

# West Partnership

## January 2020

# Youth Participation

How do we listen and respond to the views of our young people?



**GLASGOW**  
CITY REGION  
Education

## Why should youth voice be at the heart of decision making?

The West Partnership aims to “shift the ownership of change” to empower all the stakeholders within our education system therefore it is crucial that the views of the people most affected, our young people, have a voice.

Adult decisions affect young people’s futures. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 12 states that Young People have a right to be listened to and to be taken seriously *“Parties shall ensure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express these views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being give due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”* (unicef.org.uk)

Our national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people, Getting it Right For Every Child states that policy and delivery of services should put the interests of the child at the heart of decision making. To robustly understand what those interests are we need to ask our young people. “Consulting children and young people on aspects of school life that directly affect them is seen as key to improving our education system overall” How Good is OUR school? (2018)

Action 7 of the Families and Communities Workstream Action Plan aims to “support youth voice and participation through the establishment of a youth group”. This paper will summarise progress made towards this aim and how we can build upon this by developing a system to listen and respond to the views of our young people.

## How can the West Partnership hear the views of our young people?

On the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019 the West Partnership hosted its first Youth Voice Event. With a focus on collaboration the 28 young people, representing local authority groups from across the West Partnership, came together to discuss key questions about working together to achieve the aims of the 8 workstreams.

### Youth Voice Discussion Questions 9-11-19

*How do you think schools and communities can better work together to improve your learning experiences?*

*By working together how can we better support families and communities?*

*By working together how can we improve your pathways through the curriculum?*

*By working together how can we better support your health and wellbeing?*

*By working together how can we better improve student leadership?*

*By working together how can we make schools a better place to learn?*

*By working together how can we improve the knowledge and skills of professionals?*

*By working together how can we improve the data we hold on you?*



Through discussing these questions the youth representatives were able to share what they believed was working well, what was not working well and ideas for future improvements

Figure 1

## Summary of views collected

The views collected on the day have been summarised (*Figure 2*). Common themes already shared through local authority and national consultations are apparent, such as the review of the PSHE curriculum and mental health awareness. Consequently these themes are already being reviewed locally and nationally providing the opportunity for the West Partnership to learn from and network with already established work. To effectively respond to the key messages raised, the West Partnership needs to take a systematic approach to identify where we can add value to have the most impact on improving outcomes for our young people. We have the opportunity to collaborate across the West Partnership to gather and share practice that our young people have identified as effective. We can do this in partnership with West Partnership practitioners who are able to offer a wide range of expertise and skills sharing how they are already making a difference through their practice.

Summary of West Partnership Youth Voice Forum – November 2019	
Workstream	Key Messages
<u>Collaborative Learning Networks</u> <i>How do you think schools and communities can work together to improve your learning experiences?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing partnerships beyond schools staff to share knowledge, skills and experience</li> <li>- Supporting Youth Voice collaborative learning networks</li> </ul>
<u>Families and Communities</u> <i>How do you think schools and communities can work together to improve learning experiences?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnership working with CLD/Police liaison to engage with families</li> <li>- Supporting Home Link Workers to engage with families</li> </ul>
<u>Curriculum</u> <i>By working together how can we improve your pathways through the curriculum?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More varied pathways for learning</li> <li>- More life skills experience</li> <li>- Better career advice</li> </ul>
<u>Health and Wellbeing</u> <i>By working together how can we better support our health and wellbeing?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of PSHE curriculum – in partnership with young people</li> <li>- More consistent standard understood for being a nurturing school/awareness of mental health</li> </ul>
<u>Leadership</u> <i>By working together how can we improve student leadership?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More opportunities for peer education</li> <li>- More opportunities for a range of leadership roles for students</li> </ul>
<u>Systems Improvement</u> <i>By working together how can we make our schools a better place to learn?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peer education/student leadership roles to be more coordinated to facilitate and support impactful student involvement</li> </ul>
<u>CLPL</u> <i>By working together how can we improve the knowledge and skills of professionals?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More professional learning for teachers in nurture, mental health, recognising triggers and coping strategies</li> <li>- Professional learning for teachers in PSHE curriculum and Employability Skills</li> <li>- Professional learning for teachers in effectively using Glow/Google Classrooms</li> <li>- Professional learning in how to use homework effectively to support study skills</li> </ul>
<u>Reporting and Evaluating</u> <i>By working together how can we improve the data we hold on you?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve the dialogue between teachers and students to agree working and target grades</li> </ul>

