

Report Title: Here Children and Young People’s Plan Consultation Feedback

Date of meeting:	4 th December 2024		
Report to:	Sefton Health & Wellbeing Board		
Report of:	Jayne Vincent, Consultation and Engagement Lead		
Portfolio:	Strategic Support		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	Yes / No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes / No
Exempt/confidential report:	Yes / No		

Summary:

The Children and Young People’s Partnership Board has agreed to update the Children and Young People Plan, and an extensive consultation has taken place between February and May 2024. This report provides information on the key findings of the consultation.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) To note the report.
- (2) To consider the findings when developing Strategy, policy, and commissioning intentions.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Sefton Council has just updated its Corporate Plan which sets out our ambitions for Sefton for 2024 – 2027. One of our top priorities is for Sefton to be an inclusive, child friendly borough where children and families thrive. To support this aim, it was agreed to update our Children and Young People’s Plan.
- 1.2 The Children and Young People’s Partnership Board is leading on updating the Children and Young People’s Plan, considering the longer-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit and the current cost of living crisis. It was agreed that there was a need for a

three-year plan for all children, young people, and their families in Sefton, focussing on what is important to them.

1.3 The Children and Young People's Partnership Board agreed to keep the themes Heard, Happy, Healthy and Achieving but agreed to add the theme of Safe. The following seven proposed priority areas were identified, which were consulted upon.

- 1) Ensuring that children are safe, and that we protect those at risk of harm.
- 2) Strengthen families and build resilient communities.
- 3) Placing children and young people at the core of the decisions we make about them.
- 4) Getting the most out of life by through play, leisure, culture, and sporting activities.
- 5) Protect children and young people from discrimination and advance equality and opportunity for all.
- 6) Reduce health inequalities and support families to live healthy lifestyles.
- 7) High aspirations, opportunities and achievement for all children and young people.

2. The Consultation Process

- 2.1 It is really important that the voice of the child and young person is at the centre of the Children and Young People Plan and we worked very closely with the Primary and Secondary Associations of Headteachers, the Strategic Youth Voice Steering Group, the voluntary, community and faith sector, our workforce, and our local communities.
- 2.2 The partners helped us to design the consultation materials, facilitated engagement sessions and distributed materials. They helped us engage children and young people so that we can understand what makes them happy and unhappy, what they are doing to keep healthy, what they are proud of and their hopes for their future, the things that make them feel safe and unsafe and if they are listened to and if not, how that makes them feel. We also asked our adult population and people who work or support children and young people for their views too.
- 2.3 The consultation and engagement process took place from the 12th February until 10th May 2024. It included a wide range of methods including the SHOUT survey for children and young people aged 8 - 19 years (25 years for those with SEND), an online public survey, an engagement workbook, observations in early years settings, stakeholder briefings and presentations to partnership boards, a dedicated social media campaign and a video promoting the consultation, involving children and young people.

During that period, we engaged with:

- 3,102 responses to the SHOUT survey, from 56 schools and colleges.
- 91 children and young people attended two SEND Youth Conferences.
- 69 children and young people completed the engagement workbook, including young carers, Buddy-Up, youth service.
- 133 children and young people took part in surveys and research for cared for and care experience.
- 712 wellbeing and involvement observations of pre-school children.
- 239 responses to the public survey.
- Over 200 views of the consultation video.

3. Summary of the Consultation Results.

3.1 The following are key messages from the SHOUT survey and all the consultation and engagement activity:

- Children and young people feel safe at home and younger children value a supportive family. They also feel safe when doing leisure activities. They feel less safe when alone, in the dark, in the park and more police presence and better street lighting would help. Some older young people - 28% of 12 – 16-year-olds and 26% of 17+ also don't feel safe on public transport.
- A significant number of children and young people said that they have experienced some form of bullying – verbal, physical and online; 23% of 8 – 11 years olds had experienced some form of bullying and 53% said that it makes them unhappy or sad. Over 38% of children and young people aged 12 – 16 years have experienced verbal bullying and 15% have experienced physical bullying and 24% online bullying, whilst nearly 43% of young people aged 17+ said that they have experienced verbal bullying, with less experiencing online (24%) and physical bullying (20%).
- Approximately two-thirds of people who completed the public survey feel satisfied that Sefton is a place for children and young people to grow up in and live and is a place that is welcoming and inclusive to all children and young people and 53% believe Sefton is a place where people get on well together. Children and young people also reported that they like where they live as they are near friends, the shops, and the park. They say that being with family and friends makes them happy.
- Children and young people are largely positive about the involvement in life decisions and feel listened to, but there are a group who feel that their contributions are not acted upon. They feel annoyed, sad, angry, upset and unhappy if they are not listened to. Involving people with lived experience and including the voice of the parent and carer is important.
- A significant number of children and young people take part in exercise or sports and they like having fun and being active and join leisure and social activities to socialise. In the public survey, a significant number of respondents feel that there should be more free and inclusive activities and investment in parks and 84% of the respondents to the public survey are concerned about the cost-of-living crisis. It is possible that the cost-of-living crisis is impacting on children and young people partaking in leisure activities.
- Sefton is a diverse borough with many communities with different needs and equality of access and opportunity is important to all. As mentioned, respondents to the public survey are very concerned about the cost-of-living crisis and say that this and household income,

and having a child with special educational needs or disabilities are reported as contributing factors to the inequity.

