

Rhondda Cynon Taf Children's Services

Participation- End of Year
Summary report

2022-2023



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1. Background to the Participation Strategy

The Graduate Officer for Participation joined Children’s Services on 7th June 2022. Meetings were held with the Children’s Services Senior Management Team (CSMT) in June and July 2022 to find out how the voices of children and young people were evidenced through participation and co-production. Refreshing and embedding staff knowledge about rights-based approaches was conducted through a Participation Workshop by Policy leads from the Children’s Commissioner for Wales in June 2022. The rights-based principles forms part of the draft Participation Strategy that was developed in October 2022.

1.1 Voices from Care Cymru (VFCC) Participation activities 2022-2023

From July 2022 to February 2023, Voices from Care Cymru held a range of Participation events for care experienced young people. This was through their ‘Sky’s the Limit’ project for 8- to 13-year-olds and ‘Local Group’ for 14–22-year-olds. This was in response to direct feedback from a Children’s Services Participation event on 1st September 2022. Care experienced young people told Children’s Services that they would like more well-being initiatives, opportunities for meet ups with other care experienced young people, arts and crafts and nature-based activities (see appendix for the local RCT events and National events).

2. Children’s Services Participation event on 1.9.22

On the 1st September 2022, care experienced young people from the ages of 10 to 16 years old attended a participation event with engagement activities. The aim was to find out what has helped young people to grow (positives), what could help them to grow (what could be better) and engagement activities to support outcomes through display work (see appendix). 9 young people attended the event.

2.1 Summary of feedback from young people

Positives of being care experienced	What could be better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe adults.• Supportive foster carers/ key adults.• Being safe.• Stable environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health support.• Listening to the voices of young people.• Bullying in schools.• Fun activities for care experienced young people to come together to meet.

2.2 Children’s Services, Arts and crafts feedback event 3.2.2023

An arts and crafts feedback event was held at Pontypridd Museum and 6 young people attended along with their foster carers. This was part of a ‘You said, we did’ mechanism that will help inform future participation work with young people. Young people received feedback about the following:

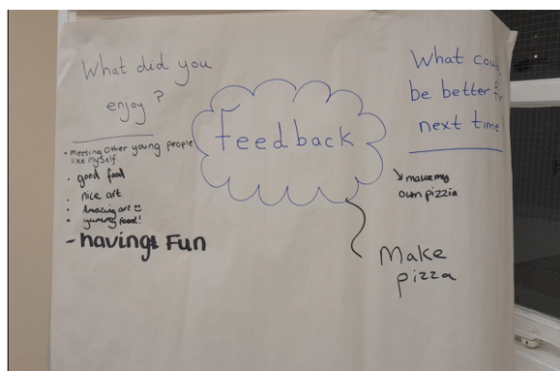
You said- 1.9.22	We did- 3.2.23
More well-being initiatives	A range of well-being initiatives through ‘Sky’s the Limit’ for 8- to 13-year-olds and the ‘Local Group’ RCT for 14- 22-year-olds
Listening to the Voices of Young People	Voices from Care Cymru have developed a wide range of local and national events and use feedback to inform the next events. Children’s Services also launched the ‘Get Involved’ survey for feedback from young people
Prevent bullying in schools	Discussed this information with the CLA Virtual Head Teacher and schools are working on their anti-bullying as part of the New Curriculum for Wales.

2.3 Summary of feedback from 3.2.2023

The feedback session on the 3.2.2023 received positive feedback. See the responses below:

Feedback

- What did you enjoy?
- What could be better next time?



‘...a massive thank you for Friday.’ (Foster carer)

Glows- positive

- Meeting other young people like myself.
- Good food.
- Nice art.
- Amazing art. 😊
- Yummy food.
- Having fun.

Grows- What could be better next time

- Make my own pizza
- Make pizza.

Foster carers comment verbally about her young person in year 6.

‘The fact that my foster daughter is asking me to leave when she arrives here is a big thing. She doesn’t normally enjoy social situations but really enjoys coming here. That is a compliment to you.’

3 The 'Get Involved' Survey

The 'Get Involved' survey was posted to **863** addresses of Children Looked After (561) and Care Leavers (302) from 4 to 24 years of age about their care experiences. The survey was also shared with Children's Services staff. The survey was open from the beginning of November 2022 to Friday 17th February 2023. There were **66** responses with just under an **8%** response rate.

