

Report Title: Participation of Children and Young People Report 2022- 2023							
Date	July 2023	Author	Sarah McCluskey				
Recommendation/Decision required							
Information report.							
Background:							
Introduction, strategic context, and background							
Since 2000 B&NES has been signed up to (Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) which states:							
<i>“Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child’s day-to-day home life”</i>							
Listening and acting upon the Voice of the Child underpins all our work and is one of the four Outcomes of our Children and Young People’s Plan CYPP							
Section A - Overview of the Participation and Engagement work undertaken between April 2022- Mar 2023 with children and young people who are service users of B&NES Commissioned Services Health and Social Care							
Section B – Overview of Participation of Children Looked After within Children’s Social Care							
Section A							
Provider Off the Record							
Length of Commission (3+2) 31/03/2026							
Service Participation							
No of service users actively engaged across all groups 35							
JICC	11	SICC	8	Care Leavers	9	Youth Forum	10
Key highlights: Summarized from Monitoring							

Junior in Care Council

- Activity Sessions
- Building links with Advocacy service
- Consultation on 'A Bit About Me' forms, furnishing insightful data as to how the children identify.
- Supporting this wide group to become more supportive of each other, building cohesion

Senior in Care Council :

- National Voice Parliament visit
- Consultation on 'agile working' a research project that explores the technology used between social workers/professionals and young people
- Reviewing the Pledge
- Delivery of the participation training to 6 professionals working across BANES.
- Creative session with the graphic novelists Jenny Drew and Anita MacCallum

- **Care Leavers (Care Experienced Council CEC)**
- National Voice Parliament visit
- July visit to the Guildhall to meet councillors for a Q&A plus a tour. Care Experienced Council were joined by Youth Forum and a group from Keynsham Now (Youth Council).
- Interviews for candidates applying for the specialist nurse role
- Care leavers week and exhibition (October 24th-28th)

- **Youth Forum:**
- Youth Pride Event Planning and delivery March 2023
- Collaboration with other young people's groups in Bath.
- July - visit to the Guildhall to meet councillors for a Q&A plus a tour.
- Oct - Successful meeting alongside CEC, Boys in Mind, Project 28 and Keynsham Now, with BANES councillors.
- Planning for BANES Youth Mental Health Event Oct 2023 – an idea which has come out of growing network of BANES youth groups (including OTR, Boys in Mind, Keynsham Now, Mentoring Plus, Project 28, Bath Mind, Bath Student Parliament, and Black Families Education Support Group)

Key challenges:

Barrier's to accessing ICC's for CLA placed out of B&NES

Young Ambassadors

The Young Ambassador (YA) programme has been adapted and now commissions individual care experienced young adults to work on specific projects and consultations. The YA budget is therefore used with a wider proportion of young people. Alongside this, we will look to recruit 1 x YA going forward.

Next Steps for 2023 -2024

- Develop a strategy for recruiting more young people into Youth Forum
- For SICC the main thing that they identified as needing improvement in the group was a wider range of activities, including away from the OTR office
- For CEC, the main things that they identified as needing improvement in the group are more frequent; a wider range of activities; more participants; and speaking more about 'why care hasn't been a great experience and how to improve that for future care children'
- JICC would like to incorporate something active, something voice related and something creative into every session.

Service user quotes:

Youth Forum

'We're running it [YF] now... It's very much a youth-led group.'

'I have been able to help create an actual event (Youth Pride) that will likely help so many young people'

'I am doing something to positively affect the local community'

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'I am doing something to positively affect the local community'

IN CARE COUNCILS

Junior In Care Council JICC

'What he's in care too, they all are!? okay cool!'

(JICC child realising everyone in the group has their own special carer)

Senior In Care Council SICC

'It brings people together with similar situations'

'I get to meet new people in care'

'It shows the knowledge that is given to us as an in-care child'

Care Experienced Council CEC

(CEC young adult, said in response to the recommendation for improved training for foster carers)

'I think it's like we're using our past to benefit our future. I think it separates us more if they pay us more. My past is out of my control, but my future isn't'.

'I get to make a difference to the newer people in care'

June 2022, we spoke with Josh MacAlister and that was the National Voice where there were a whole load of organisations got together and had a chance to voice their own opinions on the care system and how it is and what should be improved.

Participation Training YA feedback

The training has really given me more enthusiasm to go back to the team and push out that every young person has the right to a voice, thanks guys, you all done brill'

Care Leavers Week Exhibition Oct 2022



Youth Pride Team March 2023



Provider –Signis Reconstruct Independent Visiting

Length of commission – 1 year 2022/2023

Service : To provide Children and Young People (cyp) in the Care of the Local Authority with emotional support, sound adult advice, and any help that aids their development. The visitor is independent of the local authority and of the other people who are involved in the young person’s care.
The service is for CYP who have little or no contact with their family for more than a year or for whom it is determined that it is in the child/young person’s best interests to receive this service.

No of service users actively engaged 12

Age 5-11	Age 11-18	Age 11-25
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Key Highlights :

- IVs are trained to a high standard to support these vulnerable CYP
- RAG system created to streamline matching process
- Reconstruct worked effectively with a positive attitude when handing the service over to OTR so that the YP were not affected by the change in provider. 10 IV moved over to the new provider.

Key Challenges:

Difficult to recruit IV’s especially Out of area.
Lack of engagement with service with social workers & foster carers.

Service users’ quotes :

Quotes from Foster Carers

Carer 1: ‘I know it can be frustrating for C sometimes as she can only see T on weeknights after school because were at the caravan most weekends, but I really do appreciate it. I know T really enjoys it, even if it’s for an hour at McDonalds. He knows it his time’.

Carer 2: ‘R absolutely loves his time with S. I know he really trusts her. She really gets him, understand that he wants to do the same thing every time. I know she travels a really long way, and I can’t thank her enough, he’s had a really tough year but having S to talk to has just been incredible’.