- Whilst the experience of bullying is high for children and young people, the incidents are higher for children and young people who are Non-binary, Fluid or Transgender; 65% said they have experienced verbal bullying and a higher number of people have experienced both online and physical bullying, implying possible hate crime.
- Of the children and young people who said they don't feel safe on public transport, whilst a smaller number are male, 31% of 12 – 16-year-olds and 34% aged 17+ are female. For children and young people who are Non-binary, Fluid or Transgender, this is higher, with 43% of 12 – 16 years old and 41% 17+ saying they don't feel safe, implying possible hate crime.
- In the public survey, a cross-cutting theme was emotional and mental health and accessing support, with 73% being concerned about children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing and 74% concerned about accessing support. Mental health and wellbeing services was identified as the main gap when asked about the priorities.
- The cost-of-living crisis is a concern for children and young people aged 12+, with 20% of 12 – 16 years and 38% of 17+ say that the cost-of-living crisis is affecting their mental health/emotional wellbeing.
- In the public survey, there are reports that family circumstances may be having an impact on family members and children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Timely access to a diagnosis and low intensity mental health support for neurodivergent children and young people is important. Talking to someone they trust can help but waiting times for talking therapies is too long.
- Some members of the public and people who work with children and young people are concerned about the waiting times for health services, including dentists, GP's, and hospital appointments, with feedback referring to the long waiting lists having an impact on children and young people, school attendance and family life.
- On school days, 76% of 8 – 11-year-olds always eat breakfast and lunch and 20% eat lunch but not breakfast. As children become older more of them skip breakfast with 40% of 12 – 16-year-olds saying that they eat lunch but not breakfast. Notably, 11% of 12 - 16-year-olds don't eat either. Just under half (48%) of 12 – 16-year-olds and over half (52%) of 17+ report they regularly eat junk food.
- Half of children and young people aged 12 – 16 years and 41% of young people aged 17+, say that body image causes them anxiety and is affecting their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- On average, 58% young people aged 12+ feel anxious and worry about tests and exams and 57% of respondents to the public survey are also concerned about tests and exams and the impact on children and young people. There are also a cohort of children and young people who say that attending school and college affects their mental health and wellbeing; 38% of 12 – 16-year-olds and 28% 17+, respectively.
- Approximately two thirds (65%) of children and young people aged 8 – 16 years are hopeful about the future, but they are also worried (41% of 8 – 11-year-olds) and anxious (56% of 12 – 16-year-olds) too.
- Children and young people have many achievements and are proud of these, and 80% children and young people aged 12 – 16 years and 84% aged 17+ have a plan for the future. Preparation for adulthood, managing money, being able to live independently and affordable housing are essential to support this.
- A key findings report is attached at Appendix 1 and this is also supported by a full suite of annex reports/documents.

4. Feedback

- 4.1 The findings of the consultation and engagement were presented to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board in August 2024 and will be used to help develop the updated Children and Young People's Plan and Action plan. The findings can also be used to support the development of other corporate and partner strategies and plans.
- 4.2 A presentation on the Key Findings has also been given to the Strategic Youth Voice Steering group, the SEND Co-production Group, and the Corporate Equality Group.
- 4.3 The findings have been used as part of the Southport Recovery Profile.
- 4.4 Sefton Communications Team are providing support to design some feedback materials for children and young people and other stakeholders.
- 4.5 Information will also be available on the Your Sefton Your Say Consultation Hub.
- 4.6 The findings and a You Said, We Did will be shared with children and young people at the SEND Youth Conferences in March 2025.

5.Future engagement.

- 5.1 Engagement with the Strategic Youth Voice Group will continue to ensure that the feedback materials are distributed. The Steering Group will also be considering how to monitor the engagement and youth voice against the priority areas and report to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.
- 5.2 The programme for the Have Your Say Sefton youth voice group is already considering the findings and a recent engagement on transport and travel was informed by the findings from the SHOUT surveys with children and young people.

Financial Implications

No financial implication – consultation feedback

Legal Implications

No legal implication – consultation feedback

Corporate Risk Implications

No corporate risk implications – consultation feedback.

Staffing HR Implications

No staffing HR implications – consultation feedback

Conclusion

The extensive engagement that was carried out with the support of partners saw us engaging with 3395 children and young people and 239 members of the public and people who work with and support children and young people.

Developing the Children and Young People's Plan 2024 – 2027 will help us with the delivery of our Corporate Plan and it is important that we continue to involve children and young people as we develop and implement our Children and Young People's Plan.

The findings can also be used to support the development of other corporate and partner strategies and plans and commissioning intentions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Equality Implications: The equality Implications have been identified and will form part of the Equality Impact Assessment for the Children and Young People Plan.
Impact on Children and Young People: The consultation's focus was on child and youth voice and this informing the update of the Children and Young People Plan.
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD.7856/24.....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5956/24.....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The focus of this report is the consultation findings for the consultation on the Children & Young People Plan.

Implementation Date for the Decision:

Following the meeting of the Sefton Health and Wellbeing Board.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

CYPP Consultation – Key Findings September 2024.