The survey asked the following:

- What is going well (positives).
- What could be better (improvements to be made)
- How young people would like to get involved with Children's Services.

3.1 The 'Get Involved' Survey results

See the embedded links below that include the survey analysis, staff summary and survey infographics for children and young people.



'Get involved' survey results 7.3.23.pptx



Staff Summary of the 'Get Involved' survey



'Get Involved' survey results and feedback f

Survey infographics for children and young people have been shared through Children's Services staff networks (03.05.23) and shared via social media, YEPS, 16+ Team, CLA Virtual School, Residential, Foster care and Kinship care.

Positives (going well) for young people

- Education and learning opportunities.
- Seeing siblings.
- Youth club.
- Hobbies.
- Having a safe place.
- Safe adults to support young people.



What could be better...

4 to 10 years old

- Make sure young people know who their Social Worker is and other trusted adults.
- More activities in the community.
- Some young people want to know about their children's rights.

11 to 15 years old

- Looking at a range of different ways to keep in touch with family.
- Living closer to family.
- Wellbeing- to feel better about yourself.

16 to 24 years old

- More activities to do in the community.
- Access to information about mental health and wellbeing.
- Accessible information about Housing and tenancy support.
- Benefits support.



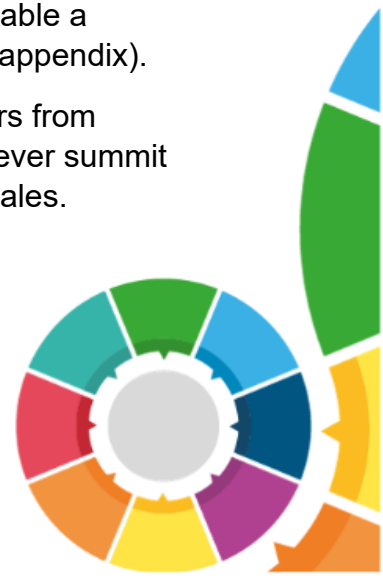
4. Key Themes/ Recommendations from the survey

- **Make sure that all trusted adults explain who they are.** Consider leaving child friendly information such as 'All about me' profiles or a child friendly letter to the young person before meeting them or with a change of Social Worker/ key member of staff.
- **Access to information.** To develop information in a range of formats that can be easily accessed and shared. Young people **16+** have told us they want easy access to information for benefits, housing, tenancy support and funding entitlements.
- **Children and young people have told us how they want to get involved.** They would like more in person meet up events, activities with nature, sports, arts and crafts and music and drama.
- **To look at different ways to keep in touch with family.** Young people have told us they would like more contact with their families.
- **Mental Health and wellbeing support.** Young people would like further support with their mental health and wellbeing activities.

5. Next Steps

- Meet with the Transforming Participation Steering group every quarterly to develop the implementation plan and key milestones for evidencing children and young people's voice.
- A task and finish group for developing public facing information for children, young people and families meets every 4 to 6 weeks to also include redeveloping the 'Two sides' website for care experienced young people.
- **A proposal** to facilitate an autumn workshop with care experienced young people to develop coproduction between the Corporate Parenting Board, Voices from Care Cymru and care experienced young people in RCT. This links to the signing of 'The Commitment' by the First Minister for Wales and Young Ambassadors (May 2023) for developing 'The Vision' for what radically reformed services should look like and should deliver for care experienced children and young people. It commits the Welsh Government to deliver a wide range of changes to the current care system to enable a 'children's first approach' in everything we do (see point 4 in the appendix).

The declaration was developed by a team of Young Ambassadors from Voices from Care Cymru and Welsh Ministers following the first ever summit (December 2022) for children looked after and care leavers in Wales.



Appendix

1. Voices from Care Cymru ¼ report (February 2023).



Update Report for
the Contract Review I

2. Voices from Care Cymru Corporate Parenting Board report (January 2023).



Voices from Care
Cymru Corporate Par

3. Children's Services feedback event (February 2023).



Participation
feedback event photo.

4. Welsh Government Radical Reform Summit (May 2023)



Care Experienced
Summit Declaration.p

