

Report from the Assistant Director, Partnerships and Early Intervention

## **Disabled Young People's Involvement**

### **Summary**

1. This report invites members of the Young People's Working Group to have exploratory discussions with representatives from the Youth Council about how to enable disabled young people to share their views and concerns with Members. The Junior A Team will also give an informal presentation and invite discussion about their proposal.

### **Background**

2. The needs of all young people are at the heart of the Children and Young People's Plan. Planning effective services for vulnerable young people, particularly disabled young people is a measure of the success of the council and a core ingredient of a cohesive, caring community. Effective planning is grounded in consultation and engagement with young people, leading to an understanding the issues these young people face.
3. In order to support this process the Head of Integrated Services for Disabled Children and two young people would like propose that the newly formed A team offer to become an Advisory Team that councillors are able to meet and talk with informally on a regular basis. The Show Me That I Matter Panel offers a model that would work well with disabled young people.
4. Members of the Young People's Working Group (YPWG) and Youth Council may like to discuss the merits of this proposal and the benefits that this would bring for themselves and the young people.

### **Topics for Discussion**

5. Listed below are some issues for consideration.
6. **Participation of disabled young people**
  - Participation of young people in decision-making is identified as a priority within the Children and Young People's plan.
  - Young people are represented through the Youth Council and this includes some disabled young people. Some may therefore argue that there is no need for a specialist group of disabled young people to consult with.

- However, many disabled young people benefit from significant support to facilitate understanding and enable them to consider issues and voice their views. It is difficult to achieve this effectively within limited timeframes within existing groups.
- There are two disabled young people who are currently members of the Youth Council. While this is very much to be commended, these two young people do not represent a wider population of young people from mainstream as well as special schools. It would be helpful for a broader group to be consulted with for Members to gain an understanding of the complexity of issues around disability.
- The Youth Council considers issues for all young people and this means that disability specific issues are unlikely to be on the agenda very often.
- The Speak Up, Meet Up group is run very successfully by one of the specialist teachers to support disabled young people who have a physical impairment to share their views and provide peer support for young people in mainstream schools. We would like to replicate this work of this group with young people with the whole range of impairments, particularly those with a learning difficulty, to enable their needs to be met with specialist support.
- The good practice evidenced in the Show Me That I Matter Panel has led to increased understanding of the needs of young people who are Looked After. It encourages active engagement and political awareness. This proposal would allow Members to offer the same opportunities for disabled young people.
- The A Team is currently run by Talkback in conjunction with Young People Services. Talkback is a self-advocacy organisation, whose role is to support young people and adults with learning difficulties to express their views with confidence: “to say a real ‘Yes’ and a real ‘No’.”
- Talkback work extensively with adults to support them to participate in the Valuing People Partnership Board, which, with multi agency professionals, makes decisions about services for adults with learning difficulties. By engaging with Talkback, we are providing increased learning about the very pressured time of transition from children’s services to adult services, for both young people and Talkback.
- Ownership of this group by Young People Services locates responsibility for supporting the voice of disabled young people within universal services. Young People’s Services have a wealth of experience and skill in enabling participation and this can valuably support this group.
- The proposal is to start with a small group and gradually build up the group to about 10-15 members, who would discuss issues and then elect representatives to meet with Members four or five times a year.

## **Corporate Priorities**

- 9 The issues discussed in this paper are consistent with the Council’s objectives to encourage children and young people to become active citizens, and to consult them about decisions that affect them.

## **Implications**

10. **Financial** implications: The A Team is currently funded through two sources. Aiming High for Disabled Children, Transition grant funds the commissioned

work of Talkback. This funding finishes at the end of March 2011. A small bid has been submitted to the Valuing People Partnership Board, VPPB, to support the transport and meeting costs of the group. A larger bid will be submitted shortly to the VPPB to support continued participation of young people with learning difficulties in transition. One aspect of this would be to continue the work of Talkback.

It is hoped that the support from Young People's Services will continue as part of the base budget beyond March 2011.

11. **Human Resources** implication: none immediately.
12. There are no **Crime and Disorder, IT or Property** Implications. This proposal fulfils the requirements of the **Disability Discrimination Act** amendments 2005 and **Single Equalities Bill 2010**. The provision of the A team arrangements will provide enhanced support and more time for disabled young people to understand issues and to be able to voice their views. These proactive arrangements fulfil the need for Local Authorities to provide 'reasonable adjustments' and 'positive discrimination where necessary', resulting in an equality of opportunity for disabled young people.

## Risk Management

13. There are no specific risks associated with this report.

## Recommendations

14. That the Young People's Working Group discuss the issues identified in this report and support the role of the A team, engaging with them four to five times a year.

Reason: To ensure the views of disabled young people are taken into account in Council decision-making.

## Contact Details

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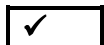
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### Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None