

Voice and Influence of Children and Young People

Date: 22nd February 2024

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Children and Families Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report seeks to provide an overview of how the Voice Influence and Change (VIC) Team engage with children and young people and how they enable children and young people to share their views, experiences and priorities with decision makers to enable them to influence change in strategic plans, policy and practice. It describes the team's partnership approach developed to enable children and young people to have a voice and influence change, including those who are often underrepresented or seldom heard. The report also provides examples of how children and young people have shaped services and includes by way of appendices the VIC team's latest annual summary report, six-monthly city-wide children and young people's voice and influence reports and Child Friendly Leeds Wishes Action Plan.

Recommendations

- a) Children and Families Scrutiny Board is recommended to note the work being undertaken.
- b) Children and Families Scrutiny Board to consider ways in which the Principal Scrutiny Advisor and Children and Families Scrutiny Board can work with the Voice Influence and Change team to enable board members to stay updated on key issues and priorities of children and young people and have more opportunities to hear from and respond to the voices of children and young people.

What is this report about?

This report seeks to provide an overview of how the Voice Influence and Change (VIC) Team engage with children and young people and how they enable children and young people to share their views, experiences and priorities with decision makers to enable them to influence change in strategic plans, policy and practice. It describes the team's partnership approach (Leeds Youth Voice Model and VIC network) developed to enable children and young people to have a voice and influence change, including those who are often underrepresented or seldom heard to be heard. The report also provides examples of how children and young people have shaped services and includes the VIC team's latest annual summary report, six-monthly city-wide voice and influence reports and Child Friendly Leeds Wishes Action Plan. The report provides an opportunity for scrutiny board members to explore and discuss how they can stay updated on key issues and

priorities of children and young people and have more opportunities to hear from and respond to the voices of children and young people.

Report Detail

1. What is voice and influence?

Children, young people and their parents and carers have a right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Having a voice and influence means they feel that their voices are listened to, valued and can influence decisions and actions. We use the term 'voice and influence' as children and young people have told us they want one definition, because there are so many different terms e.g., participation; empowerment; and active engagement, that it can be confusing.

Leeds has a bold ambition to be the best city for children and young people – a child friendly city. At the heart of making this a reality is a commitment to working restoratively with children and young people so that their voices are at the heart of decisions that affect them. There is strong evidence that working with children and young people wherever possible, instead of doing things to them or for them, produces better outcomes and helps to build confidence and resilience.

Giving a voice and influence to children and young people in decision making demonstrates our commitment to them and acknowledges their right to shape their own future. It increases trust and can enable positive change even in complex situations.

Practitioners can feel confident that decisions are informed by what children, young people and families say they want and need, which should lead to better quality services, saving money and using resources more effectively.

Working restoratively to listen and respond to the voices of children and young people is fundamental to front line-work that takes place every day across the city. Children and young people's voices should be considered at all levels:

- at an individual level: they are involved in making choices and influencing decisions about their own lives, for example co-producing their education, health and care plan or a child working with their teacher to agree their learning targets
- at a family level: all members of the family are involved in sharing their views, making choices and influencing decisions that affect their family. For example, a child and a range of their family members would be directly involved in developing an action plan at a Family Group Conference
- at a service level: they are involved in shaping and influencing how services they use are planned, delivered and evaluated. Feedback is sought in a range of ways and routinely informs service improvement, for example evaluating their service through using feedback forms or setting up a focus group to seek their views on what services should be offered.
- at a strategic level, they influence local or city-wide priorities and agendas, for example in staff recruitment panels for senior leaders or representing their peers on a city wide or local forum where they make recommendations or advise decision makers

For more information [One Minute Guide Leeds – Voice and Influence](#)

2. Why is it important?

Listening consistently to the voices of children, young people and families is central to the culture Leeds is working to create and this is evident in:

- the **Child Friendly Leeds 12 wishes** which were refreshed in 2022 and developed using the consultation findings which represented the views of over 80,000 children and young people

