

Committee:	Date:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	5 February 2014
Subject: City Youth Participation Strategy	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision

Summary

The draft Youth Participation Strategy has been developed by City Gateway, alongside partners involved in youth work. It uses City Gateway's 'SILENT, SAY, DO, DECIDE' model of engagement to set out various mechanisms to engage young people, including consulting young people and working with vulnerable groups, the use of SPICE time credits, Youth Advisors and Youth MPs.

The strategy dovetails with the development of a departmental user engagement strategy, and a combined action plan will be developed once the strategy has been agreed.

Each partner organisation, or potentially team if the organisation is large, which has signed up to the strategy will nominate a participation champion to lead the monitoring of their service's input into the strategy.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- comment on the draft strategy
- suggest actions that they would wish to commit to which could form part of the action plan (including considering taking part in youth participation champion training)
- agree to receive updates on the implementation of the plan from the CEB (Children's Executive Board)

Main Report

Background

1. Members received a Committee report at the January Grand Committee setting out the progress made against the 2013–2015 Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). Members will recall that one of the seven key priority areas identified for action within the CYPP is User Engagement.

2. The report set out the CYPP focus on the participation of children and young people in children's services so that they are active participants in the governance of services and how they are delivered. The report also gave an outline of the progress being made in developing a Youth Participation Strategy.
3. City Gateway was commissioned in 2013 to deliver on three of the five strands of youth work (Strand 2: Targeted Support; Strand 3: Youth Engagement and Participation; and Strand 4: Universal Services and Overall Co-ordination). City Gateway has been leading on the development of the Youth Participation Strategy as part of the work for Strand 3 and the co-ordination element of Strand 4.

The Youth Participation Strategy

4. The strategy has been developed using City Gateway's key principles and the national 'Hear by Right' benchmark. Hear by Right is based around the 'Seven S' model for organisational change: Shared Values, Strategy, Structure, Systems, Staff, Skills and Knowledge, and Style of Leadership.
5. City Gateway has used their 'SILENT, SAY, DO, DECIDE' model of engagement and has developed the strategy through in-depth discussions with young people with whom they have contact and using a variety of consultation methods. The strategy has also been influenced by the workshop at the Looked After Children Celebration Event in October 2013, led by City Gateway.
6. In order for any strategy to be influential and work well, all partners must buy into the principles, have an influence over its direction and commit to the direction of the action plan. All partners have been consulted on the development of this strategy at partnership meetings organised by City Gateway and their feedback has been taken into consideration as the strategy has been developed.
7. The strategy sets out the principles for participation (page 2) and explains the differences between each stage of the 'SILENT, SAY, DO, DECIDE' model (pages 4–11).
8. For each of these stages, the strategy sets out various mechanisms to engage young people, including: a) SILENT voice (gathering and reviewing data and data-sharing; b) SAY (young people raising issues, consulting young people and working with vulnerable groups); c) DO (principles of co-delivery, SPICE and rewarding volunteering, mix and match job descriptions and training); and d) DECIDE (making recommendations to decision makers, Youth Advisors, Youth MP and YES Group).
9. The strategy is supported by a number of appendices, include City Gateway's action plan, key performance indicators and good practice models, young leader job descriptions, a youth participation champion's template monitoring report and a draft consultation calendar. These are all still at draft stage and subject to feedback and input from partners.

10. The strategy is currently in draft form, is continually evolving following feedback from partners and has therefore not been spell checked – this will take place at the end of the consultation process.

Corporate parent influence and involvement

11. While City Gateway has been commissioned for work with young people aged 10–19, the Youth Participation Strategy does include looked after children, including those living outside the City of London, who may be under the age of 10.
12. The strategy highlights there are a number of groups of vulnerable young people who may need additional support to actively participate, and these include looked after children, care leavers and those not in education, employment or training (NEET). These groups are referenced throughout the strategy, including on page 6 as part of the ‘SAY’ section and page 10 as part of the ‘DECIDE’ element.
13. Each partner organisation, or potentially team if the organisation is large, which has signed up to the strategy will nominate a participation champion to lead the monitoring of their service’s input into the strategy. Members are asked to consider how they would wish to be involved in monitoring the implementation of the strategy.
14. Each champion will receive training from City Gateway to equip them with suitable skills for the role. This training is open to any Members who wish to participate. Members are also welcome to attend any sessions run by City Gateway for young people.
15. The Children’s Executive Board will receive a quarterly update on the action plan once it is finalised, and officers suggest that Members may wish to receive the most recent quarterly update as a standing item at each Safeguarding Sub Committee.

Links to departmental and corporate strategies

16. As a Department, we acknowledge that the majority of our services are delivered to support people, at whatever life stage they are, and that more joined-up work is needed to engage those people in designing, delivering and monitoring services. To complement the Youth Participation Strategy, a piece of work is under way within Community and Children’s Services to map user engagement and participation with a view to developing a departmental user engagement strategy. Each departmental team will be asked to consider the methods to engage with people who use services, using the Participation Triangle at Appendix 1.
17. The triangle merges the comparable housing and City Gateway models of participation to give an overall model for the Department. At workshops built into team meetings, teams are then asked to commit to a couple of

actions that they will undertake to meet any identified gaps or to move people 'up the Participation Triangle'. These actions will be used to develop a departmental user engagement strategy and any actions which are relevant to young people will automatically form part of the action plan for the Youth Participation Strategy. In this way, the City of London can actively commit to the Youth Participation Strategy and act as a strategic leader for other partners involved in the strategy.

Next steps

18. The final version of the strategy is out for consultation with partners at the time of writing the report. Subject to final comments by Members (of the Safeguarding Sub-committee), partners and the Children's Executive Board (21 February), the strategy will be completed and adopted by the end of February. The action plan which will implement the strategy will be developed through commitment from Members at today's Committee, partners' meetings (including the 27 February meeting) and Community and Children's Services team meetings for the user engagement strategy (throughout February). The final action plan and associated progress will be presented to the next Safeguarding Sub Committee for information.

Corporate and strategic implications

19. The strategy fits with the City of London's aim to consult with and involve service users in the development of services and more specifically the 'User Engagement' priority within the CYPP. It also meets the departmental business plan key priorities 'Promoting independence and choice for service users' and 'Supporting and empowering our communities and enabling people to make a positive contribution'.
20. Any future Ofsted inspection would consider how children and young people are involved in service design, how they have a say in their care and how they have opportunities to voice their concerns. The strategy is therefore a key mechanism for involving young people and for evidencing the City's and partners' engagement of children and young people.

Conclusion

21. The Youth Participation Strategy is an important tool for Members who are corporate parents to satisfy themselves that young people and looked after children are actively engaged in the development of services. The development of the strategy marks an important shift away from the City developing and providing services *for* young people towards the City developing services *with* young people.

22. Members are asked to comment on the draft strategy, suggest actions that they would wish to commit to which could form part of the action plan, and discuss the proposed monitoring of the strategy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Participation Triangle
- Appendix 2: Draft Youth Participation Strategy
- Appendix 3: Participation Strategy Draft Appendices

Background paper

Community and Children's Services Committee January 2014 – Children and Young People's Plan Update Report

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