotion to young people: *"I wish I'd known about the early help offer and support a year ago"* and *"Young people need to know what support is available and how to access for themselves when they need it."*

This engagement and consultation together with our self-evaluation and data analysis have enabled us to identify our key partnership priorities for the next three years.



Our priorities for 2022 - 25

Priority 1: Strengthen multi-agency strategic governance and joint ownership of the Early Help Strategy by:

1. Establishing an operational sub-group with key stakeholders (including representatives of children and young people). This group will provide reports on progress to the Children's Partnership Board who steer, support and challenge the partnership in order to achieve the aims of the strategy.
2. Improving planning, coordination and oversight of all organisations and services contributing to the early help offer to ensure provision is high quality, comprehensive, cohesive and gaps are identified and responded to through innovation, provision of common tools and greater collaboration.
3. Ensuring data on the impact of the support provided is routinely collected, collated, analysed and shared so achievements across Early Help can be quantified and used to inform future developments.

Priority 2: Further develop the Early Help offer to include a targeted response to the increased risk of long-term disadvantage for children, young people and families due to the Covid-19 pandemic, by:

1. Providing support for those children, young people and families who have increased vulnerabilities. This may include those who:
 - a. are not in employment, education or training (NEET)
 - b. are home educated, excluded, or are not receiving education
 - c. are vulnerable to exploitation
 - d. have special educational needs and/or disabilities
2. Developing a support offer for new parents/carers whose early parenthood experience has been altered by the pandemic, resulting in increased anxieties, greater isolation from peers and reduced access to help and support to address any developmental delays in their children.

Priority 3: Work together to provide effective Early Help in line with our strategic objectives and Early Help Partnership Action Plan, that supports children, young people and families to easily access support. We will do this by:

1. Regularly reviewing need, demand and location of services to ensure families in all areas are able to access suitable, high quality provision and be effectively supported.
2. Building on current good practice, identify additional opportunities for joint working to improve the experience of families, co-producing solutions and providing timely and appropriate services, reducing the need for unnecessary statutory or clinical intervention.
3. Further developing our practice and maximising our capacity to work together as a partnership using the lead agency model to meet the needs of families in complex circumstances, who need the coordinated effort from all sectors, working together towards the agreed outcomes for the family.
4. Creating a consistent and jointly owned Early Help training and support offer for front-line practitioners e.g. trauma informed practice, responding to presenting needs.
5. Reviewing pathways in partnership with families to ensure they are clear and easy to navigate, improving the user experience and timely access to support.
6. Seeking engagement of Primary Care Networks in the health liaison meetings and wider early help engagement to further enable an holistic approach to supporting families.
7. Identifying additional opportunities to co-locate early help services and further develop Family Centres into community hubs in line with the national Family Hub Model Framework (Nov 2021), ensuring spaces are fit for purpose for all age groups and the wide range of providers.

Priority 4: Develop a common understanding of Early Help across the partnership and promote a cohesive Buckinghamshire offer, by:

1. Increasing the visibility of all aspects of the Early Help offer from universal and preventative delivery, through to targeted and specialist support in Buckinghamshire to ensure all families and partners are aware of and able to access the right services to support them.
2. Identifying opportunities to share practice and collaborate across organisations and services to further embed a shared understanding of Early Help at all levels (tiers 1-3).
3. Generating a sense of purpose and belonging as a provider delivering early help in Buckinghamshire, to maximise the availability and collective impact of a broad range of support, service and intervention.
4. Recognising and engaging new partners, including the range of voluntary and community sector providers to add breadth and capacity to our partnership and expand our network, providing clear and well understood pathways to appropriate support.



Outcomes and measuring success

An Early Help Partnership Action Plan owned by an Early Help Operational Sub-group will be developed to detail the activity required to meet the 4 partnership priorities. This Action Plan will include performance measures and success criteria so that the Children and Young People's Partnership Board can assess and challenge progress against this Strategy. The Plan will be a living document with appropriate governance, updated to reflect changing priorities.

In addition to the Partnership Action Plan the Board will receive reports and provide oversight of performance management information provided by all those who directly deliver early help. Utilising approaches used in Supporting Families and across the partnership the sub-group will develop a 'Families Outcomes Performance Framework' to collate and report on:

- Identified need, enabling provision to be jointly planned.
- Where early help interventions have been successful in enabling families who have multiple and complex needs to sustainably improve their lives and step away from formal support.

The Action Plan and the Framework underpin the implementation of this strategy and are intended to evidence sustained and significant progress against the priorities.

Achieving the strategy priorities will mean:

Priority 1 - Strengthen multi-agency strategic governance and joint ownership of the Early Help Strategy.

- A broad range of key stakeholders are part of the governance group and regularly attend and contribute.
- A multi-agency action plan is in place with measurable outcomes owned and monitored by a wide range of partners, with clear evidence of progress and achievement.
- Impact data is available and collated from all early help partners and is used to inform the action plan of the governance group.

Priority 2 - Further develop the Early Help offer to include a targeted response to the increased risk of long-term disadvantage for children, young people and families due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Children and young people who are additionally vulnerable feedback that they received support that helped them at the right time.
- Children and young people feedback that universal and targeted services are available and accessible.
- Targeted interventions have a positive impact on the data where appropriate.
- A support offer for new parents impacted by the pandemic evidences positive outcomes.

Priority 3 - Work together to provide effective Early Help in line with our strategic objectives and Early Help Partnership Action Plan, that supports children, young people and families to easily access support.

- A mechanism is developed to ensure need, demand and locations of services are shared at the operational sub-group and this informs new developments as part of the early help offer.
- Early help providers take the lead agency role where appropriate to ensure the model is embedded across the partnership.
- Families experience a 'tell your story once' approach and have one plan of support in which all agencies work together.
- Universal and targeted support is co-facilitated, so families benefit from relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.
- A multi-agency early help training and support programme is implemented that enables partners to train together and work in a truly joined up and connected way.
- More services are co-located in locality areas and the Family Hub Model Framework is reflected both in family centres and across the wider partnership.
- There is evidence of coproduction with families in relation to reviewing and improving access and services provided. Pathways are published and families feedback that they are effective and easy to navigate.
- Primary Care Networks are actively engaged in the early help partnership.

Priority 4 - Develop a common understanding of Early Help across the partnership and promote a cohesive Buckinghamshire offer.

- Feedback identifies that children, young people and families know about how they can access early help in Buckinghamshire and find out more.
- A multi-agency communications plan supports partners to understand and promote a coordinated early help offer.
- A rolling engagement strategy enables new partners to become part of the early help offer; they are actively involved at an operational level and engage with strategic development.

The detailed multi-agency action plan and measures will be developed through the Early Help Partnership Governance group to reflect the breadth of involvement, engagement and delivery of appropriate support collectively agreed by the partnership.



Appendix 1: Interdependencies

- Start Well Report 2021
- Children and Young People's Plan
- SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021- 2023
- Education and Skills Strategy 2019-2022
- Family Hub Model Framework, November 2021
- Participation Strategy for Young People, 2022 - 2024
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018



Report to Children’s & Education Select Committee

Date: Thursday 8 September 2022

Reference number: NA

Title: Participation Strategy for Young People - Implementation & Progress

Relevant councillor(s): Cllr Anita Cranmer (Cabinet Member Education & Children’s Services)

Author and/or contact officer: Krissie Hutton (Youth Participation Coordinator)
Gareth Morgan (Head of Early Help)

Ward(s) affected: none specific

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to acknowledge the publication and launch of the first Buckinghamshire Participation Strategy for Young People.

The committee is asked to recognise the importance of this Strategy as a mechanism to improve the effectiveness of engagement with young people by the Council, across the County.

The committee is asked to note the timelines and progress milestones detailed within the report.

Executive summary

This report details the background, examples of impact achieved in Children’s Services, upcoming activity and monitoring arrangements for Buckinghamshire Council’s Youth Participation Strategy 2022-2025, following its launch, in May 2022.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On Thursday 19 May 2022, Buckinghamshire Council launched its first Youth Participation Strategy, at an event attended by dozens of colleagues and partners, as well as several councillors. The strategy is attached in Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The Youth Participation Strategy was developed over two years by the Family Support Service and a consultancy called The Care Leaders. The Care Leaders are a social enterprise with care-experienced young adults who use their experience, knowledge, and skills to promote high-quality participation work and professional practice within local authority and other public sector settings.
- 1.3. A Strategy launch event for young people will take place in Autumn 2022 and a young person's version of the strategy has been developed and is available in Appendix 2.
- 1.4. The Youth Participation Strategy commits us to embed high-quality youth participation work across Buckinghamshire Council's Children's Services, so that young people's voices help to improve the services and resources that they access. It also endeavours to promote and support youth participation work in the wider Council, our partner organisations, and the County as a whole.
- 1.5. To drive forward the work, a Youth Participation Coordinator has been appointed. The Youth Participation Coordinator started on Monday 11 July and sits alongside the Specialist Participation Team Manager within the Family Support Service.
- 1.6. The core of the Youth Participation Strategy is a set of engagement principles that provide a framework for participation:
 - Rule 1: We don't ask young people to do something we would not do ourselves.
 - Rule 2: Whenever we engage young people in service development, we provide them with development opportunities to ensure they have the skills to do so meaningfully.
 - Rule 3: We only engage with young people when we have a clear strategy about how we will listen, act, and respond in a timely, transparent manner that maximises young people's ownership.
- 1.7. The Youth Participation Strategy responds to the following priorities:
 - 1.7.1. The Council has a statutory duty, set out in The Children Act 1989, to consider the wishes and feelings of children when decisions are made about them.
 - 1.7.2. Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2019 to 2024 states, 'The experiences and chances that Buckinghamshire children and young people have will shape their lives. Listening to what our

children and young people have to say is central to the planning and delivery of services in Buckinghamshire.’