Child Friendly Leeds Wish 3 *‘Children and young people express their views, feel heard and are involved in decisions that affect their lives. Children and young people have a greater awareness of the different ways they can share their views and ideas. They know how to influence change within their school and community. They have access to support and training to develop their skills and confidence to enable them to have a voice and influence.’*

- the city’s **Children and Young People’s Plan 2023- 28**. One of the five outcomes in the Plan from the outset and in the refreshed plan is that... *‘All children and young people are active citizens who feel they have voice & influence’* and a core behaviour of all staff is to *“listen and respond to the voice of the child”*

Listening and responding to the voices of children and young people is also a right and a statutory duty for local authorities:

- article 12 of the **UN convention on the rights of the child**, which states that *‘every child and young person has the right to express their views freely – about everything that affects them’*
- Children’s Services has a legal duty to listen to the wishes and feelings of all children, including children in care. This is outlined in the landmark **Children Act of 1989**, which established this requirement as a ‘paramount principle’. All subsequent legislation and practice guidance has sought to reinforce this message as a key aspect of social care provision. The act makes clear the expectation that services will listen to children and young people both in relation to their own individual case and in terms of influencing design and delivery of services.
- **Childrens Act 2004** Places a duty on local authorities to ascertain children’s wishes and feelings when making decisions within child protection processes and ensure access to independent advice and support to enable children to express their views and influence decisions
- **Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children’s Services and the Lead Member for Children’s Services 2014** –to ensure effective arrangements are in place to ensure children and young people themselves are included in the scope of local authority planning, commissioning and delivery of children’s services and promote children’s and young people’s participation in public decision making.
- The **Children and Families Act 2014**, section 19 states that children and young people and their families should be involved in decision making at every level. This includes in commissioning services, in developing a local offer for children and young people with SEND, in developing and reviewing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and giving new rights to young people at 16+ to participate in decisions about their EHCP that were previously held by their parents/carers.
- **Children and Social Work Act 2017** introduced a set of **corporate parenting principles** to looked after children and young people and care leavers. Providing a framework for local authorities to enable them to comply with existing duties for looked after children and young people and care leavers. Two out of seven principles relate specifically to the voice of the child. Another key part of this act was to introduce the statutory requirement for local authorities to consult on and publish a local offer for its care leavers.
- **Working Together (updated 2023)** states that; “Children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system. These asks from children should guide the behaviour of practitioners.”

- **Children's Social Care National Framework (2023)** this statutory guidance puts the voices of children, young people and families at the heart of practice, so they can have a say in how they are supported. Key principle- children's wishes and feelings are sought, heard, and responded to. Key enabler- embed voices of children, young people and families in the design and delivery of services and support. Leaders put in place clear mechanisms for children, young people and families to raise concerns. They listen to the voices of children, young people and families and act on any complaints swiftly. Practitioners amplify the voices and feedback from children, young people, and families in respect of services.
- Such is the importance of the Voice of the Child that **Ofsted** considers it a key part of its inspection framework for local authorities.

3.Role of the Voice Influence and Change team

The Voice Influence and Change team is based in the Children and Families Directorate and was established in 2012. The team consists of 5 officers who are led by the Strategy and Influence Lead. The Strategy and Influence Lead has also been the lead for the Child Friendly Leeds Team since October 2020.

The role of the Voice Influence and Change team in Leeds City Council is to support and enable children, young people, parents and carers to have a voice and influence over services that are provided in our city. The team support staff across services by facilitating the participation of children, young people, parents and carers in the recruitment of senior roles and commissioning services. Providing advice and guidance on how to involve children, young people, parents and carers in different elements of service development, design and review. Promoting citywide voice and influence news and opportunities such as consultations, new groups and events to the networks

The team work in partnership with strategic boards, senior leaders and elected members and organise annual takeovers and opportunities for young people to share their views and priorities with decision makers. The team work also with representatives from support groups for parents and carers with children with SEND to share issues and meet with relevant managers and services and work in partnership with social care to help develop 'Let's Talk' sessions which enable feedback to Children's Social Care from families who have received social work input to their family.

