



**Included in decision-
making**

**Young People's
Scrutiny Panel: making
services accountable
to
Sheffield, January, 2021**

Following their results from the *Your life, your care* and *Your life beyond care* surveys Sheffield set up a 'reverse scrutiny panel' of young people to monitor and challenge progress on the action plans that were developed based on the findings from the surveys.

Why?

Sheffield wanted to develop a way to make sure the messages from their children and young people about how they felt and what mattered to them were embedded into their strategic planning. To make sure things changed as a result they wanted to include children in this work on an on-going basis.

What did they do?

The Bright Spots survey findings were discussed at events with young people, carers and strategic leads. Priority areas for action were identified and these were mapped across to the corporate parenting strategy; 7 priorities such as health, education or placements. Each priority area has a lead manager (e.g. Virtual School Head; Assistant Director) and they were tasked to come up with action plan ideas to address the survey findings .

Young people have been supported to form a 'reverse scrutiny panel'. At the first meeting, the lead manager had to present the ideas in the priority area action plan to the young people's panel. Quarterly meetings are held where managers update young people on progress. Managers must submit progress reports one week in advance of the panel and young people come together to discuss and prepare for the panel. This gives young people time to come up with questions and feedback: things they feel are on track as well as areas where managers need to do better.

"We are challenging each of the Priority Groups from our Corporate Parenting Board to develop SMART action plans to respond to the findings and have recruited young people to form the Scrutiny Board...to examine and challenge the work of the Priority Groups. At the first scrutiny board the chairs presented their plans to the young people. All new and different so we shall see how it goes" (Sheffield LA staff)

What difference is it making?

Feedback suggests the quality of the plans are improved from young people's scrutiny. Young people taking part report they feel listened to, empowered to challenge managers and believe their views are taken seriously.

"We have been amazed at the impact that your involvement has had and have seen the Managers you scrutinised make a real effort to act on what you have said they need to improve on"
(Sheffield LA staff)

*We don't know what's meant to happen – is there a policy on this? How have young people been told?**

*We really like this, it's a million times better**

*How do you know that's happening?**

*We don't think you need to do more consultation**

*quotes from young person panel

Priority 2 – Education		Priority 5 – Placements				
Priority Lead – Helen Smith (Virtual School Head)		Priority Lead – Paul Dempsey				
Young people want support around bullying at school		Young people want to know what their plan is and have their own copy that they can understand		Who	When	Completed
The priority lead said The Virtual School have supported the Children in Care Council to develop a presentation for school, the Assembly Squad, so all children can learn about what it's like to be in care. The Virtual School will help get this into schools and shown to all pupils and will put it into their training for new teachers.	The Young People's Panel said The panel thought this was some of the group have been developing this resource.	The priority lead said We are working on a young person friendly version of a plan which we will be using for care leavers and children in care.	The Young People's Panel replied We really like this, it's a million times better.	What we agreed needs to be done Develop the plan in consultation with young people and put it into practice	Paul	Review progress in 3 months
Young people want extra support for maths and English	Young people want to have a say where they live	The priority lead said During 2020 the Virtual School has supported pupils with maths and English on zoom for Y5 and 6 children with the Building Learning Power Club and through a letterbox book club. The Virtual School have supported Y11 pupils with extra maths and English support using fun ways to help them learn. They will start using this with Y10s from January 2021. Foster carers and children's home workers have been trained and given a handbook with ideas to support their young people.	The Young People's Panel replied How do you measure what's helping? Have grades gone, young people enjoying it? How do you support young English as an additional language? How do you let them know it is available?	What we agreed needs to be done Social workers and RfOs will always seek the wishes and feelings of young people and try to include that in their plans	Paul to lead	Review in 3 months
		The priority lead said We have a pocket money policy that was sent to all young people in care. This is included in a pack for young people when they come into care. Pocket money shouldn't be taken forever and young people should know why it's been taken and when they'll get it back.	The Young People's Panel replied How do we know if adults are following the pocket money policy? We don't know what it's meant to happen – is there a policy on this? How have young people been told?	What we agreed needs to be done Supervising social workers will regularly check with foster carers to make sure they know and are following the pocket money policy. A new section of the pocket money policy will be written, in consultation with young people, to include rules around using pocket money as a sanction.	Paul	To be reviewed in 3 months

A presentation on the scrutiny panel by Sheffield, including insights from Taina, one of the panel members, can be viewed here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7st2vueNBsA>