- 1.7.3. How well the Council listens to and acts upon the views and experiences of children and young people is part of Ofsted’s inspection framework. The outcome report of the Ofsted Inspection of Buckinghamshire Council’s Children’s Services (December 2021) states within its list of points that need to improve, “The engagement and participation of children in care in the corporate parenting work of the council”.

1.8. The Youth Participation Strategy is also built on the following principles:

- 1.8.1. Young people are experts in their own lives, and their views, opinions and ideas are essential to improving services to best support their needs.
- 1.8.2. Listening to young people and acting on their views empowers young people to realise their potential and fosters social responsibility.
- 1.8.3. Carrying out high-quality participation work with young people with special educational needs and disabilities, specific protected characteristics, and/or those young people that are considered vulnerable, enables services to become truly inclusive.

A new website and brand have been developed to accompany the Youth Participation Strategy. More detail on the website is given below in 3.1.

2. Recent examples of increased influence and impact of young people

2.1 The Leaving Care Team are focusing on increasing care leaver’s engagement with the service, making them front and central to all new developments in the team, giving feedback and helping to steer and shape the service. Engagement is being gained via activity days, the most recent being a picnic held on 5th August and an awards ceremony being planned jointly with the participation team. Special interest groups are also being set up for care leavers open to the service with a book group, fitness group and university group all in development.

The team are promoting engagement with increased social media presence with care leaver specific Facebook and TikTok accounts where young people can engage with the service and provide their views on various subject areas.

2.2 The Leaving Care Team are also organising a Care Leavers Christmas lunch for Christmas day this year. The team plan to ask a care leaver to participate on the steering group to help organise this – one of our care leavers is currently on an events management course so we will be approaching her initially as this would provide great experience in her chosen area.

2.3 In terms of active participation of care leavers the following is in place:

- Care leavers have been invited and participated on the interview panels for PA and Senior PA roles.
- They have given their views on health summaries which led to a change in the health summary format for children in care.
- They gave views on housing which led to a “you said, we did” set of actions which have already started to improve housing option for care leavers and is kept updated to evidence change.
- Care leavers in custody have given feedback on improving services for them both whilst in custody and on release and we obtained direct feedback from them on the publicity we are providing which has been updated in accordance with their input.
- Care leavers participated in updating the care leaver local offer.
- We have a care leaver who attends the corporate parenting panel who will be joining the education sub-group as he is passionate about improving educational outcomes for children in care and providing input into how this can be improved.

Feedback to the young people is provided throughout all of these forums in line with the strategy principles, so they are aware of the impact they are making on shaping the service.

2.4 In addition:

- Two of our children who live in our children’s homes sat on the recruitment interview panel for our new looked after nurses.
- One of our children who lives in our children’s home took part in the selection interview process for Buckinghamshire’s new Corporate Director of Children’s Services
- A group of children from our children’s home are involved in writing and delivering training to social workers and carers on caring for teenagers, this covers social media, friendship challenges and teenage relationships.
- We have a group of four children in care who have been undertaking visits to our semi-independent placement providers to assess whether they would be appropriate placements – they provide verbal feedback which includes suggestions for improvements.

3. Key participation activities over the next 12 months

3.1. Launch of the Youth Voice Bucks website – August 2022

- 3.1.1. www.YouthVoiceBucks.co.uk will act as a hub of participation work for young people and practitioners. It will present numerous participation opportunities for young people available from the Council and partners, as well as best practice case studies and blogs.
- 3.2. Launch of the Youth Voice Champions Programme – September 2022
 - 3.2.1. Youth Voice Champions are colleagues who promote and develop participation opportunities for young people within their respective services. They meet quarterly to share ideas, solve barriers, and monitor an action plan. 15 colleagues from 12 services have so far expressed an interest, and the quarterly meetings will commence in September 2022.
- 3.3. Young People’s Launch of the Youth Participation Strategy – Autumn 2022
 - 3.3.1. Once the website is live and the participation offer to young people has been mapped and enhanced, a launch of the Youth Participation Strategy for young people will be held. The event will celebrate youth voice and promote participation opportunities. The event will be co-created with young people engaged with the Council’s existing participation work.
- 3.4. Launch of a Councillor Mentoring Scheme (subject to resource) – October 2022
 - 3.4.1. The feasibility of launching a councillor mentoring scheme is currently being explored. This scheme would invite ambitious young people with an interest in politics to shadow local councillors for 3 or 6 months. It would be led by the Democratic Services team.
- 3.5. Training by The Care Leaders – monthly until December 2022
 - 3.5.1. Care-experienced facilitators are delivering monthly training sessions for practitioners and Members in Buckinghamshire that work with young people, focused on themes such as connection, belonging and wellbeing. They are grounded in facilitators’ personal experience, plus evidence, legislation, and national trends. More information is available in Appendix 4.
- 3.6. Agreeing a consistent approach to youth interview panels – by December 2022
 - 3.6.1. Youth interview panels are often used in Children’s Services to recruit to roles that involve direct work with children and young people or management of services for children and young people. It is an effective way of engaging young people in decision-making.
 - 3.6.2. While there are many examples of good practice, there is currently no approach agreed across the department for the process. This will be addressed within the remit of the Youth Participation Strategy.
- 3.7. Launch of a Community Board Youth Ambassador programme – April 2023

- 3.7.1. To embed youth voice in the Council's 16 community boards, a Community Board (CB) Youth Ambassador programme will be developed. The programme will provide a high-quality leadership opportunity for community-motivated young people.
 - 3.7.2. The young participants will be educated on the structure, functions, and processes of the boards, and provided with opportunities to develop skills such as public speaking, analysis, and budget management.
 - 3.7.3. The CB Youth Ambassadors will take on various functions that align with the character and workstreams of the boards and the young person's strengths and interests. The scheme will pilot in a few of the Community Boards and adjusted and expanded for other boards as appropriate.
 - 3.7.3.1. E.g. CB Youth Ambassadors for one area might lead on a consultation with peers to explore the concept of a new youth café / hub, and present their findings and recommendations to the Community Board for a decision.
 - 3.7.4. The CB Youth Ambassadors will be invited to join the Youth Voice Executive Committee (see 2.9 below).
- 3.8. Development of a Voice Apprenticeship/Internship – by April 2023
- 3.8.1. A Youth Voice Apprenticeship/Internship will bring together what are currently ad-hoc opportunities for young people to contribute to Council participation projects in various services, such as:
 - Sitting on a youth interview panel
 - Helping to plan events for young people
 - Developing resources, surveys etc. for young people / for use with young people
 - Testing website suitability for young people
 - 3.8.2. This position will provide the young people working with us with a more joined-up and coordinated approach and will appropriately reward them for their contributions through an apprentice salary/stipend.
- 3.9. Growth of Youth Voice Bucks forum and the Youth Voice Exec Committee – ongoing
- 3.9.1. Youth Voice Bucks is a forum for young people to have their voices heard, raise the issues that they are most passionate about, and take an active role in making Buckinghamshire the best place to live.
 - 3.9.2. Youth Voice Bucks is open to all young people aged 11-19 (or up to 25 where a young person has a special educational need or disability), who live in Buckinghamshire or go to school in Buckinghamshire.

- 3.9.3. Young people’s governance of Youth Voice Bucks is managed through a new Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee. The Committee will have representation from each locality within the county and, over time, from other youth forums including We Do Care and Shout Out for SEND. The committee will be chaired and managed by young people and will be able to call on officers for consultation and support.
- 3.9.4. While various iterations of the Youth Voice forum and Youth Voice Exec Committee have existed over previous years, membership and meetings lost momentum over the pandemic. Growing the forum will therefore be a key ongoing workstream for participation.
- 3.9.5. Youth Voice Bucks and the Youth Voice Exec Committee will also be developed through increased involvement with UK Youth Movement opportunities, such as national events.
- 3.10. Specialist Participation Opportunities to continue and grow
 - 3.10.1. We Do Care
 - 3.10.1.1. The We Do Care forum gives children and young people a chance to have their say on issues that matter to them, to make sure that they are listened to by Social Workers, managers and other decision-makers.
 - 3.10.1.2. A new Care Ambassadors programme will provide care-experienced young people with a leadership role to share their voice and amplify the voices of young people with similar experiences to them.
 - 3.10.1.3. A Care Leavers Celebration Event will take place by the end of 2022
 - 3.10.1.4. As mentioned in 1.7.3 above, the outcome report of the Ofsted’s latest Inspection of Buckinghamshire Council’s Children’s Services states within its list of points that need to improve, “The engagement and participation of children in care in the corporate parenting work of the council”. An options paper has been submitted to Children’s Services Senior Management Team to agree how the voice of care-experienced children and young people is routinely captured in order to influence service improvement, and new workstreams will be developed as agreed.
 - 3.10.1.5. New To Bucks is a new voice programme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people and young refugees.

3.10.2. Shout Out for SEND

- 3.10.2.1. Shout Out for SEND reps are young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities that share their voices and experiences to improve local activities and services for young people with SEND.
- 3.10.2.2. SEND young inspectors visit local activities and clubs to help make them suitable for people with SEND.
- 3.10.2.3. Young people with SEND are also listened to via an annual conference, activity days, a young people's group, and specific projects.

