

People Scrutiny Commission

6 December 2023

Public Forum



Public Forum Questions

Ref	Name	Topic
Q1-2	Jen Smith (not attending)	SEND and Transformation Program



PUBLIC FORUM - QUESTIONS

Question 1 – 2, Jen Smith

Q1: Exactly how many Send children and young people are involved right now in designing 'effective services' compared to the entire Send population of children and young people in Bristol?

Officer Response

To support us to hear and act on the voice of children and young people, Bristol City Council commissions the SEND Participation Service. The service aims are to enable children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to share their collective experiences of education, training and children's services, with a view to inform the design, delivery and evaluation of future services for children and young people with SEND, at a local, regional and national level.

The Service is currently delivered by WECIL and is called the Listening Partnership. There is participation group that meets up to 3 times a month. The service works with at least 30 children and young people aged 11-25 and is required to bring in 5 new members every year to create a flexible and evolving membership. The service also has two co-opted members who sit on the Youth Council.

The Council, and other bodies in the city, can attend the group's meetings to ask for their input into service design and evaluation. This input can take many different forms and may evolve into a larger piece of work. An example of this is the advisory board that was set up to advise on the construction of the new independent living centre at City of Bristol College (Project Rainbow)

The service's role is to enable young people to:

- Understand their rights and the rights of the children and young people they are representing
- Develop the skills and confidence to participate in decision making.

We expect that young people will feel:

- Empowered to express their views
- Listened to
- That their contributions are making a difference.

Our Families Programme is a portfolio of projects and thereby as portfolio in its own entity has not directly consulted with young people, however the individual projects where appropriate have or will be engaging with young people/families/carers. Some of these projects have started to do this e.g., HTST process redesign consulted with Parents/Carers panel, and some of the projects are still in their infancy and therefore not at that stage for consulting with young people/families/carers. Some projects simply are improving internal processes and therefore will not involve consultation with young people/parents/carers.

For the Top Up consultation, we produced an Easy Read copy of the survey which has been shared with schools and other VCSE organisations, who have been encouraged to support young people to complete and submit the form.

Q2: I have two Send young people. Not once have they been approached or invited in any way to involve themselves in inputting their opinion into the development and improvement of Send services. Exactly how does Bristol City Council plan to reach the voices of children and young people.

All of the voices, every single one of them to ensure they have the opportunity to be represented? As it's clear whatever's in place at the moment does not work.

In the previous 6 months the participation service has been involved in:

- Peoples Voice Feedback and Consultation (5)
- Bristol University Best Interests Research (8)
- The CYN Exhibition display and possibly using the brain to illustrate mental health and disability (8)
- Disabled Women Take Action – Collaboration (9)
- BDEF transport survey
- Disability and LGBTQ+ Allyship Event (2)
- Consultation with Access Sport around neurodiversity training and gathering Young People's views into the session (6)
- CYP SA Self Advocacy group
- Project Rainbow (6)
- FLARE.

**Numbers in brackets represent the young people attending. Where a number is not shown, we do not hold this data.*

These specific sessions are alongside the regular sessions run by the group, where the focus is on young people led campaigns.

The service also has a strategic function to be an advocate and amplifier of children and young people's voices.

The service is regularly promoted via schools, youth groups and social media.

Young people are encouraged to self-refer to the group. If you feel that your young person would benefit from attending then you or they can contact WECIL here [Youth services - WECIL - Supporting Independent Living](#).

The service is working well it is meeting its key performance indicators, for example the service has recruited 7 new young people against a target of 5. We recognise that the numbers are low compared to the overall numbers of children and young people with SEND in the City. However, the service does provide an insightful, rich, powerful, and diverse voice. Feedback from children and young people has shown that the service is well regarded, and that young people feel their voice is making a difference. Feedback includes *"I feel that LP is a safe space to feel myself and give my views in a group that understands me."*

The council undertakes regular contract monitoring of this service to ensure it is meeting our expectations and is representative of the wide and diverse population of the City. We monitor ethnicity, gender, where children and young people live in the city and what needs they have.

Outside of the SEND participation service we engage children and young people as part of consultation process, creating easy read documents and online surveys.