The team facilitate a wide range of city-wide youth voice programmes including: 'Have a Voice' Children in Care Council, Care Leavers Council, SEND Youth Forum, Leeds Youth Council, Leeds Children's Mayor and UK Youth Parliament. The team deliver an annual SEND youth summit and Primary School Leeds Children's Mayor Summit. The team work in partnership with the Communities team and Community Committees to deliver community youth voice summits across the city.

The team are also responsible for the coordination of the [Leeds SEND local offer](#) which provides information about education, health and social care services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents or carers. The team run an annual Leeds Local Offer event and facilitate monthly Leeds Local Offer drop-in sessions for families.

For more information about the team –

Appendix 1 Voice influence and Change team – Plan on a Page 2023/24

4. How do the VIC team engage with children and young people and enable them to share their views, experiences and priorities with decision makers?

The VIC team have three strands of work to support engagement with children and young people:

Universal Work strand is focused on working in partnership with staff and children and young people they support in universal settings such as early years, schools, colleges, specialist provision, health, voluntary and community groups, youth groups and youth voice groups. The universal youth voice programmes the team facilitate include the Leeds Childrens Mayor and UK Youth Parliament which involve the team organising citywide elections enabling children and young people to apply for these roles, run their campaigns and for children and young people to elect their preferred candidate. The team support the Leeds Children's Mayor to deliver a project or campaign that supports their manifesto aims. For example, last year the team worked with Mason the Leeds Childrens Mayor and his school to plan and deliver his Accessible Olympics event and produce a guide which was shared with schools across the city at the summit event.

Any child or young person aged 10-18 (up to 25 with additional needs) can join the Leeds Youth Council network and 500 members receive monthly opportunities from across the city via email and text and have the opportunity to join monthly online or in person sessions and to apply to be part of the Leeds Youth Council working group. The team are currently running monthly Child Friendly Leeds Wishes youth voice sessions, focusing on a different wish a month. Schools, colleges, youth groups and youth voice groups are encouraged to register for the Make Your Mark Ballot every year and vote for their top issue. 5546 young people from across Leeds voted for their top issue in the 2022 Make Your Mark Ballot. The Leeds Youth Council working group and UK Youth Parliament develop an annual campaign based on the top issue voted for by young people across the city in the Make Your Mark ballot. For example, this year the focus is on health and wellbeing and top issues were exam stress and access to information about mental health services. The young people shared good practice about supporting students with exam stress at the secondary headteacher forum and have reviewed all secondary school websites. They fed back at the headteachers forum that currently 70% Leeds Secondary schools had pages around mental health for students and so are producing a template with MindMate and Public Health to support schools to provide better information for their students around mental health.

The team primarily engage with children and young people in schools and colleges through youth voice summits; Leeds Childrens Mayor Youth Voice Summit and the eight community youth voice summits delivered in partnership with the Communities team. The summits provide an opportunity for elected members and senior leaders to meet directly with children and young people and hear their top issues and priorities. The team recruit new members to the Leeds Youth Council at these events and through Breeze on Tour events in the summer. The team also engage with young people via social media - for example through Leeds Youth Voice Instagram. The team also regularly promote opportunities through their VIC network of voice and influence leads in universal settings including all schools (student voice/ school council link staff), youth services, health partners and third sector organisations. They also offer to go into schools and youth groups/ youth voice groups to develop spotlights on good practice and share information about youth voice programmes or help promote the Make Your Mark Ballot or Leeds Childrens Mayor.

If a team or service or strategic board would like to consult with children and young people, we can arrange for them to meet one of our youth voice groups or support them to develop a consultation activity which is then shared with our network and youth workers who run different groups/ school staff will then deliver the consultation activity. For example, we used this approach with the Child Poverty Board, who wanted to consult with children and young people to ensure their priorities were incorporated into the refreshed child poverty strategy and over 200 children and young people from 20 youth groups / youth voice groups participated in this consultation. If senior leaders and elected members would like to meet directly with young people about a particular issue, we can signpost them to the different youth voice groups in the city and if young people / services want to raise an issue with a relevant decision maker we can facilitate and support that meeting. For example, young people from Black Lives Matter and Youthwatch wanted to meet with senior

leaders about the film they developed Being Black and Being Me and we facilitated for the young people to present their film and share their recommendations / calls to action with the Children and Families Equality Diversity and Inclusion Board.