4. **Measuring success in participation**

- 4.1. A set of KPIs, target outcomes and a reporting system is in development to accompany the Youth Participation Strategy. Success will be measured by a both quantitative and qualitative measures.
- 4.2. Quantitative measures will include KPIs such as (but not limited to) the following:
 - The number of young people who have engaged with participation projects – and the demographics of participation project attendees, including ages, protected characteristics, and service experience
 - The number of participation projects being undertaken, the diversity in delivery leads, the areas of the County covered, online vs in-person ratio
 - Quantifiable responses from feedback forms, such as average score given by young people in response to questions like “on a scale of 1-5, do you feel you either had, or were provided with, the skills, experience and knowledge to undertake this project to your best ability?”
- 4.3. Qualitative data will include case studies, blogs and quotes, co-created with young-people, youth voice champions, partners, and other relevant stakeholders. These case studies will evidence the longer-term impact of participation projects for the participants, the services, and future service-users.
- 4.4. Each participation opportunity will have a listing on the Youth Voice Bucks website. The listings will be diverse in terms of delivery lead, length of project, whether they are available to all young people or targeted towards young people with specific experiences. They will each be labelled as “recruiting”, “ongoing” or “complete”.
- 4.5. For quality-assurance, each listing will include a table detailing how the Listen / Act / Respond rule detailed in 1.6 above is being adhered to – i.e.
 - how participants will be/were listened to

- what action will be, or has been, taken in response to their contribution
- when and how the young people will, or did, hear back about the action that was taken in response to their contributions.

- 4.6. A quarterly highlight report will showcase key KPIs, projects details and feedback. This will be shared with the Youth Voice Executive Committee, Children’s Partnership Board, Corporate Parenting Panel, and other platforms as appropriate.
- 4.7. The first of these highlight reports will showcase the baseline of participation work from which the activities listed in section 2 will grow. Significant mapping work is currently underway to develop a clear picture of participation efforts and opportunities within and beyond the council to date.
- 4.8. All performance measures and reports will be “youth-friendly” and available to young people via YouthVoiceBucks.co.uk to ensure transparency.

5. **Legal and financial implications**

- 5.1. All activity detailed in this report is funded through the Family Support Service core budget, with the exception of the Councillor mentoring scheme, which is being led by Democratic Services. There is no additional financial implication for the Council.

6. **Corporate implications**

- 6.1. This report highlights the new Buckinghamshire Participation Strategy for Young People and the positive opportunities for young people in our communities, together with the areas where increased and more meaningful engagement with young people can realise benefits to the organisation. It is hoped that during the lifespan of the Strategy, these benefits will become increasingly embedded with key areas of council business, so that young people’s views, input and creativity can support the council’s policy, practice and professional development.

Appendix 1. Buckinghamshire’s Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-25



BC Participation
Strategy 2022-25.pdf

Appendix 2. Young People’s version of the Participation Strategy 2022-25



Participation
Strategy for Young Pe

Appendix 3. Care Experienced Leaders - Training offer / programme



Youth Voice Bucks
training.pdf



Participation Strategy for Young People 2022 - 2025

How Buckinghamshire Council hears the voice of young people

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1. Vision and foreword

Buckinghamshire's Vision for Children and Young People

'We aim to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.'

Foreword from Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet member for Children's Services

In Buckinghamshire our ambition is to provide the best services possible to support children and young people and their families to realise their potential. 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 and how to use that knowledge to develop services. We need to provide opportunities to engage children and young people to have their voices heard, responded to and acted upon.

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 all of us who work with and within 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. It is our aspiration that everyone within Children's Services embrace participation as it is described within this strategy, to involve children and young people from across the county to affect positive change in shaping our services and delivery, by using a wide range of opportunities and innovation to enable them to be involved.



2. Definitions

What the dictionary says and what it means to us:

Consultation

- *The action or process of formally consulting or discussing.*

Seeking the views of children and young people in creative ways on how we are supporting them and how they think services should be delivered, and taking actions in response to what they have said.

Participation

- *The action of taking part in something.*

Young people taking an active part in a range of activities including forums, consultations, interview panels and training.

Engagement

- *participate or become involved in.*
- *occupy or attract (someone's interest or attention).*
- *involve someone in (a conversation or discussion).*
- *establish a meaningful contact or connection with.*

Building positive relationships with young people by offering opportunities to interact with us in ways that are meaningful and interesting and gives them an appropriate degree of ownership and control.

Diversity

- *showing a great deal of variety; very different*
- *including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.*

Offering a wide range of activities that are delivered and promoted in different ways to reach young people from different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations and abilities. Getting feedback to ensure these activities meet their needs, interests and passions and making changes based on what they tell us.

3. Context

This participation strategy has been developed to ensure we capture the views of all young people in Buckinghamshire so that their experiences influence service development at an individual, operational and strategic level. We have worked alongside a wide range of stakeholders to create a strategy that is effective, maximises ownership and has Buckinghamshire’s strategic aims and the profile of need of young people at its heart.

The Council has a statutory duty, set out in The Children Act 1989, to consider the wishes and feelings of children when decisions are made about them. How well the Council listens to and acts upon the views and experiences of children and young people is part of Ofsted’s inspection framework.

Buckinghamshire Children and Young People’s Partnership Plan 2019 to 2024 states, *‘The experiences and chances that Buckinghamshire children and young people have will shape their lives. Listening to what our children and young people have to say is central to the planning and delivery of services in Buckinghamshire.’*

3.1 Our 9 Priorities

We have 9 challenges that we are working to meet, to ensure we are improving the participation of our young people. These challenges have been developed based on research and what young people and adults have told us are important issues to overcome, to ensure authentic and meaningful participation.

Our 9 challenges and how we plan to address them:



1. Updating young people's contact details

Facilitate an internal campaign to ensure young people's details are updated, including those residing outside of Buckinghamshire, so that we can be proactive in making contact and offering opportunities to all.

2. Ensuring young people are not consulted on things that they don't own and are not relevant to them

Devolve power to young people to enable them to develop their own consultations about issues they 'own', because these are their challenges, they matter to them and they may own the solutions.

3. Strengthening our relationship between Youth Voice Buckinghamshire, service areas and partners

Develop and manage a Champions Programme to help champions develop creative ways to engage with all young people from across children's services. Maximise resources to ensure we effectively coordinate our action plan, monitor and report our progress and impact to the widest audience.

4. Engaging with young people who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (Disability, Race, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment), those with Special Educational Needs and those from under-represented or marginalised communities

Work with young people, particularly those with the highest needs, and the services that support them to understand what engagement should look like. Understand and respond innovatively to barriers to engagement to be inclusive and accessible to all, with a conscious focus on increasing engagement and participation amongst young people with SEND, those from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities and the LGBTQ+ community.

5. Addressing the isolation of young people caused by COVID-19

Host a series of activities to bring young people together, experience new things and have fun whilst getting their voices heard.

6. Engaging with young people from rural areas of Buckinghamshire

Support and enable young people to attend activities in person e.g. providing transport and provide online events so young people can engage online.

7. Ensuring the information we provide for young people is appealing and engaging

Rebrand our participation service so that it is appealing to young people and uses straightforward, jargon-free language that is easy for everyone to understand.

8. Engaging with young people through digital means

Develop a new online brochure that will share important information, events, consultations, opportunities and contact information, so the council can ensure it is easy for young people to get involved.

9. Making participation count by acting on it

Develop clear parameters for consultations and lines of communication and accountability to ensure that when young people are consulted, they know how much power their views will have, who will make the final decision and how they can communicate with decision-makers.

4. Purpose

4.1 Our Mission for Participation

To listen, act and respond to the views of young people in Buckinghamshire.

- **Listen** - listen to the views of young people in Buckinghamshire, ensuring we do so in ways that engage the widest possible audience while respecting their needs and capturing their ideas.
- **Act** - work with young people to build opportunities, services and a better future which meet young people's needs.
- **Respond** - respond to the needs, interests and aspirations of young people in a timely and transparent manner, so that their ownership and engagement are maximised.
- **Repeat** – participation will be a process: we listen, act and respond and then we continue to review and develop by listening, acting and responding.



4.2 Our Statement of Purpose

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.

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.

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 and providing transparent feedback, we can better meet the needs of young people in Buckinghamshire.

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 empowered to realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.

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.

5. Scope

5.1 Embedding Participation into our Culture

5.1.1 Our 3 Rules of Engagement

We have developed 3 rules to ensure that whenever we engage with young people, we do so ethically and authentically.

Rule 1: We don't ask young people to do something we would not do ourselves.

Rule 2: Whenever we engage young people in service development, we provide them with development opportunities to ensure they have the skills to do so meaningfully.

Rule 3: We only engage with young people if we have a clear strategy about how we will listen, respond and act in a timely, transparent manner that maximises young people's ownership.

These rules have also considered and responded to the priority, '**providing opportunities for children and young people to meet their full potential**' within the Children and Young People's 2019 – 2024 partnership plan.

5.1.2 Our Participation Principles

'Listen, Act, Respond and Repeat' sums up our transparent operational approach and acts as a memorable mantra that everyone within Buckinghamshire should know.

To understand how everyone can 'Listen, Act, Respond and Repeat' we explain how this is relevant to individuals, services, and decision-makers.