Figure 2



## **How do we build on the youth voice event?**

Through listening to the young people experiencing teaching and learning within the West Partnership we are more likely to prioritise actions that are relevant to their needs. Our young people tell us, though, that listening is not enough. They want to know where actions are being influenced by listening to their views and want to have an ongoing involvement in how changes and improvements are made.

Youth voice is often heard across the West Partnership with events taking place across most local authorities, supported by CLD, as well as individual schools and nationally to gather the views of young people. The variety of youth groups across the West Partnership; MSYP, Youth Councils, Young Carers, Who Cares? groups, involve a diversity of young people with a range of life experiences. If mapped and connected there would be network that could offer an even more effective and dynamic system for empowering young people in having a say in the improvement agenda.

## **What could a West Partnership Youth Voice Network look like?**

To ensure that our Youth Voice event is not tokenistic and that we continue to listen to, value and involve the views of young people in the West Partnership Action Plan we are requesting 2 Youth Ambassadors from each local authority to act as a forum to gather and share practice in relation to an agreed theme or purpose. Such themes would be agreed at Workstream Meetings.

The larger West Partnership Youth Voice Event, involving 5 youth representatives from each authority, would be organised annually to report back and listen to the current youth views on the work of the West Partnership.

## **Operational Aspects**

- Volunteers for Youth Ambassadors are recruited through already established youth voice networks within local authorities e.g. MSYP, Youth Councils, Youth Champions, through the West Partnership CLN Managers Network
- The Lead Officer for the Families and Communities will be responsible for the operational, finance and networking aspects of Youth Voice Forums and the annual event under Action 7 of the Families and Communities Action Plan.
- The West Partnership's CLD Managers Network have offered to support the logistics of gathering and supporting the ambassadors in attending meetings and representing local groups. The Youth Ambassadors would meet for a maximum of 4 times a year, in the evenings.
- The West Partnership's CLD Managers Network have offered to support an annual West Partnership Youth Voice Event
- Lead Officers with responsibility for the themes will take a lead role in supporting the youth ambassadors with their projects

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- At present we envisage one group of Ambassadors working on one theme. There is the potential, though, for further youth ambassador forums or consultative groups to be set up, as required, to support and inform the work of each workstream.

#### An example

Our young people want to improve how PSHE is taught in schools. Other common themes raised across all the workstreams was the effectiveness of peer education, when coordinated, and the strong desire of young people to be given the opportunity to lead their own learning.

To take this forward the Lead Officer for the Health and Wellbeing workstream will support a group of Youth Ambassadors in using an enquiry approach to gather, share and learn from practice across the West Partnership. The group will focus on discovering where young people have felt PSHE learning and teaching has been successful, especially where young people have taken a lead role in the learning process.

#### Next Steps

- Lead Officer, Families and Communities, Helen Brown, to map out the networks in the West Partnership that collect youth voice
  - Lead Officer, Families and Communities, Helen Brown to set up a forum of 16 Ambassadors (2 per authority) supported by West Partnership CLD Managers Network
  - Lead Officer, Families and Communities, Helen Brown to arrange another Youth Voice event for May/June 2020
  - Lead Officer, Health and Wellbeing, John Stuart, to support an initial Youth Ambassador project; “How young people can lead learning in the PSHE curriculum?” collecting and sharing good practice, especially in peer education
  - All Workstreams to consider where working collaboratively with West Partnership Youth Ambassadors will support and inform their action plan
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