

Child/Youth Friendly City and Community proposal to the Scrutiny Panel for Children and Young People | 13 September 2016

Hello, my name is Penny Hay, I am Director of Research for 5x5x5=creativity and Senior Lecturer in Arts Education at Bath Spa University and I am speaking on behalf of the Child Friendly City Steering Group.

I'm here with just 3 minutes as a brilliant opportunity has arisen which I feel would benefit the whole community. I didn't want us to miss the chance as bids close on 31 October.

Bath & North East Somerset has been invited to apply to be a UNICEF pilot project, a feather in our cap for B&NES as there are only 6 pilots planned in the UK.

Childs Rights Partners is a ground-breaking programme - systematically embedding children's rights in public services at both policy and practice level has never been trialed before in the UK.

A vision of childhood is underpinned by **dignity, equality, safety and participation**, informing community cohesion and prioritising support for the most vulnerable children and young people.

This supports the B&NES aspiration of narrowing the gap; we want to close the gap in access to educational, social, cultural, creative and community resources.

UNICEF offers a practical framework for working with and for children and young people including mentoring and peer support.

The Child Rights project supports us to work with children as rights holders and governments and services as duty bearers.

When local authorities take a child rights-based approach, children and young people:

- know and understand their rights and their individual responsibilities to society
- know about the services available and how to access them
- have a say in the design, delivery and evaluation of services
- experience connected, tailored and responsive services
- feel safe, nurtured, prioritised and are treated with dignity and respect

Children who are raised with a belief in dignity, equality, safety and participation are more likely grow into responsible adults who treat others with dignity and equality and are committed to delivering a safe and participatory society.

In B&NES, we want all children and young people to have equal life chances with positive mental health and well-being, with higher aspirations. We know the Council has identified health and socio-economic inequalities and is working towards reducing these; this project would actively support the Council's work.

We want to increase partnership working in allowing greater opportunities for all children and young people to access educational, cultural and creative activities.

We believe systems would be improved by embedding a rights-based approach, not only to improve children's lives and give all children the same opportunity to flourish, but to improve local communities and society as a whole.

It is not a cliché - our children are the future. We want and need to hear the voice of young people.

We are drafting the UNICEF bid now with Child Friendly Community partners. We are inviting the Council to be a partner and asking the Scrutiny Panel to consider making a recommendation to Cabinet to support this initiative (of course we understand it's having to be within existing resources). A modest amount of funding from the Council will leverage a strategic investment in the future for our whole community.

We are keen that there is a political commitment to this initiative, with co-operation across the Local Authority together with robust engagement and cross-Council participation.

We will come back in November with a fuller brief / presentation with UNICEF colleagues.

Thank you for your time.



Penny Hay on behalf of the Child Friendly City Steering Group

September 2016