	Individuals	Services	Decision-Makers
Listen	<p><i>Individuals listen to young people with the intention to learn.</i></p> <p>We engage with young people with the intention to listen, learn and encourage them to take ownership by being active participants within our service.</p>	<p><i>Services to use creative methods to listen to young people.</i></p> <p>Each service works with young people from different backgrounds and levels of need. Our expectation is that all service areas develop creative methods to ensure they engage effectively and listen to their young people. These methods will include more than surveys and focus groups and will be developed based on the needs of their young people.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers invite young people to meetings that make decisions.</i></p> <p>Decision-makers will role model youth participation by ensuring they create space for and support young people to have presence in spaces where decisions are being made. These include but are not exclusive to corporate parenting panels, sub-groups and senior leadership meetings.</p>
Act	<p><i>Individuals to co-create agreements to act with young people.</i></p> <p>We focus on doing things with young people and do this by creating a clear plan and a timeline that explains how we will act based on what we have learnt from them. This is to ensure the young person and individual can take ownership and hold each other accountable to an agreement.</p>	<p><i>Services to develop opportunities with and for young people.</i></p> <p>We have a duty to listen to young people and provide opportunities for them to develop themselves and the services they receive. Where young people are not initially present at discussions that may affect their services, or where their input is needed and could enhance the offer, we will develop creative methods to gain their views. We must be clear about the developmental process: sometimes we will co-design, sometimes we will make an offer first; we will always be open to feedback.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers to devolve power to young people.</i></p> <p>Decision makers commit to a bottom-up approach and devolve power to young people to enable them to take ownership of the things that are important to them. Devolution will include but is not exclusive to having shared power in recruitment panels, vote on relevant boards, own their agenda in forums, choose to consult on issues that matter to them and can say no to consultations from others.</p>

	Individuals	Services	Decision-Makers
Respond	<p><i>Individuals to always respond to young people with no exceptions.</i> We recognise the ethical and moral duty to always let young people know what we are planning to do with their views, within a reasonable timeframe, even if we haven't been able to do what we originally agreed. There should be no exception to this.</p>	<p><i>Services to be honest with young people about what we can and can't do.</i> Services will ensure they communicate clearly to young people how their views have shaped service development. We recognise that on occasions services may not be able to act, this must also be communicated with a clear explanation why.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers commit to communicating directly with young people.</i> Our expectation is that if young people are to attend decision-making meetings to share views, young people should expect decision-makers to attend youth forums to share updates. These should form part of a decision-makers routine and be scheduled with the same importance as any other meeting.</p>
Repeat	<p><i>Individuals recognise that participation is everyone's responsibility.</i> We recognise that engagement and participation is everyone's responsibility and that it is not the sole responsibility of a participation team. To ensure participation is diverse, effective and impactful it needs support from everybody from the front-line who can support access to young people, to the decision-makers who can build systems for authentic engagement.</p>	<p><i>Services to develop new opportunities to engage with young people annually.</i> Services recognise that young people have varying needs and that needs change, they will review their offers at least annually for young people and adapt dependant on the needs at that time. Services will pay particular focus on young people with special educational needs, disabilities, those who are considered vulnerable and in need of extra support.</p>	<p><i>Decision-makers to offer a permanent invitation for young people in decision making spaces.</i> Decision makers will ensure that young people have a permanent invitation to all appropriate decision-making spaces and that they are supported to attend.</p>

5.2 Developing Participation within our Services

How we plan to engage with young people in the future

We know that youth participation should be embedded in all our service areas and that everyone should take an active role in ensuring young people have opportunities to engage in service development whilst developing themselves.

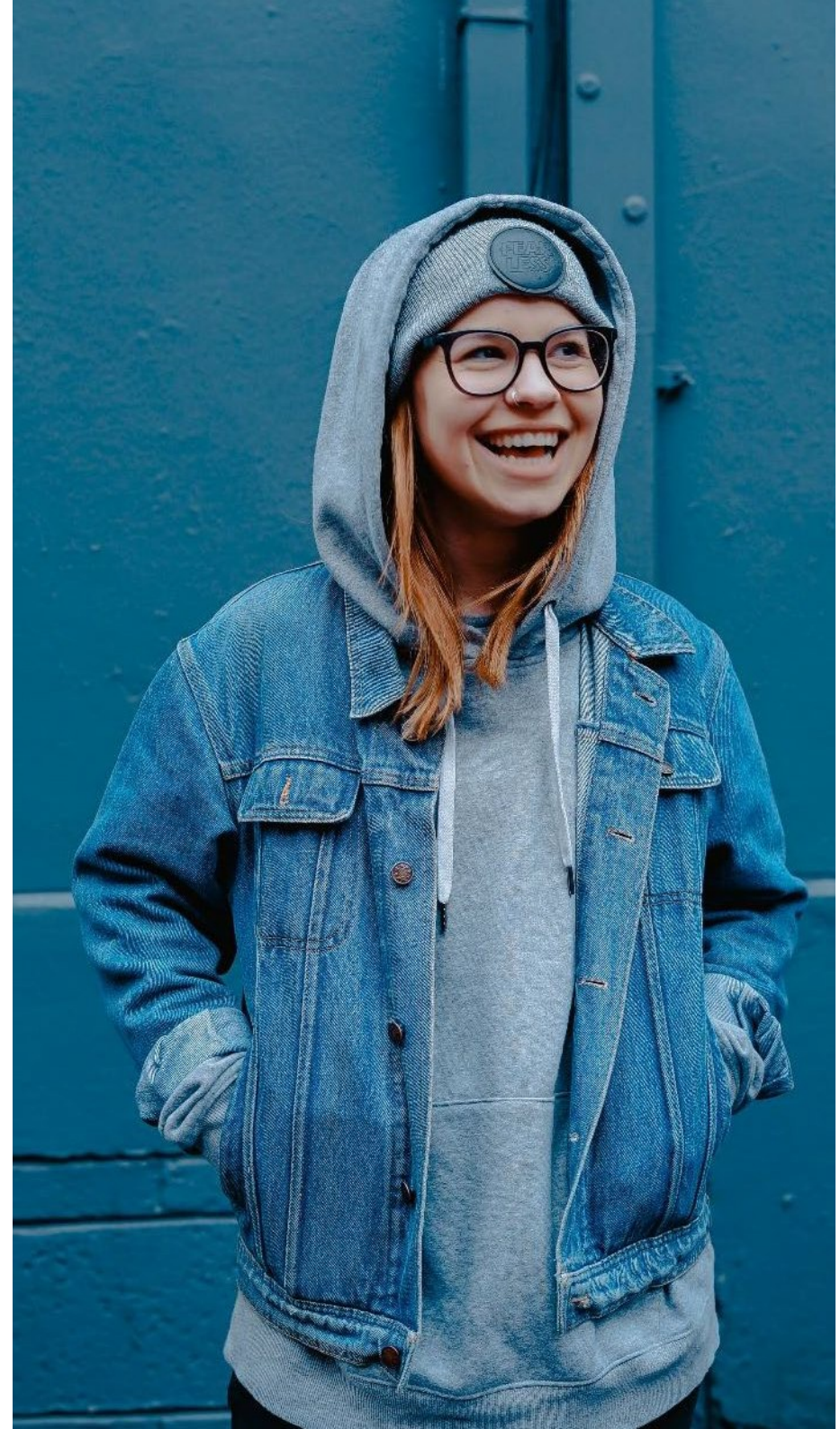
This section of the strategy explains what we are currently doing and how we plan to develop our youth participation offer.

5.2.1 Youth Voice Bucks

Context

Youth Voice Bucks is the new brand that will bring together all the participation activity across the local authority. Youth Voice Bucks is focused on listening to young people, acting on their views and responding to them to let them know what impact they have had. Its work will encompass the Specialist Participation Team, individuals responsible for youth engagement within the Family Support Service and wider Children's Services teams.

The concept of Youth Voice Bucks was developed to ensure we have one clear participation brand for all young people, displaying a clear and consistent message and have an up to date, engaging and youth focused design. From feedback we recognised the term 'specialist participation team' was difficult to explain and labels particular groups of young people as different, which is contrary the work of the 'We Do Care' and their 'Language that Cares' campaign. Therefore, children and young



people who are looked after or have special educational needs will share their voice through tailored opportunities which contribute to Youth Voice Bucks.

We have developed 4 service areas that focus on engaging young people in a diverse, effective and meaningful way, while actively involving individuals, services and decision-makers.

Our 4 service areas/offers:

1. Champions Programme

A forum of individuals from children's services focused on developing opportunities for young people to develop themselves and the services they and others receive.

2. Activities

Bringing young people together to experience new things and have fun whilst getting their voices heard.

3. Forums

Forums that engage young people in conversations about the services they receive, sharing their views, opinions and ideas about how to develop them.

4. Training

Providing training for service areas that support them to engage with their young people.

5.2.2 Youth Voice and the Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee

Engaging with young people from all 16 localities across Buckinghamshire.

We want our young people to be proud of living in Buckinghamshire and have ambitions for themselves and their peers. Our proposed partnership between Youth Voice and The Executive Committee enables a collaborative and trusting working relationship that gives young people an active role to strengthen our community, supporting Buckinghamshire's key priority to make it the best place to live for all young people.

Youth Voice is a place where young people can have their voices heard to benefit and strengthen our community, raise the issues that they are most passionate about and take an active role in making Buckinghamshire the best place to live for all young people. Youth Voice is open to 11- to 19-year-olds (or up to 25 years old for young people with a disability or learning disability) from Buckinghamshire.

Young people's governance of Youth Voice Bucks is managed through a new Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee. The Committee will have representation from each locality within the county and, over time, from other youth forums including 'We Do Care' and 'Shout Out for SEND'. The committee will be chaired and managed by young people and will be able to call on officers for consultation and support.

The Executive Committee informs senior leaders from the council about youth issues and undertakes programmes of work to improve local services. There is also the opportunity to represent the county at national events too. Youth Voice is coordinated by the Community Youth Team based within the Family Support Service.

With the Community Boards now established across the county and the existing Youth Voice Executive Committee in place there is a real opportunity to link them together to the benefit of both, ensuring that Youth Participation is embedded as part of this key new process in Buckinghamshire.

There is an opportunity for young people to get involved in the following ways:

- Attend Community Board meetings as official members ensuring their voice is heard and consulted.
- Be given budget responsibility as a Youth Voice Executive Committee to drive forward identified change.
- Consult on key Local Authority Priorities.
- Assess relevant applications to the board and offer input, particularly those with a youth focus.
- Support with recruitment of young people to those boards in need.

Proposed Model

Our ambition is to have 2 Ambassadors from each Community Board area identified to join the Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee. They will represent their board at meetings and feedback relevant information/opportunities to their Community Board for further discussion and actions. This may then lead to discussions at Youth Voice where key trends are identified to be taken forward by the Youth Voice group as countywide or area-specific actions and opportunities.

This will make the Youth Voice Executive Committee stronger with wider representation, while ensuring that Community Boards are inclusive to young people.

