
Report to West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

24 June 2021

Report title: Update on the Children First Board (a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board)

Report by: Lucy Butler, Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning

Summary

This report provides a brief update on the work of the Children First Board formed in October 2020.

Recommendation to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- (1) Note the contents of this report.
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Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

1. Starting Well
2. Living and Working Well

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The Children First Board is chaired by Cllr Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Meetings are held four times a year, and the inaugural meeting was held on the 8 October 2020. There have been two subsequent meetings (on the 14 January and the 3 April) since the first report made to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.2 The Board is made up of a wide range of organisations and groups in West Sussex – including schools, police, health partners, voluntary and community sector. Importantly, there are also four young people on the Board, they are supported by the Voice and Participation team and all notes and papers for the Board are written in as simple and clear a style as possible.
- 1.3 The Children First Board has agreed three main goals;
 - Improve outcomes for children and young people who live in West Sussex, or who are cared for by West Sussex’s children’s services.

- Ensure that all agencies that provide services for children and young people in West Sussex work together effectively.
- Listen and respond to the views of children, young people and their families all the time, particularly when decisions are being made about how services are run and funded.

1.4 To achieve these goals, the Children First Board will;

- Have oversight of the key strategic planning for children and young people's services, especially when these plans affect more than one agency or service.
- Always remember that our children and young people have the right
 - To be kept safe by everyone, and learn how to keep themselves safe
 - To be supported to be as healthy as possible – both physically and emotionally
 - To be given the skills to be successful in adult life.

1.5 The Board will also;

- Decide what the main priorities are for children and young people.
- Agree how these will be addressed.

2. Update on progress

2.1 One of the Board's early priorities is the development and production of a Children and Young People's Plan. The Board has agreed an approach and style for this Plan, having previously established that this was the young people's preference. There have been a number of workshops with partners and key stakeholders to develop the content of the Plan, and a draft will be submitted to the Board for discussion and approval at its July meeting.

2.2. To inform the production of the Children and Young People's Plan, at its second meeting, the Board reviewed information held by a range of organisations and services about children and young people's views. Jenny Hacker, Public Health, talked about the importance of making links to the Health and Well Being Strategy, the Board endorsed this approach.

2.3 In response to a query from our young people's representatives about what we know about the impact of Covid-19 on West Sussex's children and young people, public health led a useful presentation. The Board noted that children are likely to be disproportionately affected by measures to contain the virus and that deprivation and poor mental health were worsening factors. More positively, some children have been able to increase their resilience and learnt new skills.

2.4 Emotional wellbeing and good mental health for our children and young people is a key priority for the Board. The Board has established an Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health sub-group whose primary focus will be to develop and oversee implementation of a place-based improvement and delivery plan.

The first meeting is in late June, and the sub-group will meet every two months thereafter.

3. Consultation, engagement and advice

- 3.1 The Board has a very strong ethos of engagement and participation. The first meeting of the Board (held on the 8 October) focussed on thinking about how the Board keeps the views of children and young people central to its work. The young people's representatives gave two very helpful and informative presentations. It was agreed that it was important to make sure that as wide a range of views from children and young people as was possible was considered, and that the Board considered the information about views already held in many groups and organisations.
- 3.2 The Board has had a powerful and informative session with Luke Rodgers (The Care Leaders) on what outstanding participation and engagement looks like – the Board remains very committed to working toward this outcome.

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Appendices None

Background papers None