Carer 3: ‘C is just brilliant, honestly, he’s amazing. He really understands W needs. W is a techy kids, loves everything to with computers and I know C is as well. The last few visit C and W have been making a small animation production. I think W feels comfortable with C...’

Some recent feedback from our young people, describing their IV:

She is kind and fun.
"He's funny and he likes football."
Very kind and understanding

Describing their favorite visit:

Arcade visit
Going up to the Bristol City stadium.

They're all equally great

What's their favorite thing about having an IV:

I like that its just me and her.

It gets me out of the house.

That I have support

Provider
Off the Record – Shout out advocacy service

Service
1st April 2023 - 31st March 2026 +1+1 year

No of service users actively engaged

266 engaged with service

Age	5-11	x	11-19	x
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Key Highlights :

- Young people using advocacy are changing their individual outcomes but also changing social work practice, and we want to use this page to highlight this and encourage others to use advocacy.
- Young people are feeling supported and empowered in themselves to self - advocate in review meetings.
- Improved plans have been created to support CYP experience of the complaint process
- CYP attending CPC online or in person has been positive and empowering.

OTR website has been improved to show different types of advocacy support on offer. To help young people see the difference their voices and views make OTR are looking at creating a page on their website with examples of their successes

Key challenges

- CIC's reviews are missed due to either receiving dates too late or date of CIC review changes
- Getting parent or foster carer consent is challenging for CPC
- Increase in UASC seeking advocacy has created more work in translation and travel. There is a need to adapt resources to cater for this change – looking to create leaflets/ voice overs in different languages so information is more accessible.

Service user quotes

“Social care give one answer to children and we get an advocate involved and social care change things or re-word them. It's good knowing someone's got your back and get's things done.” YP in residential care Feb 23

“Some people say they will help but you actually help” Care leaver January 2023

Social worker reported that one young person really valued the long-term relationship with her

advocate and that she knew she could contact her advocate anytime.

A social worker thanked an advocate for her support of a child in care during a complaint and said that the YP would not have got the outcomes she wanted without the advocate.

Provider: Action for Children (Beaumonts)
Length of Commission: 3 years + 2 ending March 2024

Service
Residential Overnight Service

No of service users actively engaged
14 yp between 8-17years

Age	5-11	11-18	18-25
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Key highlights

This period has been full of outings and activities. We were lucky enough to secure a £500 grant from Action for Children fundraising department, for the purpose of enrichment and used this during the February half term. We were able to support children to go swimming, aquarium, bowling and out for meals.

We have also purchased many new toys and games for the home during this period including a three wheeled scooter, a Lego set, puzzle set, sensory toys, a busy bored and new story books.

Service introduced a PECS symbol book to be used during VIP meetings and throughout children's stay if they so wish. The book includes commands, who, when, where signifiers, activity and food choices, feelings, rooms at Beaumonts, numbers and letters. This book has been used by multiple children during VIP meetings. Young people have seemed to really enjoy using this book and it has aided communication. Whilst PECS symbols have always been used within Beaumonts, this book has made the use of PECS in the home easier.

(VIP ie. Very Important Person - meetings takes place at the beginning of every stay for young people to choose (within parameters) what they would like to do during their stay e.g., activity, food, room etc.

Key challenges:

The main challenges during this have been:

Reduced level of service due to cost of living and the impact of service user.

Staff recruitment, particularly Waking Night Staff

Service user quotes:

Using variety of communication tools, feedback from the young people attending Beaumonts was overwhelmingly positive.

Most of the young people said they liked coming and spending time with their friends, enjoy spending time with the staff, like the toys, games, activities, outdoor play area/equipment and outings.

Some of the young people would like to attend for longer.

Provider Black Families Education Support

Length of Commission: 3 + 2 years March 2025

Service: Information Advice and Advocacy
B&ME Education Support Service

No of service users actively engaged
18

Age 5-11

Age 11-19

18

Age 18-25

Key highlights

Service supported the planning and delivery of a **B&NES Council Day workshop on disproportionality with regard to race** for council staff and provided. BFES presented at workshop to highlight case study examples illustrating the experiences of BAME children and young people in education.

Worked with the **Violence Reduction Unit** to provide some input into the planning for a conference on school exclusion and ethnicity, which was delivered in March.

Key partner in the development and implementation of **Race Equality Charter for Schools**, now developing a **guidance and training package** to accompany and support the adoption of the Charter by schools, developed **Audit tool for schools**, involved in delivering 2 workshops to schools on Implementing the Charter effectively. There has been a marked progress in schools engaging with the Charter.

Work with BAME young people - The **Supplementary School** continued to run weekly sessions during term time, delivering a range of innovative and exciting educational and cultural sessions. The **Mentoring Programme** continued to support BAME students in schools, 8 students were mentored.

Windrush Project in partnership with BEMSCA, a living heritage exhibition and educational programme for schools established at Fairfield House. Young people accessing this service involved in the project/exhibition

Key Challenges:

Financial limitations to activities that can be undertaken with young people accessing the service e.g., Residential trips have not taken place for the last few years, even though they have a very positive impact on the young people.

Service user quotes:

“My child was going to be permanently excluded from school. I asked for support from Jason to help me to put a case in front of the Governors as to the many reasons why my child should not be excluded.

I cannot thank Black families and Jason enough for his help and assistance through this most difficult time”

Parent Using Advice and Advocacy Service

"X feels like black families has helped them realise they are not the odd one out and there are other children that look like them that go through the same struggles"

Parent of Supplementary School Student

"Black Families has and continues to provide essential support to both of my children. My eldest describes it playing a significant role in their life as a black person growing up in Bath, at one stage being the only black pupil in their primary school and the wider unique experience of being young and black in Bath and North East Somerset. There was ongoing support advice both social, educational and emotional through peer mentoring, support from the coordinator, opportunities...with a group who they didn't have to explain their self to, just being with others who just 'get it', being in the majority even just once a week was empowering and having the opportunity to express their self in a safe space meant they were able to build upon resilience to manage and challenge the systemic racism they encountered during their time at secondary school.