Training

We will provide training to both Community Board members and Community Board Coordinators as part of an induction process. This training will focus on three main areas:

1. Engagement with young people
2. Introducing the model and ensuring this process is understood and being used as a standard approach across each of the boards.
3. Highlighting the role of Ambassadors.

5.2.3 'We Do Care' - Buckinghamshire's Children in Care Council

Engaging with our care experienced young people.

'We Do Care' gives children and young people with experience of care a chance to have their say on issues that matter to them, to make sure that they are listened to by social workers, managers and decision-makers in the council, and to make a difference to the lives of children and young people in care and care leavers.

The Children in Care Council is a group of children and young people who are either in care or a Care Leaver. Their ages range from 5-12 ('We Do Care' Juniors), 12 plus ('We Do Care' Seniors) and 18 plus (Care Leavers).

What we do:

- Talk to decision makers about being in care in Buckinghamshire
- Share ideas about how to improve services for children and young people in care and Care Leavers

- Help interview people who want to work with children and young people
- Organise events like fun days and an award event to celebrate the success of children in care and Care Leavers

Examples of 'We do Care' projects

- **Using Language that Cares**

Our young people developed a video that explained what it means to be in care and what language we need to be using when speaking about young people. The video can be viewed [here](#)

- **'Things to know about care' booklets**

We Do Care Supported the development of booklets that explain what it means to be in care. These can be viewed [here](#)

Online Brochure

We are developing our digital presence to ensure we have an online brochure that can share the opportunities available for young people to participate, we also recognise we have some improvements to make to ensure some of our most vulnerable young people know where to go to access information such as care leavers accessing their rights and entitlements.

Message from young people: 'Being a good Corporate Parent means that you listen to us and that you do not dominate. Whilst not replacing the parenting role, being a good corporate parent means having clear boundaries, helping us settle into new homes and getting the most out of these new routines, ensuring that we feel safe, can sleep and eat well and that there is always someone there for us to talk to and to develop our interests. A Corporate Parent builds our confidence and helps us work through our feelings.'

5.2.4 Shout out for SEND

Shout out for SEND (SOFS) gives children and young people with SEND a chance to have their say on issues that matter to them, to make sure that they are listened to by workers, managers and decision makers in the council, and to make a difference to the lives of children and young people receiving SEND services.

There are a number of ways in which young people can participate. These include:

- Shout Out Reps – where representatives speak for their school, college, friends and community. Reps meet virtually once a month to share the views of young people with SEND in Buckinghamshire.
- SEND Young Inspectors - young people (Inspectors) visit local activities and clubs to check they can meet the needs of young people with SEND. Their reports aid others in finding what a club or activity is like before they go.
- Annual conference for young people - a day of creative and fun activities, for young people with SEND with the opportunity to talk to senior people at Buckinghamshire Council.
- Young people's group - meet every month during school term time, providing the opportunity to develop confidence, self-esteem, improve teamwork skills and share views and help other young people with SEND.
- Activity days - young people with SEND take part in new and fun activities, usually during the school holidays, which also provides opportunities to give their views to influence the support and services provided for SEND children and young people.

SEND Co-Production Pledge

Our SEND Co-production Pledge puts the needs of the individual at the heart of all decision-making processes and the support services that are provided.

Our SEND Co-production Pledge principles:

- Everyone is welcome and treated with care and respect
- Everyone's opinion is not only listened to, but is equally valued and included
- Everyone is communicated with respectfully and in a timely fashion

- Everyone works together to achieve the best outcomes, offering compromise where necessary
- Everyone acts with trust and transparency

The pledge is aimed at all levels of the organisation which include;

- Individually – where an individual can influence the support and services they need. Their voice is heard, they feel empowered about the decisions being made about their future.
- Collectively – where two or more people influence the way services are designed, commissioned and delivered.
- Strategically – where co-production is an embedded culture of inclusion. Individuals, families, groups and organisations can influence equally services, commissioning, monitoring and new projects.

5.2.5 Champions Programme

A staff forum of colleagues focused on developing opportunities for young people, self-development and the services they receive.

While the perception of previous participation efforts is that the focus has been on providing consultation opportunities for young people, we believe participation is so much more.

Our Champions Programme brings together individuals from across children’s services and the partnership to develop creative ways to engage with young people [see section 6. Service commitments to young people].

Based on our participation principles, the champions have 4 clear aims:

- 1. Listen:** Services to use creative methods to listen to young people.
- 2. Act:** Services to develop opportunities with and for young people.
- 3. Respond:** Services to honest with young people about what we can and can’t do.
- 4. Repeat:** Services to develop new opportunities to engage with young people annually.

Champions are volunteers from across Children's Services who work together to ensure that youth participation activities are integral to service development and delivery. Every service area commits to providing a champion, who will support for as long as their role allows.

Champions are provided with training to learn about how to create opportunities for young people to develop both themselves and the services they receive.

Champions have 4 meetings a year where they discuss the opportunities that they have identified and developed for young people. They also work with Youth Voice Bucks and decision-makers to remove barriers that might prevent young people from engaging, and will nominate adults and young people for 'recognition awards' to celebrate good practice.

Upon ending involvement, the outgoing Champion will discuss the opportunity with colleagues, nominate and appoint someone else from the represented service area to become the service participation Champion. The services represented are listed in Appendix A.

Once embedded within Children's Services, the Champion model will be expanded into the wider council and partner agencies.

6. The Future for Participation

How we are developing opportunities for youth participation

6.1 Champion's Commitments to Participation

Our Champions are developing opportunities for young people to engage in their service area. They recognise that for participation to be great a joined up approach should be developed to ensure Buckinghamshire offer a robust and meaningful youth participation offer.

As part of the initial Champions Programme, attendees were asked to research and identify:

- Current participation activities in their service
- Their vision for participation
- The barriers that are preventing them from achieving their vision
- The impact of achieving their vision

From these responses, we can create a 'whole system' view of participation, giving us vital information that enables Champions to think creatively about solutions to providing meaningful engagement opportunities for young people. These commitments will be reviewed and developed through the Champions Group and will form part of the impact



monitoring activity. See Appendix A for the Champion's Participation Research and Appendix B for the Opportunities by Service Area. Once established, the intention is for the wider Council and then partner agencies to adopt the Champions approach.

6.2 Participation Development Opportunities

Our ambitious plan to develop youth participation in Buckinghamshire

This section explains our ideas around engaging with young people across Buckinghamshire. These opportunities have been developed through engagement with our Champions, Specialist Participation Team and Family Support Service, and have been informed by feedback from our Corporate Parenting Panel.

6.2.1 Annual Surveys

Champions to develop annual surveys to consult with young people

We recognise that capturing of the views of young people is key to ensuring that our services can be developed to best support them. We also understand that service areas request consultations at different times throughout the year, many surveys ask similar questions and can lead to 'over consultation' with young people.

Through the Champions we will agree annual surveys to hear the views of young people. These surveys will be designed to ensure we ask young people relevant questions, so that all service areas can benefit from young people's feedback. We will also ensure that surveys will be scheduled mindfully throughout the year so that young people are not 'over consulted'.

6.2.2 Training

For young people, staff and leaders

It is important to develop the relevant skills to understand how to engage with young people. Providing development opportunities to staff, young people and leaders will help us build a culture of outstanding participation across Buckinghamshire. We plan to explore development opportunities for young people to learn skills in facilitation, presentation and leadership so they can effectively engage with our service.

For staff, we aim to offer training that develops their skills in engaging with young people, with a particular focus on engagement with SEND young people. Finally, training for leaders will be based on our new approach to participation ensuring we have buy-in at every level of Buckinghamshire. We will be providing training that will support our community board members, lead members and participation champions to understand how to engage with young people and understand their corporate parenting responsibility. This training will include learning to enable adults to understand the new participation strategy and to recognise the lived experiences of young people in Buckinghamshire. This training will be provided by lived experience leaders who have personal and professional experience of children's services and our partner services.

6.2.3 Digital Offer

Communications and Web Content

We know that most young people now access and engage with information digitally. Our aim is to develop our digital offer to reflect the participation opportunities. Developing our digital offer will focus on two areas; firstly, to share online the opportunities for young people to engage through forums, activities and conversations: secondly, to provide information about rights, entitlements, events and other useful content.

We have 'rebranded' participation as 'Youth Voice Bucks' which will bring together all the participation activity across the local authority. This branding will enhance our ability to engage digitally with young people through visually appealing content.



6.2.4 Youth Apprenticeships

Supporting young people into employment

From our work with Champions we have identified existing opportunities for young people to engage with services (See 6.1.1). These opportunities range from interviewing potential staff, supporting training, developing resources, engaging in decision-making spaces and more. Usually, individual service areas would reach out and ask young people to volunteer their time to support with these requests, often asking the same young people to be involved. Our focus here is to identify opportunities from all service areas and create a coordinated set of activities that could be suitable for an apprentice.