SEND Work Strand is focused on working in partnership with staff and senior managers in SEND services (health, education, social care and third sector), children and young people with SEND in specialist provision and mainstream settings and parents and carers via support groups and forums across the city. The team also facilitate the SEND Youth Forum which is a citywide youth forum for young people aged 11 -25 with additional needs. The SEND Youth Forum receive monthly opportunities and plan and deliver an annual campaign and are currently working on an e-learning training as they want staff working with children and young people with SEND to understand the importance of good communication.

The team now run an annual SEND youth summit, enabling young people to share their views and priorities with different teams and services and senior leaders. The team promote voice and influence opportunities through the VIC network of voice and influence leads working in SEND Services. The team also recruit young people to the SEND Youth Forum through visiting schools, sharing information with families attending SEND support groups and Leeds Local Offer events and through the SEND youth voice summit.

The team support students with SEND from Specialist Schools across the city to annually takeover the Area SEND Partnership Board. In response to feedback from young people at the Area SEND Partnership Board takeover meeting in 2021, the SEND Next Choices event was organised by the Employment and Skills Team. SEND Next Choices was created and designed to offer support with employment, training, education, support services and leisure activities. The event has now taken place for the last two years with thousands of young people attending. At the takeover meeting last year, young people shared they wanted more opportunities to try different activities and groups and so the team sourced funding from the Community Committees and organised a "Give it a Go" event for young people at the John Charles Centre for Sport. The SEND youth summit and Takeover Meeting provide opportunities for senior leaders and elected members to meet directly with young people with SEND and hear and respond to the issues that they feel are most important.

If teams and services would like to consult with children and young people with SEND, they can run consultations or workshops at the SEND youth voice summit or we can arrange for services to meet with the SEND Youth Forum. The team also help services develop consultation activities to share with staff in schools and specialist settings and youth groups. We have also developed a SEND Local Offer Facebook page for families and have a network of parent/ carer support groups and so we can promote surveys / voice and influence opportunities directly to parents and carers who can share with their children.

Seldom Heard/ Social Care Work Strand is focused on working in partnership with staff and senior managers in social care teams and teams across children and families and third sector groups/organisations on our VIC Network. We have built strong connections with staff who work directly with young people accessing their services whose views may often be seldom heard or under-represented for example Gypsy Traveller young people, Young Carers, LGBT+ young people, refugee and asylum seekers.

The team have previously run community youth voice summits to engage the wider views of children and young people in youth and community groups / working with third sector partners but this year we are planning a youth voice takeover for the Children and Young Peoples Partnership. The event has been planned in partnership with youth workers and young people from 12 youth voice groups and provides a platform for them to share their top issues and priorities, increase awareness about their group and seek support from senior leaders and elected members. The

team also offer to visit different groups to meet with young people and are running democracy workshops at the civic hall, adapting the format to meet the needs of the young people. For example, in 2022, the team facilitated a youth voice summit workshop for young people at GATE at the civic hall.

The team facilitate the Children in Care Council (10-17 years olds) and Care Leavers Council (17-25 year olds) and support senior leaders and team managers to regularly meet group members to seek their views on how to improve their services, youth proof documents or share their priorities to influence plans and strategies. For example, the care leavers council worked with the care leavers service to develop the headings and content for the Leeds Care Leavers Offer. The groups also deliver training to the Corporate Parenting Board members and social care staff – Total Respect Training and are members of the Corporate Parenting Board. The groups annually takeover the Corporate Parenting Board. An example of how group members who are representatives on the board have influenced the board, include the introduction of a glossary for meetings and influencing the data that is collected on the dashboard at every meeting.

The team have consulted with children and young people via surveys shared with foster carers and residential staff and have communicated voice and influence opportunities through newsletters sent directly to children and young people. For example, the team developed a consultation on the corporate parenting strategy and mental health and wellbeing was identified as a top priority and in response, corporate parenting priority leads will be including an action to address mental health and wellbeing in the refreshed strategy.