My youngest child is still attending and echoes the above"

Parent of Supplementary School Student

Provider: WECIL

Length of Commission:

3 + 1 +1 (ending 31st March 2024)

Commissioner :

Dee Chaddha

Service

Befriending/buddying Scheme for disabled young people

No of service users actively engaged

32 young people

Key highlights

All but one link has resumed face to face contact. Young people enjoying a range of activities with befrienders including swimming, cinema, trips to park, art and crafts, pantomime, eating out etc.

Providing opportunities for young people to have social experiences with peers away from their carers and develop their independence and confidence, whilst having a fun-time.

Provider secured pantomime tickets for families to enjoy.

Whole family activities during the summer so that families of disabled children can have a break and connect with other families in similar circumstances.

Key challenges:

Retention and recruitment of volunteers. This is a challenge that many services are facing in the current climate.

More of the Young people referred to the service tend to have complex needs

Service user quotes:

"A is fantastic. D really enjoys going out with her".

"Dear Cleis ,You are so wonderful. You go way beyond your job in supporting us."

"She has been amazing. I was able to go to a gym induction whilst E took J out".

"C always brings something new and exciting for me to discover. She also knows what I like

and organises her experiments to incorporate my likes. If I'm tired, C will change activity or go slow”

“It gives K the confidence to do things outside of the family home. She is at the right age to start to learn to be more independent.”

“D is loving spending time with J. They went to Sydney gardens this morning and I was able to spend some time with F”

Provider: B&NES Carers Centre

Length of Commission: 3+2 years

Service - Young Carers Service

No of service users actively engaged

745 registered with service (min. will receive newsletter)

607 young people accessing short break activities

- **Key highlights**

- *Young Carers Council launched and has 12 members so far, and have taken part in a radio show for Somer valley FM.*

We had great feedback from our February Activities

- *100% felt the adults were friendly and helpful*
- *87.5% felt the activities were interesting*
- *100% felt the activities were the right length of time*
100% felt connected with other young carers.
- *100% had fun.*
- *75% had a short break from my caring role.*
- *87.5% felt happier at the end of the activity*
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Key challenges:

- Recruiting permanent staff
- Cost of Living – impact on service users and staff team.
- Rising cost of delivering service.

Service user quotes

- *‘He loved it and was very inspired’*
- *‘Archery was a good confidence boost.’*
- *‘I want to thank Mike and all the other staff members on the creative day who were all so wonderful and welcoming. Despite the adults outnumbering the children at the creative session Belle really enjoyed herself. I am so grateful that these opportunities exist for young carers 😊’ (Note - This was due to working with Students at the University of Bath)*
- *‘My son had a great time. He made some new friends and asked to do archery more often so I bought him a bow and arrow kids set to play at home.’*

- *'The archery was really fun and I enjoyed making new friends.'*
- *'My girls enjoy all the activities they've done, thank you for all you do!'*
- My son was nervous about coming but was soon put at ease and is keen to come to more activity sessions"
- *'Thanks for all your help and support over the years Lindsey. It has made a huge difference.'*
- *I had a text from S's mum thanking me about how M helped his son with his anxiety and made a gr I had a text from S's mum thanking me about how M helped his son with his anxiety and made a great friendship with M.*
- *'My daughter is coeliac, dairy and soy intolerant and I felt confident that she would be well looked after.'*
- *'Thank you ever so much for last Saturday, M came off the coach with the biggest smile on his face I had seen in a long time, He was absolutely buzzing he said he had a great day! M is very much looking forward to coming along to another trip.*
- *'My daughter is coeliac, dairy and soy intolerant and I felt confident that she would be well looked after.'*

Provider: SARI

Length of commission: 5 + 2

Service

Cultural Diversity and Equalities work with schools

Cultural Diversity and Equalities work with Children's Social Care

No of service users actively engaged

Age 0-4 We worked with 176 x 0-9 years

5-11 We worked with 176 x 0-9 years

11-18 We worked with 150 x 10-15 year olds and 55 x 16-19 year olds

18-25 We worked with 41 x 20-24 year olds.

Key highlights:

Increased number of requests for 1-1 interventions with young people and for assemblies and workshops in schools.

Service has exceeded the targets for both 121 and school interventions. Regardless of this no school has been turned away and have continued to support schools as they approach us.

3 schools have signed up to the Race Equality Charter and 20 schools have taken part in the Charter Implementation Workshops

Key challenges:

Challenge is still there in making sure that we have wider range of schools requesting this intervention. We also realise that we offer up to 30 sessions in total (3 per person), however this has been difficult to implement as most require just 1 or 2 sessions. Also similar to the previous quarter, ensuring that schools submit their evaluations has also been a challenge which we will need to address for the next quarter.

Service user quotes:

- *'Fantastic to have Shanze working with the children, including our Equality Team. Many thanks, it was all extremely valuable.'* – **Headteacher, Farmborough School**
- *'It was a shame that we did not have even more time as my year 5 and 6 class were very interested in the content and found the discussions surrounding equality and diversity fascinating – it started a lot of conversations.'* – **Deputy Headteacher, Roundhill Primary**

School

- *'I learned a lot about our country, I didn't know curry was the national food!' 'It got me thinking about all of the ways that we are different from each other but can still be friends. 'The quiz was really good fun too- I did really well!'* – **Feedback from children at Roundhill Primary School**



Provider: Project 28 Substance Misuse Service
Length of Commission: HCRG Care Group contract- 2024
Commissioner: HCRG (Amanda Davis) Council (Celia Lasheras/Gilles Bergeron)

Service:
 Project 28 is the B&NES drug and alcohol treatment service for young people aged 11-18, their transitional worker continues supporting and facilitates engagement with adult services for people 18-25. P28 would meet young people at school, at home or at Project 28 when they feel most comfortable. They deliver PSHE at schools and promote their digital platform the Wrap :- <http://www.thewrapdhi.org.uk/> which provide films information and self-help tools. The platform also enables teachers to deliver training for young people around the harms of substances using films and information.
 They support young people by working in partnership with Youth Connect South West delivering outreach five evenings per week with the aim to reach the most disaffected and disengaged young people living in poverty.