6.2.5 Mentorship Programme

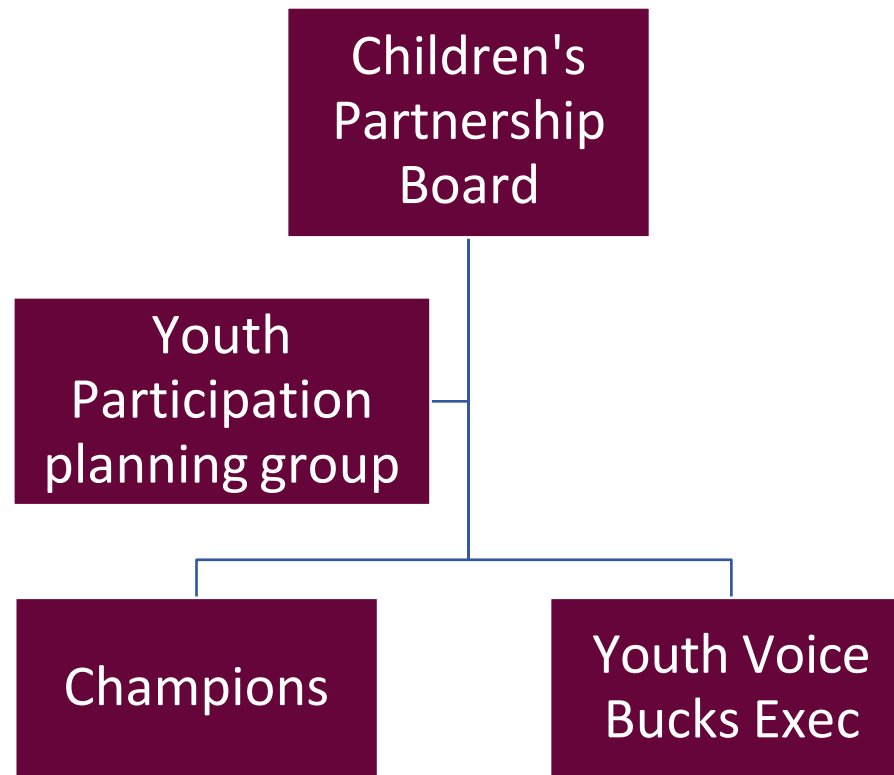
Providing young people with a mentor to learn skills and develop interests

Our mentor programme will provide mentors who are able support young people to develop their skills, interests and hobbies. Mentors will be volunteers from the employee pool within local authority. Recognising that we have various sectors within our organisation we have the potential to access individuals with a wide range of expertise from law, health, social care, finance and more. We are also asking volunteers who have a skill or hobby that they can share to become a mentor, enabling us to offer mentorship based on people's interests which could include playing an instrument, sport, music, art and more.

7. Governance

The governance for Youth Voice Buckinghamshire will mirror existing governance processes and reporting but with the addition of the Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee, which will receive and write reports and be able to call on the support of officers and members to fully understand and respond to strategic and operational development outlined in this strategy or in other developmental areas.

7.1 Governance Tree



7.2 Governance Tree - Overview

To ensure we have the most senior buy-in and can hand over appropriate power, our Children's Partnership Board will oversee the participation strategy.

Our Youth Participation Planning group is made up of Youth Voice representatives, the Participation Coordinator, Specialist Participation Team Manager, Community Youth Service Development Manager, Participation Champion Representative and Heads of Service for Early Help and Social Care (or delegate) whose responsibility is to create an action plan to ensure we implement our participation strategy, monitor KPIs and maintain senior oversight.

The Champions are individuals from the services areas outlined in section 5.2.5 of this strategy whose primary focus will be supporting Youth Voice Bucks by providing and evidencing participation opportunities for young people.

Increasing engagement and participation will bring benefits to Buckinghamshire's young people, and the whole council. As such, the ambitions in this strategy should be widely known and understood so everybody contributes to maximising the impact the new strategy and approach can bring. Youth Voice Bucks is the service dedicated to enhancing participation activity across Buckinghamshire Council but it cannot achieve our strategic goals without the full support of children's service staff, council officers, Members and partner agencies.

8. KPIs and outcomes

Youth Voice Bucks Executive Committee to receive quarterly report from each service area covering:

Listen, Act, Respond and Repeat

Increased effectiveness and engagement of young people's consultation:

- Number of participation/consultation events and opportunities
- Number and diversity of young people engaged
- Outcomes from proposals made by young people: response given, action taken and impact

When consultation with young people has happened, individuals/services can produce a clear agreement that states what actions were committed to, the impact it had and what response was given to the young person.

Youth Participation Planning Group

This subgroup will be responsible for overseeing the progress of the strategy and impact on youth participation. Once the participation planning group is established and the action plan for implementation of the strategy agreed, the group will also confirm KPI targets for the forthcoming year, April 2022 – March 2023, which will include:

- Levels of engagement and participation (e.g. the number of opportunities and attendance)
- Training engagement and impact
- Feedback from young people
- Examples of positive change



The planning group will monitor performance and progress on a quarterly basis and provide an annual report to the Children's Partnership Board to demonstrate the progress towards the aspirations of the strategy. The group will also be responsible for the review and setting of new KPI targets each year.

Baseline Data

We recognise that baseline data has not been previously captured. Therefore our commitment is to capture data that can be used to hold us to account to ensure we provide effective youth participation and so that we can understand the impact we are making. As a starting point, baseline data will be captured through participation work across Children's Service, through the Champions network. We will clearly evidence where young people have authentic power in decision making, and will demonstrate progression towards solving our 9 challenges of participation through case studies and examples of change.

Outcomes

The action plan and KPIs will ensure that the strategy delivers on its aims and make a demonstrable difference. The outcomes that we expect to see include:

- Increased number of diverse participation opportunities.
- More young people attending participation activities and groups.
Wider representation of young people attending participation activities, including those with SEND, those from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities and the LGBTQ+ community.
- Clear evidence through case studies of actions taken as a direct result of listening to young people's voices.
- A well-attended and active champion network in place for Children's Services, with members from the wider council and partner agencies, who can provide clear evidence of the opportunities made available to young people and the changes made as a result.
- Young people report that they feel listened to, know that action will be taken and can see the difference they are making.

9. Reference and Index

In developing this strategy, we have engaged with:

- The Unitary Council's Community Boards and their development with the Youth Voice Executive Committee.
- The Specialist Participation Team and their engagement with young people considered 'vulnerable', particularly those who have care experience.
- Representatives from service areas across children's services and the partnerships working with young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Senior leadership and their vision for participation and engagement.

We have also referenced and considered local documents including:

- Buckinghamshire's Children & Young People's Partnership Plan 2019 – 2024.
- Children's Service Plan.
- Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023.
- Corporate Values Proud, Ambitious, Collaborative, Trustworthy (PACT).
- Buckinghamshire Partnership Early Help Strategy 2019 - 2022.
- Buckinghamshire's Equality Objectives.
- Buckinghamshire's Equality Policy 2020 –2023.
- SEND Co-Production Pledge 2021.
- OFSTED services inspection 2018 and 5 monitoring visits between 03 July 2018 – 24th February 2021.
- Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Additionally, we have taken guidance from:

- Department for Education's Government Design Principles.
- Department for Education's Participation of young people in education, employment or training.

- Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies (Gov.uk)
- Plain English Campaign
- UN Conventions for the Rights of the Child

10. Contact

If you would like to speak to us about this strategy you can contact us by emailing youthvoicebucks@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or by calling 01296 382583.



Appendix A – Champions’ Participation Research

	Current Youth Participation Activities	Vision for Youth Participation	Barriers to Overcome to Achieve Vision	Impact of the Vision	Opportunities
Youth Offending Service	<p>Young people are consulted on their individual intervention plans as part of the assessment process. They complete a self-assessment that gives feedback on various elements of their life which is then triangulated with information gathered from other sources. We have involved young people in recruitment processes in the past and gather feedback from every young person at the end of their intervention, asking them about each stage of the criminal justice</p>	<p>We gather feedback but I want to see us do something more meaningful with this and make positive, tangible change. I would love for a young person to attend our Partnership Board so strategic partners can hear their experiences first-hand and I would love to see the collective voice of young people within strategic decision-making processes. – Becky</p> <p>Have young people involved in the decision making and shaping of the YOS, including on a strategic level. Not only doing interviews but being transparent and honouring the weighting the YP panel have in interviews. Forming a pathway of opportunities including potential employment within the Council. - Lisa</p>	<p>Resources. Partnership buy in. Ensuring young people feel safe to share, both with professionals and other young people.</p> <p>Clear planning and process for staff including partners, supporting and training young people with a variety of forums to engage.</p> <p>Resources available in the community, resources available to the Youth Offending Service, having a digital platform would be helpful for young people to access as there is so much information and</p>	<p>Services are more effective and young people feel valued.</p> <p>Increased confidence, voice, transferable skills into their education/employment/family settings. Making a positive difference to make change to future services.</p> <p>Young people feeling more involved, young people feeling hopeful about the future, creating positive outcomes that can continue to benefit young people long after they've finished their contact with the YOS.</p>	<p>Young person to attend our Partnership Board</p> <p>Honouring the weighting the YP panel have in interviews</p> <p>Supporting and training young people with a variety of forums</p> <p>Access to opportunities and resources to help them develop the skills to avoid further contact with the system</p> <p>Training for senior leaders about youth engagement</p>

	<p>programme and supporting them to consider how they felt about each of these.</p> <p>Forming and sequencing action plans, feedback form at end of interventions, supporting with young people interview panels.</p> <p>Young people coming to the YOS are involved in their sentence planning, they give feedback on interventions, they are encouraged to make suggestions of how sessions will work best for them (e.g. appointments taking place in the community instead of the office, shorter sessions etc) and we try to accommodate this where possible.</p>	<p>For young people to be supported through their contact with the Criminal Justice System and be provided with access to opportunities and resources to help them develop the skills to avoid further contact with the system. – Melissa</p> <p>Resources. Partnership buy in. Ensuring young people feel safe to share, both with professionals and other young people.</p>	<p>jargon associated with the Criminal Justice System so an easy way for them to get local information about Court processes, opportunities (such as ETE) etc would be great</p>		<p>Develop copy/inset with young people to add to Youth Voice Buckinghamshire brochure site that explains the criminal justice system.</p>
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Family Support Service/ Children's Services Education	Youth Executive Voice group, SEND and Child Looked After Youth Voice Groups - the SEND and CLA youth voice groups are currently a little more developed than the executive group, with paid staff assigned to the running of the former as their main jobs. All 3 these groups include consultation, engagement activities and training	We would like to see participation embedded in strategic thinking and policymaking of services that affect them as well as the county. This includes a coherent strategy for making this work, including appropriate resourcing for youth participation	Staff resourcing, local authority processes including management buy-in and support, communication rules and policymaking	A county where young people and their communities feel safe, supported and empowered to contribute and live fulfilled lives.	<p>Decision-makers to offer a permanent invitation for young people in decision making spaces.</p> <p>Young people participate in recruitment of staff, particularly Youth Family Support Workers.</p> <p>Young people participate in further development the FSS Service provision, delivery and Family Centre spaces.</p> <p>Youth representative(s) attend and are active members of the EH Strategy governance group.</p>
Children in Care Team	From the Children in Care Team this includes: Direct work with children and young people by social workers to	We want the Children in Care Team to be a place where we are not just 'corporate parents' who do things for children and young people, but also do things with them. I want children and young	The Children in Care Team is just beginning to find stability after a time of overwhelming caseloads and changes of social workers. We	To have a service that keeps children and young people at the heart of all we do, to have better relationships for children and young people with their social workers,	<p>Disseminate Language that cares more widely</p> <p>Children and young people to come to</p>