The team promote voice and influence opportunities through “voice of a child” training sessions with social care staff and attending staff away days or team meetings. Childrens rights advocacy team send information about the groups to all children and young people in care and promote the groups and referrals often come through different social care teams and services. The team work in partnership with the care leavers service who deliver a programme of activities to care leavers from Archway – the new care leavers hub and this provides opportunities for the team to engage and seek wider views of care leavers. The Co-design working group of care leavers plan activities on offer at the hub and care leavers council are represented on this group. The team have also worked with residential staff and third sector organisations working with care experienced young people such as Gipsil to seek the wider views of children and young people – for example for young people’s views on education for a film recently developed by the care leavers council for the virtual school which will be used in staff training for designated teachers.

We also regularly facilitate young people’s involvement in recruitment and selection of senior leaders and managers and commissioning panels. We work with the different teams and services to identify which young people / youth voice group it is relevant to approach depending on the job role or contract. For example, for a SEND related commissioning panel we have involved the SEND Youth Forum and students in Specialist Provisions.

A diagram explaining our partnership approach see Appendix 2 – Leeds Youth Voice Model

For more information about the Leeds Youth Voice programme visit the teams [website](#) aimed at children, young people and families

For more information about Voice and Influence Opportunities – [One Minute Guide](#)

5. Sharing good practice and demonstrating impact

To raise awareness and demonstrate how children and young people are having their voices heard and influencing change – Outcome 5 in the Children and Young peoples Plan 2023-28, the team have produced six monthly citywide voice and influence reports and quarterly e-bulletins since

2012. Colleagues on the VIC network representing different teams, services and organisations across the city are invited to provide an update on:

- the top issues/ priorities of the children and young people they work with
- how children and young people they work with have had their voices heard and influenced change in their service, organisation or community in the last 6 months
- plans for the next 6 months on how they will work in partnership with children and young people and further enable them to have their voices heard and influence change in their service, organisation or community.

A voice and influence of parents, carers and families citywide report is also produced every six months. The reports are shared back with the network of VIC leads to raise awareness of the priorities and issues shared by children and young people and of the consultations and engagement activities that have taken place/ planned to reduce duplication, share learning and encourage partnership working.

The third six monthly report – the Voice of the Child in Social Care report is shared with the social care VIC leads on the network and available on request for the wider network. It has not been included in this report as it is primarily an internal report and therefore cannot be published on the website.

The voice and influence reports are presented or shared at the Children and Families Partnership, Area SEND Partnership Board, Childrens Population Board and Corporate Parenting Board.

The sixth monthly reports and Voice and Influence quarterly e-bulletins are also shared with all councillors via the Lead member for Children and Families Cllr Fiona Venner.

Over the last 12 months, the VIC team wanted to ensure children, young people and families could learn more about how children and young people are having a voice and influence in Leeds and started visiting staff and young people in groups and schools. They created spotlight summaries on the [Child Friendly Leeds Blog Page](#) and are promoting the blogs across social media.

Progress towards achieving short term and longer-term goals in the Child Friendly Leeds Wishes Action plan will be reported alongside the Children and Young Peoples Plan. Updates will be communicated to families via the Child Friendly Leeds Blog and an annual communication developed summarising highlights.

6.Examples of children and young people influencing services

Detailed below are some examples of how children and young people have shaped services in Leeds linked to the Child Friendly Leeds Wishes. The examples have been shared by different teams and services and included in the six-monthly voice and influence reports:

Child Friendly Leeds Wish 1- Mental Health and Wellbeing

MindMate Ambassadors (aged 17-23) help develop content for the Mind Mate website which is relevant and engaging for children and young people of different ages, including writing blogs and online content for social media platforms.

In response to exam stress being voted a top issue by a Leeds Youth Council consultation, MindMate updated the web content on exam stress, worked with the youth council on a social media campaign and filmed some [real stories](#) featuring young people sharing advice about their coping strategies.