No of service users actively engaged 126

Age	0-11	1	11- 18	125	18 -25	30
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Key Highlights

- Peer Mentoring service- 13 Peers
- Partnership working with Youth Connect South West
- Detached service 5 evenings per week
- Girls group every Tuesday evening after school
- Diversionary activities through summer months
- Cost of living funding to purchase items to promote young people's well being
- All staff are trained in exploitation
- Planned exits, successful completions (94%) above national average (81%)
- All young people had an intervention within 3 weeks
- Higher than national average referrals from children and young people services

Key Challenges

- Knife crime
- Gathering groups in large numbers

Inhalants

Service User Quotes

'Thank you for being there for me'
 'You helped me turn my life around'
 'I always thought I would need drugs in my life, but you have shown me I am better than that and I can do better than that'
 'I could not have got out of dealing if you had not helped me.'

Provider: Southside Family Project
Length of Commission: 2021-2024

Commissioner : Heather Brumby

Service: Family Support and Play Service

No of service users actively engaged
488

Age 0-5 – 34, age 6-10 – 227, age 11-15 – 152, age 16-18 – 13, age 19-25 - 11

Age	0-4 36	5-11 286	11-18 147
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Key highlights

- The Young Advocate team have continued to meet throughout 2022-23 and are actively recruiting more members
- On all Family Support assessments there is specific section to record the child's voice and their view of what the situation is they are living in and the support they think they or their parents need.
- At the close of the work, children are consulted to get their voice to find out what was helpful, what not so helpful and their view of how things have changed as a result of the support they have received.
- We have developed our online feedback survey and workers ask for children and young people's feedback at the close of work where appropriate.
- We have developed a Participation Policy to reflect the practice as outlined above.

Key challenges:

Cost of living and the impact on families ability to provider for themselves
High level of emotional and mental health support need, not enough services to support
The COVID-19 aftermath continues to have has increased the need and complexity of cases referred to Southside. This is reflected throughout all Early Help services.

Service user quotes

Feedback from the Nurture Groups:

"I thought it was going to be boring at the start, but now I don't ever, ever, ever want to leave!" "It feels like Christmas I'm so lucky" "I had to go to hospital, and this has made me forget about my memories"

"Thank you so much for your support, it was really helpful and needed we really can't thank you enough."

Provider: Mentoring Plus

Length of Commission: New contract started March 2021 for 3 years +1+1

Service: Volunteer Mentoring Service for Vulnerable Young People

No of service users actively engaged

Age	5-11	11-18	30
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Key highlights

- Improved accessibility and opportunity for children and young people to provide feedback to each provision anonymously. This is accessed through a secure web link and young people are given space to provide both targeted and general feedback about the service they receive
- Youth Reps and Girls' Group are service user advocacy group, available to mentoring graduates, who meet weekly (YR) or monthly (GG) in term time to share and give back to other young people what they learnt and experienced through mentoring. The groups take responsibility by co designing and planning projects of their choosing, events, attending training and developing their own manifestos and calls to action.
- Free transport is provided to enable access for all young people
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Key challenges

- Action identified to include young people in the recruitment process
- Increased demand for services
- The long-term impact of COVID restrictions continue to impact on Young People's ability to participate in projects and support community events

Service user quotes

"For starters it helped me to be more confident and doing all the different things with my mentor. And because of that I enjoyed it all because my mentor made it fun and interesting."

"I would say mentoring smashed everything and I don't think mentoring plus can do anything better because it's perfect at everything you do there."

"I think the friends I hang around with accept me for who I am, I like who I am now"

"I'm very confident. I've just got a lot better at talking to anyone. I've got a lot better at starting conversations. Mentoring has helped this a lot and getting involved in a nice friendship group"

"Really good at picking the perfect match, really good at sorting things – on the ball with everything. Don't know how to put into words, it's exactly what I needed."

Provider: Youth Connect South West

Length of commission: 4th November 2019 – 3rd November 2024

Service:

To provide targeted early help for children and young people aged 13 – 19 (up to 25 with SEND), living in Bath and North East Somerset who have additional or complex needs to improve their outcomes and reduce inequalities by.

- Helping young people overcome barriers to fully engage in education, employment or training meeting statutory duties as specified in the description of service.
- Providing support and interventions that will engage and challenge vulnerable young people to help them develop their resilience and make a positive difference to their lives and to their communities

No of service users actively engaged:

90 young people on the targeted case load

Age 5-11	Age 11-18	Age 18 - 25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key highlights ● Young people / service users are part of our interview panel for potential new staff and their feedback is used to recruit new employees. ● Our annual survey is about to be launched so we will have an update on this over the next few months. ● A young person's trustee has just been appointed to the board. ● We have just recruited the Wellbeing project Lead who will start in May 2023. ● As part of our support, we complete an EHA and Action plan which we review with YP every 12 weeks to gain feedback/evaluation of our support. ● Feedback form is completed with YP at the end of their support. ● An annual survey is completed with all YP to gain further feedback on the support they have received from YCSW. ● Staff have all undergone Mental Health First Aid training and understand how these issues and other challenges can affect YP. ● Staff have created workbooks and resources which are shared amongst the team and can be used to support YP with a diverse range of issues. ● We have internal champions who have greater knowledge of how ASD and allergies can affect YP and these knowledge / training / resources are shared amongst the staff teams. 		
<p>Key challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing approach to accessibility including engaging with black and ethnic minority communities. ● There has been an increase in demand for our services which has resulted in waiting lists and temporarily closing 1:1 support. 		
<p>Service User Quotes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Z and I would like to say a massive thank you for all the help, advice, and support that you have given us. We are truly thankful for everything you have done. Z has had his medical problems for coming up to five years and you were the only person that supported and listened to Z whilst also taking an interest in his conditions to help with a way going forward regarding his education. Z and I have felt that no other organisations would listen to our problems, and we felt lost in the system. Now, with your guidance, we feel that we can move forward and that is something that we had not felt in the past four years and half years before you came support Z. So a massive thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making such a massive positive impact in not just mine but more importantly Z's life too. 2. I don't think the last 6 months or so would have been possible without the support from C which is why I think it would be really good if C and Jack could see school to the end. 3. <i>I think it helped me be able to just like be able to open up more and start going to school again really. Meeting M was meeting someone knew and that was a lot for my confidence.</i> Would you recommend this support to other young people? <i>Yeah, I have.</i> Any other comments? <i>Helpful and a safe space.</i> 		

Provider: Oxford Health NHS Trust

Length of Commission: 7 years

Service:
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

No of service users actively engaged:

SUPPORTING SERVICE DESIGN

Participation is embedded within strategic groups operating across BSW. This ensures the voice of children young people, and their families is an integral part of service design and development.

- **Contributing to the development of the 16-25 pathway**

Staff from the 16-25 team regularly join Participation team meetings to consult the group and feedback on developments.

Members of the group have developed and delivered an interactive workshop exploring young people's views and experience of transition which has been used with our group and which they hope to deliver to other young people's groups in our area.

- **Assertive outreach review**

The group shared their experience of OSCA and assertive outreach – what they valued most and would like to see continue after the review. They had loads of ideas including developing “About me” document that could be used to communicate the support preferences of individual young people. The manager leading the review promised to include their views and let them know the outcome of the review process.

- **Appreciative Inquiry Day to review CAMHS Liaison Service**

Five members of the Participation team people attended the liaison review day and played a key role, sharing their experience and views regarding what would make our liaison service outstanding. Comments included:

“I'd like to see better communication between doctors, nurses and CAMHS workers to ensure that at no point a young person feels that they are not heard and do not deserve every bit of help they are receiving.”

“Clinicians should use gender inclusive language and practice. Encourage clinicians to be aware of Queer / LGBTQIA identities and the basics of what treating Queer people with respect and dignity looks like.”

- **Website**

The team contributed to website development plans and in particular filming plans. They had loads of ideas and suggestions and subsequently one of our young people, who is studying media, developed a plan for structuring the ‘welcome to base’ films. She then joined the website editorial group meeting to present her ideas. Her suggestions were well received, and she subsequently produced films introducing the BaNES site and the Salisbury site, working with local staff and young people.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

- **Single Point of Access (SPA)**

The Participation team has worked closely with the SPA Manager to develop and trial a mechanism for exploring young people's experience of the SPA. After one of the meetings the manager wrote, ***"Thank you to all that contributed to the meeting; the gems of information, ideas and thoughts have been amazing. I can already tell that this has created so many ideas for future service development."***

SUPPORTING STAFF TRAINING AND WIDER EDUCATION OF CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE

- **Participation training for students at Bath University**

In May and again in March the Participation team delivered a half day training session to Clinical psychology students at Bath University. The session included a range of interactive and experiential activities which worked very well. The feedback they got was stunning.

This was such a useful, insightful, and thought-provoking session. I really loved the exercises and activities the young people set up - these were excellent and bringing the ideas and experiences to life for us but also things I will take with me into my role in lots of areas.

I felt really privileged to hear from the young people and was struck by their honest, open, and constructive sharing of their own experiences, views, and opinions. I particularly found the honing in on experiences (e.g., experience of inpatient, neurodiverse, LGBTQ+ YP) useful and bringing to life these experiences more.

- **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy skills training**

In May two members of the Participation team attended an online training session for staff on DBT skills. The young people provided their perspective of attending DBT/RODBT groups and highlighted what they valued and what they found challenging. They also responded to questions from participants.

PARENT/CARER SUPPORT GROUP

Between May and December, monthly Parent carer support groups took place facilitated by a Family therapist and the Participation lead. Feedback from the parents was positive and they appreciated having a space to talk and an opportunity share the challenges of supporting children who are struggling with mental health issues.

However, the group remained small, and we decided to pause the group over the winter and relaunch in the Spring with a stronger focus on publicity and recruitment

STAFF RECRUITMENT

It's been great to see increasing numbers of young people sought for involvement in the recruitment process.

Our youngest member at 13 undertook recruitment training and then joined a day of interviews at Marlborough CAMHS for a Psychotherapy trainee. Feedback from all involved was very positive including from the young person's mum who wrote,

"This is such a great thing for A to be asked to do and I know she's looking forward to it – I'm very impressed by her preparation already."

And following the day she wrote,

“Thanks for making sure everything went so well yesterday – it sounds like it was a really great experience.”

Another member of the group participated in service manager recruitment. The interviews took place over two days, and it was a gruelling process, but her input was invaluable and afterwards the managers involved wrote and thanked her, commenting on how professional, articulate, and insightful she was and how valuable her input had been. She appreciated the feedback very much and found the process both rewarding and empowering.

