

## **Child/Youth Friendly City and Community | Proposal to the Scrutiny Panel for Children and Young People | 15 November 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. The **Child and Youth Friendly Community** initiative has been driven by a diverse range of creative and cultural organisations across B&NES. Coordination of this Steering Group is currently being provided, in a voluntary capacity, by 5x5x5=creativity ([www.5x5x5creativity.org.uk](http://www.5x5x5creativity.org.uk)) an award winning charity - now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year and born out of this Council – has inspired and supported high quality creative education across the UK.

Our vision for a **Child/Youth Friendly City and Community** across Bath and North East Somerset involves the right of every child and young person to experience a safe, healthy and happy childhood, with an emphasis on respect and engagement.

The Child Friendly City Initiative Steering Group are keen to work with the Unicef **Child Rights Partners Team** alongside the Council and young people. **Child Rights Partners** is a ground-breaking programme - systematically embedding children's rights in public services at both policy and practice level. 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. 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.

This supports the B&NES aspiration of narrowing the gap - to close the gap in access to educational, social, cultural, creative and community resources, and to ensure that young people in our communities are as safe as possible. 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. B&NES has identified health and socio-economic inequalities and is working towards reducing these; this project would actively support the Council's work.

Children and young people have a right to be involved in all decisions that affect their lives (Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and endorsed by the Council's Participation Strategy). There are already many examples of co-production and meaningful participation across the authority, with services becoming more responsive to the needs of children and young people.

We are inviting the Council to be a **Unicef Child Rights Partner** and asking the Scrutiny Panel to consider making a recommendation to Cabinet to support this initiative. 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.

I am delighted to introduce you to Naomi Danquah, Programme Director, Child Rights Partners and Karolina Kozlownic, Programme Officer, Child Rights Partners, Unicef who will outline the details of the potential partnership.

**Penny Hay on behalf of the Child Friendly City Steering Group, November 2016**