Child Friendly Leeds Wish 2- Safe places to play, hang out and have fun

Thousands of children and young people complete the Youth Activity Fund Survey and participate in consultation activities at community youth voice summits every year, sharing their views on the type of activities they would like to see on offer, when and where in their local area. Their feedback influences the offer for the following year, for example lots of children and young people said they wanted more dance sessions in 21/22 and so in 22/23 lots of additional dance sessions were funded by the community committees.

A growing number of knife crime incidents in Leeds has led to young people sharing with staff in different groups and projects that they are feeling anxious about knife crime and less safe in their local communities. In response to this the youth service and third sector organisations have been delivering knife crime workshops to support young people and speak to young people about knife crime through detached youth work sessions. In February, the police and agencies across Leeds are planning a month of activity engaging schools and youth groups, focused on the impact of knife crime and reducing the risk of young people carrying weapons.

Child Friendly Leeds Wish 3 – Voice and Influence

Children and young people are routinely being involved in the recruitment and selection of staff across a wide range of services and therefore influencing which staff work with them – helping ensure they have the qualities and skills to engage with children and young people and understand their needs. This includes residential home staff and managers, youth workers, health practitioners, teachers and senior leaders in schools and personal advisors in the care leavers service.

Leeds Community Health NHS Youth Board developed a guide for staff around involving young people in recruitment panels and this guide is being used by staff when involving young people in staff recruitment. Young people also took part in videos promoting some of the children's healthcare services. These videos are being used as part of a recruitment campaign.

Child Friendly Leeds Wish 4 – Celebrating and understanding diversity

LEAP Young Carers group created short films sharing their lived experience of being young carers and the impact this has on their lives. They were involved in filming, creating publicity material and planning the launch event involving a big screen, popcorn and awards. These films are now used with Health and Education professionals to raise awareness, aid identification and signpost to support. The group were involved in the review and update of the Leeds Young Carers Support Service Website, particularly surrounding preferred language used to talk about their caring role. They also designed posters for the service, which will be displayed across the city, giving information and advice about what a young person can do, if they think they may be a young carer. They also discussed what information they thought should be in the service leaflet and what they would have found useful when they were seeking support.

Out 2 18 & Transtastic LGBTQ+ youth group were involved in creating a training resource in partnership with young people from the care leavers council. This resource provides an introduction in how to talk to LGBTQ+ young people about gender identity and sexuality. The resource is now used as part of training available to all staff in Leeds City Council.

In response to requests from young people in their local areas two new LGBTQ+ youth groups were established – one by BARCA in West Leeds and one by the youth service in south Leeds.

Child Friendly Leeds Wish 6 -Safe reliable and accessible travel

Leeds Citizens, First Bus and students at Carr Manor Community School in Leeds have worked together to develop a dedicated bus service. A group of 30 students aged 14-16 were trained by a team from Leeds Citizens in listening and leadership skills to get the views of Carr Manor's 1,500 pupils on initiatives they would like to see to improve life in the school. A bus service around the school day to better meet the travel needs of young people and families emerged from these sessions and First Bus responded by meeting with the students in March, followed by a series of

discussions to decide a plan. First Bus has created a pool of drivers dedicated to the CM3 school service operating from Halton Moor and made timetable changes to the 7 and 91 services to synchronise more closely with Carr Manor's start and end of lessons.

Child Friendly Leeds Wish 12 -Inclusive city and increasing awareness different disabilities

A member of the health youth voice group Youth Watch made a film called '[Make it work for me.](#)' about her experiences of going to see her doctor. This has been used to deliver training to over 300 health and care professionals across the region which aims to improve the way that professionals communicate with people with disabilities.

Children and young people shared with the Leeds Children's Hospital Children and Young People's Diabetes team that they needed more support from schools regarding dealing with their diabetes. The team ran a focus group -offered to all children across Leeds with type 1 diabetes aged 7-15 and sought their views and experiences about living with diabetes and how this effects their school lives. Their feedback has been used to develop resources which are now used to help students settle in at school after diagnosis and when starting a new school.