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Service user quotes:

“Our participation is driven by hope – hope that we can use our experience to make positive changes, hope that we can improve and increase the support young people receive, and hope that things can be better for us all.” (Thom 20)

“I’ve enjoyed being part of the Participation team, especially as I get to share my experience as a trans person who has accessed CAMHS. I have been able to let people working in mental health care know things I wish the people responsible for my care had known. Health care for trans people is often so ineffective and frustrating for us, due to the ignorance and lack of education and awareness about trans and other queer issues, so it’s been good to be able to contribute to services becoming more inclusive through participation. More participation can only be good, and I hope next year more young people will be able to share their experiences and shape the services they and their peer’s use.” (Ian 20)

Provider: Connecting Families

Length of Commission: we are funded by the Government Supporting Families programme, from the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities.

Commissioner : N/A

Service

Connecting Families (CF) is the name which B&NES Council has given to its core team leading the programme of Service transformation as part of Central Government’s Supporting Families Programme (SFP). The team works with families who have the most complex needs and require intensive interventions to help them achieve positive outcomes for themselves. We aim to break down intergenerational cycles of deprivation and poor outcomes, prevent problems from escalating and reduce the need for the involvement of statutory services.

Our track record of helping the most ‘troubled’ families transform their life stories through intensive, flexible, and personalised support packages, shows how empowering families creates real transformation, as families are the masters of their own destiny. The Connecting Families Team’s

innovative approach has enabled family members find employment, improve their school attendance, maintain reductions in drug use and anti-social behaviour and see a decline in child protection concerns. Families are positive about their futures. This directly supports the Council's strategic objective to "promote independence and positive lives for everyone" working with families that are the hardest to engage and/or living in the most deprived parts of B&NES.

The aim of the programme is to **turn the lives of families around** and make a positive difference to the families' progress by successfully addressing at least 3 of the following criteria:

1. Getting a good education.
2. Good early years development.
3. Improved mental & physical health.
4. Promoting recovery & reducing harm from substance use.
5. Improve family relationships.
6. Children safe from abuse & exploitation.
7. Crime prevention & tackling crime.
8. Safe from domestic abuse.
9. Secure housing
10. Financial stability

No of service users actively engaged

The CFT work with approx. 80 families which is approx. 300 children and young people at any one time, they are across all age groups.

Key highlights

- The CFT regularly involve children, young people and families and have effectively and strong relationships with them
- Families are involved as partners with staff, this means that they are fully involved with their assessment of their needs, action plans and outcomes recorded.
- Young people and families are always involved with all interviews and take active role in scoring and the appointment of new staff.
- All children, young people and families are asked to give feedback about all aspects of the service and staff from the Head of Service to the key workers.
- We have started supporting a small group of service users / young people who are keen to have their voice heard to engage with officer to promote more involvement with key issues and topics that they feel strongly about.

Key challenges:

Time to engage children and young people to ensure that their voice is heard

Family Feedback

My son "most enjoyed being taken to get new uniform as Paul treated him afterwards to some food. He said he was really worried that he might have to turn up to school with just a basic uniform and some of the stuff he had tried on at the Clothing cupboard was really tight - instead he got brand new clothes." Mum said seeing his face on the first morning of school was "the best thing."

Paul has done everything that he said he was going to and even more, as my partner wasn't expecting any help, and Paul is now supporting him as well.



Paul Bennett



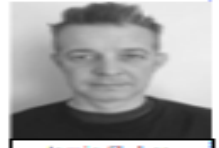
Hannah Heald

"Hannah is approachable and easy to get on with and talk to, she listens and is very down to earth and non-judgmental, she has helped with lots of advice on different things from practical support to emotional stuff."

If I hadn't received the support from Hannah at Connecting Families "I think I would of continued to feel very overwhelmed, very lost really in terms of where to get help, and just massively overwhelmed with everything that needs to be done but not knowing where to go."

"Jamie has such a positive and enthusiastic nature and I always enjoy our meetings and often feel better about things after. I can't think of anything that hasn't gone well."

My son and I were not in a good place. "Our relationship was breaking down. If Jamie hadn't joined us, I think it would have continued to deteriorate. Jamie has made a real difference and that's made such a n improvement to our daily lives."



Jamie Flukes



Joan Cooper

"Joan is a very compassionate lady who really listened to what we had to say and offered us lots of help. We would have been left foundering without her support." Joan chased up appointments and brought in the Connecting Families Employment Advisor to help with claiming benefits.

Children's Centre Services 0-5

Provider: Bright Start Children's Centre Services

Length of Commission: 3 years (2020-2023) - NOW IN-HOUSE

Commissioner : Paula Bromley

Service: Early Help Family Support to families with children aged 0-5 years
(0-8 years for parenting and Theraplay)

No of service users actively engaged
616

Age	0- 4 (392)	5-11 (85)	11-18	41	18-25	98
	TOTAL: 477					

Key highlights

- **Long-awaited move** to Hope House Centre, Radstock, alongside GPs and other public health opportunities.
- Excellent **staff recruited** to vacancies and maternity leave cover.
- Strong working relationship with ONE CHURCH, Keynsham who are providing various **volunteers** to support work with centre and families; seeking to develop on this for other areas.

- Very good uptake of **OUTDOOR PLAY AND EXPLORE** in all three Children's Centre areas (Radstock, Bath and Keynsham).
- Good uptake of recently-adopted 'open' **BRIGHT BEGINNINGS** (for parents with infants – a post-pandemic cohort of concern).
- Perinatal groups (**MY TIME MY SPACE** and **OUR TIME OUR SPACE**) supporting high numbers of 'at risk' mothers or mothers with complex needs.
- Successful **FOOD CLUB in Keynsham** running with good uptake - supported by Volunteers
- Supporting a parent-led **INFANT FEEDING GROUP** (also ex- Health Visitor) in Radstock to address low breastfeeding levels in this area.
- Strong working relationship being developed with BATH OPPORTUNITY PRE-SCHOOL and ACTION FOR CHILDREN to ensure optimal service delivery of **PORTAGE PLAY & EXPLORE GROUP** for pre-school children with SEND across BANES.
- Increased numbers of fathers engaged through evening-run **VIRTUAL FAMILY LINKS PARENTING PROGRAMMES**.
- Further staff member (Co-ordinator) able to attend Systemic training (meaning 3 Managers (HL, JuP, JeP) and 3 Practitioners (MH, LF and WC) will be trained
- Service co-facilitating **Trauma Informed Practice workshops** to Children's Services (Social Care and Early Help) staff to support understanding and address of Vicarious trauma
- **Trauma Counselling Service** seeing good numbers of referrals coming through; Parents reporting the approach provides address not previously felt or seen through other mental health services.