	gather their views about their care plan. Inviting children and young people to attend CLA Reviews and PEP meetings.	people to be actively involved in saying what they want for their care plans (and for this to be reflected in the language we use in assessments and care plans), but also what they want from the service as whole. For example, to have direct feedback from children and young people about social work practice; to give them a voice that we listen to and make changes as a result. The expert in knowing what a social worker needs should do and be like, are the children and young people who we work with. I'd like children and young people to come to training sessions/team meetings to help my team to make sure they are always thinking about what work they do and why. Often as adults we can overcomplicate and create jargon filled processes. I want there to be simple, fun, and easy ways to provide feedback and to be involved.	are still concentrating on getting the basics right and there is a lot of work to do - so it's about what to focus on first. I think people can be stuck in their habits of how they practice social work - and to think about change can be difficult. People have caseloads that are too high so to add in any other work can feel/be overwhelming. A small proportion of children in care go to the participation group, so we're only getting feedback from a relatively small group compared to the number of children/young people in care.	where they feel listened to and their views are valued, and to know they are cared for. The journey into care is never going to be an easy one; it's related to trauma and loss. However, once children are in care, I want to make that experience as supportive and positive as we can.	training sessions/team meetings
Children and Young Adults Disability Service	Very limited for children and young people with additional needs in my service. There has recently been a	That children and young people with additional learning physical and medical needs are enabled to have their views and voices heard. If there were to be a participation job role that person	TIME, resources, accessibility. For our team engagement with other services education health etc is great but it would	They children and young people will feel empowered and heard.	Provide training about how to engage with young people who have additional or complex needs

	<p>consultation for the 0 to 25 CYA disability service and an agency we used to gather views with the young people but these were not with the young people with the most complex needs who our team support so I don't not feel it was a true reflection for our team. There are significant challenges to obtaining Children and young adults views. We have resource to obtain views within our team and we try to establish their views as best we can.</p>	<p>would need to have a good knowledge of children and young people with additional and complex needs.</p>	<p>need us all to work together to enable young people with complex additional needs to be heard.</p>		
Virtual School	<p>The young person is invited to every PEP and they can contribute verbally. They also complete a section of the ePEP with a trusted person in the education setting to help</p>	<p>To have a clearer view of the voice of young people, active engagement with young people through listening to their needs and trying to implement them where possible and if appropriate. – Trudi</p> <p>More ways for the young people to communicate with us, more</p>	<p>YP need to be able to access an online forum where they can get answers to queries and access help without going through a third party</p> <p>To be able to provide a way of getting</p>	<p>that YP feel validated through being heard.</p> <p>PEP will be relevant to the young person and reflect their plans for the future and the actions and support needed. It won't be just a process.</p>	<p>Develop an online forum for young people to ask questions about education</p> <p>Develop inset for Virtual School on the Youth Voice</p>

	prepare for the PEP meeting	input from them on what makes a good PEP meeting, more focus on their voice, wishes and ideas. - Sara	information to our young people more quickly, in a way they can interact with rather than keep going through the social worker and carers/key workers. To be more open to having leaving care ambassadors rather than always being risk averse to everything.		Buckinghamshire Website Create care leaver ambassador role within the virtual school
Children's Social Care (Court Team)	For my team it is completed through wishes and feelings/direct work, this can be useful but can also sometimes feel like a tick box exercise as often it doesn't end with a resolution.	I would like the voice of the child/YP to actually be heard. One of the missions was for the journey of the child to be clear throughout their SC involvement and to show the journey they had made etc. and it is shown but often through work completed by professionals e.g. LAC reviews but there doesn't seem to be an area that really shows the child participated to give their voice.	The team I work in is time limited and then moves over to another team, there are also staffing issues and the case load numbers are very high for the number of staff in the team, there just doesn't feel like there is enough time to cover everything.	It will hopefully get them the right services, it will enable them towards the future to know that they can speak up, it will give them a little bit of power (not sure that is the right word) in what happens in their future. It will enable them to work with professionals rather than against them.	Create a visual journey (infographic) to explain the journey into care
Education Psychology, Children's Services Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of our role as educational psychologists is to elicit and promote the voice of the CYP we are involved with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CYP will feel that they are able to participate meaningfully in decisions about them. All CYP will feel that their views are both heard and understood by adults working with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring all partners understand the needs and challenges to participation CYP face at an individual level across the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each CYP would feel meaningfully included in the various systems around them. Longer term, there would be a stronger sense of 	Education Psychology to offer training to the wider council Staff to be Makaton trained

	<p>in statutory processes such as an EHC needs assessment or Annual Review for an EHCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In promoting CYP’s views we use a range of tools and techniques to promote active participation, including consultation skills, solution focussed questioning, visual cues such as strength cards. • As well as trying to elicit their views we look to draft outcomes and targets based on the aspirations and interests centred around what the CYP has told us, in order to promote a sense of agency and ownership for the CYP over decisions being made for and about them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All CYP will know what happens to the information/views they share when we ask them to participate with county wide policy development. • All staff working with CYP in the county would be Makaton trained. • All staff working with CYP in the county would feel comfortable with and be using visual prompts and cues to aid communication with CYP. • All staff working with CYP in the county would have sound knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues and be sensitive to them when working with CYP. • CYP would rate all staff they encounter in the local authority as accessible if they were to rate us on a scale 1-10. • CYP would communicate having confidence in the adults they work with and feel they could share in an open and safe way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that we are ethical in how we seek participation of CYP and what we do with the information we gather. • Ensure funding and time is available for appropriate training. • Consistent buy in and valued placed on participation strategies from senior leaders at the council. 	<p>community value and spirit amongst CYP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff would feel more equipped and confident in their skills and this in turn would have a positive effect of the relationships built with CYP. • The Local Authority would be identified as a leading advocate of inclusion and CYP engagement. 	<p>Campaign to get young people to ‘rate their worker’</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We also seek consent/assent from each CYP we work with. 				
Missing and Exploitation Hub	Using advocates, strength and difficulty questionnaires, direct relationship-based work.	We need better face to face consultation with our children and young people to support our understanding of what is important for them, how they want us work with them etc, this needs to be acted upon not just given lip service. For instance, having an advocate to voice the child's voice at conference, this needs to formulate part of the child's plan, even if what they are saying is not safe, it needs to be acknowledged in the plan and feedback to the child so that they know they have been heard and have some power over their own destiny. In addition, these plans need to be child/young person friendly, so that a child can truly be part of it. This needs to go further, children need to be part of formulating this and helping to create a process that can empower them. In my service, I would like to get to a point where we not only ask children to support our understanding but	Concerns about risk to the LA. For instance, asking young people to be champions/experts to support other young people, could be emotionally triggering for them, the LA would be concerned with regards to this risk. Although a young person is the expert in their own experience, there would also be concern that their experience may have created different norms and values which could be unsafe for to share with other children, all of this risk could be mitigated with good supervision and management	I would like children that have been victim of exploitation to help professionals understand what they found beneficial in the multi-agency response and what they found harmful/unhelpful, I would then like to create a program for these children to support other young people who are still being exploited, in terms of impact, I feel that this would empower victims too become mentors, improve trust with professionals and will also improve the response to children still being exploited, as they are more likely to talk to a peer and we are more likely to gain an understanding of what is actually important for the child rather than what we think is important to the child.	Care Leavers/Teenage ambassadors 'Peer to Peer' support programme

		get to a place where these young people are empowered enough to then support other children with similar circumstances.			
Help and Protection Team	In the Help & Protection Team direct work is completed with children and young people to determine their views and wishes. Before CIN or CP reviews children are invited to come along and share their views. Most children and YP choose to not attend but pass on their views to SW in consolation prior to meetings.	What I have found powerful in my role is when you receive service user feedback - for example from care leavers talking about their experiences and what they found supportive and what they didn't like such as how upsetting every day professional language like LAC can impact on young people and how this makes them feel. This makes you reflect and consider the language you use and record.	In the HAP team we support babies - 18 yr olds so this is a very varied age range to tailor a vision for. It's difficult as our goal is to not work long term with families its short interventions to then close or step down, so I am unsure how participation long term could look. It's also difficult with time constraints. Not everybody has the same training and approach.	If they look back at their case file in years to come, it needs to show their journey in a respectful and clear way that doesn't involve using professional jargon that can cause offence and make them feel unimportant.	Life story work Training for staff
Leaving Care	We do not have enough care leavers engaging in participation within the leaving care service, the youth/ participation team should work more collaboratively with	Care leaver can participate in reviewing our policies, procedures and standard documents & get involved in staff recruitment A video to send to our new care leavers to inform them what to expect from the leaving care	Motivating care leavers to participate Location and access Young people don't want to engage when they don't know anyone	The service will be tailored to meet the needs of our care leavers identifying what works and what doesn't work	Care leaver to be involved in reviewing policies, OFSTED inspections, attendance to national and local events and staff recruitment