For further examples of how children and young people's voices are influencing change see below

Appendix 3 -Citywide Voice and Influence of Children and Young People April – September 2023

Appendix 4 – Voice Influence and Change team 2022/23 summary report

6. Recommendations

- a) Children and Families Scrutiny Board is recommended to note the work being undertaken.
- b) Children and Families Scrutiny Board to consider ways in which the Principal Scrutiny Advisor and Children and Families Scrutiny Board can work with the Voice Influence and Change team to enable board members to stay updated on key issues and priorities of children and young people and have more opportunities to hear from and respond to the voices of children and young people.

Further ideas to discuss and consider:

The chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board has been invited to attend the Youth Voice Groups Takeover of the Children and Young people's Partnership Board on 31st January. A summary report outlining key issues raised can be shared with the Children and Families Scrutiny Board following the event. If the event is successful and staff and young people from the youth voice groups want to plan and deliver another event next year, then potentially all members of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board could be invited, and it could become a joint takeover meeting.

The Principal Scrutiny Advisor meets with the Strategy and Influence Lead at the start of the year when planning the scrutiny inquiries and considers how the child friendly Leeds wishes and views of children and young people can be heard and responded to in scrutiny enquiries.

The Children and Families Scrutiny Board reporting template could be reviewed, to strengthen the voice of children and young people (and families) in scrutiny reports.

7.What impact will this proposal have?

- 1 Board members will have a greater awareness of the issues and priorities raised by children and young people.

- 2 Board members will have a greater understanding of the different ways children and young people are influencing both strategic change and influencing practice and services they access.
- 3 The voice of children and young people will be further embedded within the Children and Families scrutiny board.

8. How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

In the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Priority 1 is focused on Leeds being a child friendly city. The vision for a child friendly city is centred around the voice of the child and the 12 Child Friendly Leeds wishes, which were developed using consultation data from over 80,000 children and young people. The VIC team work in partnership with the Child Friendly Leeds Team and are Wish Lead Officers for two of the wishes (Wish 3 and 12) in the action plan that has been developed to help address the wishes. Priority 2 focuses on engaging communities and prioritising listening to the most vulnerable and directly links to the work of the VIC team and Child Friendly Leeds Wish 3 which is about children and young people having a voice and influence over services they access. Priority 5 focuses on being more active, Child Friendly Leeds wish 9 focuses on children and young people having support and information to make healthy choices and have more opportunities for physical activity. Priority 12 focuses on mental health and links directly to Child Friendly Leeds Wish 1- mental health and wellbeing is the top issue for children and young people in Leeds.

The refreshed Inclusive growth strategy focuses on economic growth but also on tackling inequality, ensuring we have the right infrastructure to enable our ambition, tackling the climate emergency, supporting all sections of our society into better jobs, raising skill levels and improving the health of the poorest the fastest while helping people to live healthy and active lives. This report and work of the team directly links with Child Friendly Leeds Wish 11 which focuses on young people having access to a wide range of work experience, employment and volunteering opportunities, Child Friendly Leeds Wish 8 which focuses on the impact of poverty and supporting families with the help they need. It also links directly to Child Friendly Leeds Wish 6 which focuses on children and young people wanting to be able to travel around the city safely and easily.

Zero carbon and climate emergency – this directly links to the Child Friendly Leeds Wish 5, which focuses on children and young people wanting to have a greater awareness and understanding of what actions are being taken to protect the environment and address the climate emergency.

9. What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

This is not a decision-making report, and the purpose of the report is to provide an overview of our approach to consulting and engaging with children and young people, so consultation and engagement on its contents is not required.

10. What are the resource implications?

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

11. What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

12. What are the legal implications?

This report has no specific legal implications.

Options, timescales and measuring success

13. What other options were considered?

This is ongoing work to support the directorate and families in Leeds

How will success be measured?

This is ongoing work to support the directorate and families in Leeds

14. What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

This is ongoing work to support the directorate and families in Leeds

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – VIC Team Plan on a Page 23/24
- Appendix 2 – Leeds Youth Voice Model
- Appendix 3 - Citywide Voice and Influence of Children and Young People Summary Report April – Sep 2023
- Appendix 4 – Voice Influence and Change team 2022/23 summary report
- Appendix 5 – Child Friendly Leeds Wishes Action Plan