Key challenges:

- **Staffing vacancies and recruitment** – 2022
- **Parental confidence in attending groups** - waned in the early part of academic year (although significantly improved @ April / May 2023)
- **Building issues** in Radstock.
Unable to use the outside area for 8 months following move; ongoing building snag issues affecting functioning at times.
- **Parking issues in Bath** (have to pay £6.80 minimum to attend for groups and clinics; reimbursement offered; minimal uptake; affecting service delivery / uptake)
- **Parking issues in Radstock** – limited capacity in the area for parents and staff.
Whilst acutely impacted by plentiful construction work in the area, it is felt this will continue due to competition with Post-Office staff, users of GP surgery and town centre.
Note: The nature of outreach work means car access is crucial and use of public transport impossible.
- Very **high levels of need for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Social Emotional Mental (SEMH)**; continual review and actions to optimise capacity to meet need.
- **Service had hoped to recruit a much-needed Volunteer Co-ordinator** (using COMF monies, with sustainable model being supported by Connecting Families team going forward). Budget pressures meant this was not possible. This continues to be investigated this coming financial year as there are a number of opportunities to incorporate volunteers into the services' delivery (gardening, Food Club, practical support for families, etc).
- Data Reporting continues to be an ongoing issue

Service user quotes:

Theraplay - M assisted us to find ways to nurture xx and better-understand what his triggers are and what causes them. We are better-positioned to react more appropriately when he's oversensitive or losing control of himself. Overall, we are all happier around each other and reduce strong emotional reactions.

Portage Play & Explore - Thank you for letting me come to today's session, it was so lovely for both the children and the parents. They both seemed so relaxed in the calm in a beautiful environment and having professionals to speak too knowing their children were safe. This group is wonderful, having attended the outdoor play and explore which I also love attending, but this is perfect for children with SEN, think this is filling the gap until both child and parent feel comfortable in the environment. Especially when parents are struggling with diagnosis and find it difficult to access different groups, as not sure how their children will be in a different environment.

My Time My Space – the group helped me feel I belong, and I am not on this journey alone. Having a calm space to be me in knowing xx is safe and happy and also having fun himself has been so important to my recovery journey.

Children's Group - This group has given me the confidence to leave xx with other people. given me space, time, and sanity for 'me time' that I don't get at home. XX has learnt, changed, and developed so much since coming here.

Provider: Action for Children

Length of Commission: Since 5/1/18. 3 years plus 2. Now on a 1-year contract to 31st March 2024

Service: Bath West Children's Centre Service

165 children supported in Q4 2022/23

Key highlights

Action for Children have a national Participation and Engagement Officer- Sarah Reynolds who supports the involvement of children and young people.

The provision of groups in the community has been widely welcomed. The service has recognised that many families have required additional support to attend groups. Very young children have struggled with being in groups. Group planning reflects the lack of social opportunities young children have had during the Pandemic.

Key challenges:

Children in their early years have been particularly impacted by the Pandemic. Their social and emotional development has been delayed due to lack of social opportunities. The open access groups have paid particular attention to this deficit in planning group activities e.g., speech and language and sharing.

Service user quotes:

- Your compassion, consideration, support, and care have always been from the heart.

We are grateful that you have supported us for so long. We appreciate your kindness and humility. Your smile and kind heart make you a wonderful person to be around. Your commitment to helping people grow and find meaning in their lives makes you a valuable resource.

- Having support from AFC has impacted massively and gave me confidence to know I have as doing right by the children. I think the children would have all needed emotional support and would have struggled with school life if we didn't receive the support. We are much better and happier as a family, i have confidence back in my parenting. Thank you so much.
- Thank you so much for all your support, I really don't know how I would have done all this without your help

Mental Health Services 16 - 25 Support DONE

Provider
Bath Mind

Length of Commission: not stated

Service: Intensive Outreach

Age	18-25	10
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Key highlights:

- 8/10 people have improved Warwick Edinburgh scores
- 4/5 people reported a reduction in self-harm
- 7/10 people are now engaging with wellbeing groups in community
- 8/10 people feel like they are better able to manage their mental health and wellbeing

Key challenges:

- We find that more support sessions are cancelled with this client group
- Financial support is a common theme with this client group
- Higher number of EUPD and complex trauma diagnosis in this client group

Service user quotes:

“Bath Mind has been the best support I have received for my mental health. I especially liked that it was with consistent people and the support was person centred”

“The support really helped my put some purpose and routine back into my life”

Provider: Bath Mind

Length of Commission: Spot Purchase

Service: Community Support Service

Key highlights:

Supporting an autistic client who was previously virtually housebound with anxiety to move to independent accommodation. This is amazing progress.

Advocating for and supporting a client to take over the tenancy from their mother when moving would have caused overwhelming anxiety and mental health decline.

Supporting a client to manage the responsibilities and workload of university.
Good multi agency working for many of these clients.

Key Challenges:

All the clients of this age group that we support have autism and this can limit their engagement with different support workers. One client has struggled to make progress after a diabetes diagnosis, and we will be ending his support until he is better able to engage.

Service user quote

“I receive support with life skills and organisation that is very helpful. My support worker is great, they all are.”

