

Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 July 2017

Summary of Minutes from Children and Families Partnership

20 March 2017



**County Durham Children
and Families Partnership**

Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge

The Children and Families Partnership was awarded gold commendation, the highest level of recognition by the Children's Commissioner, for the successful events, which took place as part of the Takeover Challenge in 2016.

Organisations opened their doors to children and young people as part of the Takeover Challenge, which is an England-wide event where organisations are encouraged to involve children and young people in decision-making. Over 3,500 young people took part in a range of activities and were able to see what it was like to 'take over' key roles and share their thoughts. Young people benefited from having their views heard, having fun and being inspired, and partners gained a fresh, unique and creative perspective on important issues.

Following the success of the Takeover Challenge, the Children and Families Partnership are championing this initiative and encouraging partners to consider how engagement with children and young people can take place throughout the year.

Children and Families Partnership Priorities

At the meeting on 20th March, the Partnership agreed the following three strategic priorities due to their substantial impact on outcomes for children and families:

- Reducing Child Poverty
- Building Resilience
- Best Start in Life

The Children and Families Partnership will continue to receive updates on key issues that affect children, young people and families, for example the youth employment initiative and Stronger Families programme.

Young People's Mental Health

Young people, supported by Investing in Children attended the meeting to give an update on outcomes following their involvement in the CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) review and providing feedback on the Children and Young People's Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Transformation Plan, including:

- Establishing an urban art group in Durham City, to provide peer support and help close the gap between transitions from CAMHS to adult mental health services.
- Setting up a young adults support café called Y-ASC, which was established as a place for young people to meet up before the urban art group. The café provides peer support for young people who are not interested in being part of the art group, but who benefit from the support in a safe environment.
- Young people from these groups are developing a cart to enter into the Red Bull Soap Box competition with the slogan 'powered by ADHD' to raise awareness and break down stigma attached to mental health.
- A peer mentoring project is being piloted in Seaham High School and North Durham Academy, in response to feedback Investing in Children received in relation to increasing the understanding of mental health issues in school.

Engagement with Children and Young People

The Children and Families Partnership is committed to ongoing dialogue with young people to ensure that they are integral to the development of key areas of work to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Partners agreed a more active, coordinated approach to engagement with children and young people moving forward, where they will share feedback and outcomes from their own engagement activities allowing them to be utilised by others. The new approach will:

- Maximise resources and funding
- Develop relationships between partners and provide opportunities to share best practice
- Avoid duplication and encourage feedback, ensuring that children and young people don't feel over consulted and undervalued
- Allow us to identify gaps in County Durham's engagement activities so we can ensure engagement is reflective and representative
- Maximise engagement outcomes.

A web based SharePoint site has been created to record and capture the range of engagement with young people taking place across the county, and all partners are being encouraged to access, utilise and contribute to this.

The new approach aligns with Durham County Council's Transformation Programme vision to better meet the needs of residents at reduced cost and move partnership working from good to great.

Please contact Jayne.watson@durham.gov.uk if you would like further information or a demonstration of the SharePoint site, or require IT access.