	<p>care leaver, this needs to improve</p>	<p>team and transitioning into adulthood including Adult social care, CHC, Probation.</p> <p>A video to send to our care leavers re: 21-25 service</p> <p>Care leaver to be a “mentor” or care leaver champion with support and guidance from one of our PA’s</p> <p>Involvement with Ofsted inspections</p> <p>Involvement to organise events and forums e.g. LGBTQ+ care leaver forum and Diversity forum and national care leaver week.</p> <p>WhatsApp group for care leavers</p> <p>A care leavers group represents the views of care leavers aged 18 onwards. Perhaps meet once a month/ bi-monthly and discuss issues to do with leaving care and everything related to transitioning into adulthood and other Adult services, Adult social care, AMHT.</p>	<p>Young Parents - what activities can they do? Childcare?</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Out of county Care leavers</p> <p>Age-appropriate activities such as over 18 groups</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Being with other care leavers, conflict</p> <p>Having a label being a “care leaver” Care experience or former looked after – changing the language we use</p>		<p>Care leavers to develop media for other care leavers</p> <p>Care leaver as a mentor</p> <p>Organising events for other care leavers</p> <p>Development of a care leavers forum</p>
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		<p>Employment guarantee for care leavers - Employment Guarantee is an opportunity for care leavers to get extra support and experiences of work to help them get into employment. Work with ETE providers and DWP/ Bucks HR, work coaches, find local work experience places for care leavers</p> <p>Buckinghamshire to engage UK Artist (music, music management) www.apprenticenation.co.uk ETE opportunities</p> <p>Accessible venue - in a safe and comfortable environment</p> <p>Not using labels such as; “care leaver” Care experience or former looked after – but look at changing at the language we use</p> <p>Care leaver to participate in national Bench Catch 22 – forum</p> <p>AQA awards to be implemented to our care leaver</p>			
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Appendix B - Opportunities by Service Area

This table highlights the opportunities for young people to engage in service areas identified from the Champion's Programme.

Opportunity	Service Area
Young person to attend our Partnership Board Honouring the weighting the YP panel have in interviews Supporting and training young people with a variety of forums Access to opportunities and resources to help them develop the skills to avoid further contact with the system Training for senior leaders about youth engagement Develop copy/inset with young people to add to Youth Voice Buckinghamshire brochure site that explains the criminal justice system.	Youth Offending Service
Decision-makers to offer a permanent invitation for young people in decision making spaces. Young people participate in recruitment of staff, particularly Youth Family Support Workers. Young people participate in further development the FSS Service provision, delivery and Family Centre spaces. Youth representative(s) attend and are active members of the EH Strategy governance group.	Family Support Service, Children's Services Education
Disseminate Language that cares more widely Children and young people to come to training sessions/team meetings	Children in Care Team
Provide training about how to engage with young people who have additional or complex needs	Children and Young Adults Disability Service
Develop an online forum for young people to ask questions about education Develop inset for Virtual School on the Youth Voice Buckinghamshire Website Create care leaver ambassador role within the virtual school	Virtual School
Create a visual journey (infographic) to explain the journey into care	Children's Social Care (Court Team)
Education Psychology to offer training to the wider council Staff to be Makaton trained Campaign to get young people to 'rate their worker'	Education Psychology, Children's Services Education
Care Leavers/Teenage ambassadors 'Peer to Peer' support programme	Missing and Exploitation Hub

Life story work Training for staff	Help and Protection Team
Care leaver to be involved in reviewing policies, OFSTED inspections, attendance to national and local events and staff recruitment Care leavers to develop media for other care leavers Care leaver as a mentor Organising events for other care leavers Development of a care leavers forum	Leaving Care

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Youth Voice Bucks
Young people's version of the
Participation Strategy for young people
2022-25

YOUTH
VOICE
BUCKS

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Our Vision

'We aim to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.'



The Participation Strategy for Young People 2022-2025

What does participation mean?

Participation is about how we can involve you in different ways to hear your views and tell you about the action we will take as a result of what you have said. Participation activities include events, fun days out, forums, youth councils/boards, consultations, interview panels, mentoring councillors and more.



What is the Participation Strategy?

Our participation strategy document sets out how we plan to make sure that this happens, the actions we will take and the different ways we will engage with you to make sure your voice makes a difference.

In Buckinghamshire we want to create opportunities for you to talk about the things that matter to you. We want to create simple ways for you to get involved in things that are fun, to help us understand how we can provide you with the best services and for you to know what we will do with what you say. We are committed to making sure that you are listened to and that your views and ideas change the way we provide services for you.

We want you to share with us your views, ideas and thoughts because we believe that your voices are what we need to hear to make Buckinghamshire the best place for young people to live.





**Our mission to
engage with the
young people in
Buckinghamshire**



- **Listen**

listen to the views of young people in Buckinghamshire, ensuring we do so in ways that engage, respect the needs and ideas of the widest possible audience.

- **Act**

work with young people to build opportunities, services and a better future which meets young people's needs and which they are part of building

- **Respond**

respond to the needs, interests and inspirations of young people in a timely and transparent manner, so that their ownership and engagement are maximised

- **Repeat**

participation will be a process: we listen, act and respond and then we continue to review and develop by listening acting and responding.





What have we said we will do?

These are the top 3 actions that we will take to make sure that participation is the best it can be, that you have opportunities to share your views and that you can see the difference you have made.




1. Develop a new website

This website will tell you about all the exciting events and opportunities that you can get involved in, important information, who to contact and how you can join in. It will include fun activities, participation opportunities, training to help you develop your skills and forums that you can get involved with.

www.youthvoicebucks.co.uk

2. Re-brand participation activity

‘Youth Voice Bucks’ is the name that we have given to all of our participation opportunities and activities. We will use clear language so it’s easy for everyone to understand how to take part and there is a vibrant new look that will help you to recognise Youth Voice Bucks.





3.Change our culture

We want all our colleagues and council partners to understand that participation is everyone's responsibility. We have agreed some ways to change our culture in the Council to make sure that there are lots of opportunities to hear your views and involve you in making decisions and developing services. We will provide training to staff to make sure they have the skills to create opportunities to involve you, listen to you, act on what you say and tell you what they did as a result.

We will have a group of staff called 'Participation Champions' who will be leading on this activity for their own teams but come together as a group to ensure participation is joined up.



Our 3 Rules of Engagement

We have 3 rules ensure we engage with young people ethically and authentically.



Rule 1:

We don't ask young people to do something we would not do ourselves.

Rule 2:

If we want young people to engage in service development, we provide them with development opportunities to ensure they have the skills to do so.

Rule 3:

We only engage with young people if we have a clear strategy about how we will listen, respond and act in a timely, transparent manner that maximises young people's ownership.





Youth Voice Bucks –
the team that **listen**
to you!




What we do

Youth Voice Bucks aims to bring together all youth participation activity across the Council and its local partners. Our mission for young people is clear: we will listen to you, act on your views and then tell you what difference you have made.

Who we are

Youth Voice Bucks has a core team of staff who run the following projects:

- Youth Voice Executive Committee (including Ambassadors from each Community Board area)
- We Do Care
- Shout Out For SEND



These are not the only opportunities we offer you. We are clear that youth participation is the responsibility of everyone who works with young people and we support our colleagues across the Council and partners to understand how to offer meaningful participation opportunities to the young people they work with.

We are also pleased to have an ambitious group of staff who are our 'Participation Champions' actively committed to offering you opportunities to get involved and have your voice heard.



Contact Us:

If you would like to speak to us about this strategy you can contact us by emailing youthvoicebucks@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or by calling 01296382583

YOUTH
VOICE
BUCKS

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The Care Leaders training

The importance of belonging
Thurs 25th August 12:30 – 14:00

Gymtherapy: Trauma, the embodied self and expression
Thurs 22nd Sept 12:30 – 14:00

The importance of mentoring & building positive relationships
Thurs 20th October 12:30 – 14:00

An Introduction To Youth Engagement & Your Call to Action
Thurs 17th November 12:30 – 14:00

Participation and Leading with Love
Thurs 15th December 12:30 – 14:00

**Book via
Eventbrite:**

**Ctrl + click
session title on
the left to open
the Eventbrite
page**



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Children’s and Education Select Committee (Chairman: Julie Ward, Scrutiny officer: Katie Dover)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
3 November 2022	Update on Children’s Mental Health (CAMHS to present)	To receive an update on service provision following the increased demand post-Covid	Richard Nash/John Macilwraith	CAMHS representative Anita Cranmer John Macilwraith
	Children Missing from Education	For the Select Committee to receive a report on children missing from education, and in particular vulnerable children and those with EHCP, traveller children	Gareth Drawmer	Gareth Drawmer John Macilwraith
	Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Annual Report	To receive an annual report 2021/22 from the Partnership Chairman	Richard Nash/Francis Habgood/John Macilwraith	Chairman of the Partnership John Macilwraith
26 January 2023	Education Standards Report	For the Select Committee to receive the assessment outcomes for the years 2021/22 for children and young people in Buckinghamshire	Simon James	Simon James Anita Cranmer John Macilwraith
	Education Strategy 2022-27	To receive an update on the agreed Strategy	Simon James	Simon James Anita Cranmer John Macilwraith
	Update on progress of recommendations on Social Worker recruitment & retention report	For the Select Committee to receive an update on departmental progress against the recommendations in the rapid review group’s report	Richard Nash	Richard Nash Anita Cranmer
	Update on Progress of SEND Written Statement of Action	The first update following the report to 30 th June 22 Select Committee on the SEND inspection	Richard Nash	Richard Nash John Macilwraith
23 March 2023	Fostering and Adoption Service	To receive an overview of the service and hear progress through 2021/22	Palvinder Kudhail	Anita Cranmer Richard Nash

				John Macilwraith
	MacAlistair report – independent review of children’s social care	Information report update	Palvinder Kudhail	Palvinder Kudhail
	Out of County Placements	To update the committee on the current challenges with regards to out of county placements	Richard Nash/John Macilwraith	John Macilwraith