Provider: Second Step

Length of Commission: Current contract ends March 2024

Commissioner: HCRG

Service: Bath & North East Somerset Floating Support

No of service users actively engaged: 19

Key Highlights :

One of our 18-25s has been with the service for approx. 18 months and has made huge progress in this time. This includes:

- Work to build confidence and to walk the recovery journey, including a first every support session outside their home
- Work towards gaining driving licence
- Able now to take the initiative to address issues with his housing provider

Our other 18-25 has been with the service for less than 2 months, however in this time they have built a very positive relationship with their Recovery Coach, who has supported them at 2 very stressful work (sickness) related meetings. This is still an ongoing piece of work but already highly beneficial for the service user.

Key Challenges:

- Challenges with benefits agencies – intensive support often required to navigate this and liaise with them for things like PIP assessments / reviews.

Service user quote

None available at this time – feedback being sought service-wide in May 2023.

LD Support

Provider: Swallow
 B&NES –Youth Group project is funded by Children in Need

B&NES commission the SWALLOW Base House that accepts referrals from 16+ but currently only have people over the age of 18 attending.

Service:
No of service users actively engaged:

Age	11-18 6 18+	18-25 10
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Key Highlights
 We love the opportunity to work with younger people at SWALLOW and the Base House is testament to that.
 The SWALLOW Youth group for teenagers with a learning disability, continues to be a great success.

Key challenges

- Funding for the youth group

Service user quotes:
 J says that feels safe at Base House and enjoys mixing with the other people he stays with

Section B
Capturing 'Voice of the Child' within Social Care. 2022-2023

Key Highlights

- The Young Ambassador (YA) programme has been adapted and now commissions individual care experienced young adults to work on specific projects and consultations. The YA budget is therefore used with a wider proportion of young people. Alongside this, we will look to recruit 1x YA going forward.
- Clear guidance for staff and partner agencies has been completed and presented to social care staff.
- To further develop a Care Experienced Council
- To increase participation in the junior/senior in care councils
- Young Ambassadors and In Care Council have been consulted on our Pledge and Local Offer
- Social Care are facilitating a group called Building Bridges; this group is comprised of families that have had previous social work involvement. They are now working with Social Care to provide advice on what works most effectively when Social Care are working with families. They will eventually receive training with a view to becoming advocates for families involved with Social Care.
- There is now an Instagram page to aid communication with young people
- Pathways Plans have been updated and are now embedded in practice.

- To contribute to the Corporate Parenting Group Meeting.
 - To ensure information is accessible for children and young people who have different communication needs who are open to social care.
 - To have a resource available for young people explaining the safeguarding and court process
 - To inspect specific areas of the service from a YP perspective - still needs to be progressed.
 - Care Experienced young adults have assisted with the training of Foster Carers.
 - Care leavers week was a huge success, and we are planning for 2023. Care experienced young adults will be taking the lead in this year's celebrations.
 - The most recent OFSTED inspection (2022) rated services to children in care and care leavers as 'Good', with voices of children commented on
- **Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service**
 - A leaflet has been designed by parents and carers for parents and carers which explains what can be expected at a child protection case conference.
 - Shout Out as the advocacy service working with children across Bath and North East Somerset supported the service to design a leaflet for all children 11+ years which explains what a child protection case conference is and what happens. There was also some input from a young person who themselves had been subject to a child protection plan.
 - Independent Chairs routinely contact all parents and carers ahead of a child protection conference to allow them opportunity to voice any concerns or dissatisfaction. To ensure they are aware of the concerns leading to conference, have seen reports and feel prepared for the meeting.
 - All children 11+ years are referred to Shout Out when an Initial Child Protection Conference has been requested in respect of them and their siblings. Children have attended conferences with the support of their advocate or completed a statement with their advocate which is then read out at the conference.
 - All child in care review records are written directly to the child so that should they wish to read these they are more accessible. All children receive a letter from their IRO following their child in care review which highlights what was discussed or what the child shared.
 - All children, their careers and parents are sent consultation forms ahead of a child in care review and IRO's will discuss these with the child ahead of the review.
 - IRO's have continued to maintain contact with children throughout the pandemic, IRO's have been issued with iphones to broaden how they can maintain contact with children in care, this has been very successful.
 - IRO's have need to become more creative in supporting children to participate in their review

whilst these have been held virtually, IRO's have played games with children over zoom such as scavenger hunt, quizzes, find the object.

- IRO's have met with children in the community social distanced, taking a walk at the local park – these have provided new opportunities to see children in their environment and supported conversations to take place away from family and carers.
- The IRO service was instrumental in supporting children in care to participate in the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey undertaken with children in care aged 4 -18 across Bath and NE Somerset. The responses obtained will be a unique opportunity to find out how children are feeling about their lives in care and give the opportunity to look at the services provided and how well they are meeting children's needs. IRO's acted as the trusted adult, supporting the child to complete the survey.
- The IRO service with input from the In Care Council produced recommendations as to an information pack that should be made available to all children in care, the content of the information pack has been designed with input from the In Care Council and the Young Ambassadors. Children's Social Care are now responsible for launching this and IRO's will become responsible for ensuring all children have this. The information pack seeks to ensure children in care know their rights and entitlements.

All children upon coming into care will be sent a one-page profile about their IRO, this lets children know who they are, how they can be contacted and what their role is.

Key Challenges

Care Outcomes

- Young Ambassadors under review
- Prioritisation of work plan
- To inspect specific areas of the service from a YP perspective

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service

- Obtaining feedback from children, their parents and carers remains an area of focus for the service. Feedback systems have been introduced within the child protection service, but a feedback strategy needs to be developed for the IRO service.
- The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service is keen to strengthen its links with the In Care Council and hear directly from children in care as to the issues they feel should be areas of priority for the IRO service.
- The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service will be looking at the templates used across the service to see how these can be improved to become more accessible to children and their families.
- Input from those with lived experience is needed and consideration to be given as to how this

can be achieved.

Report: July 2023

Author: Sarah McCluskey