ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

PARTICIPATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

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CONTEXT

1. GENERAL PARTICIPATION IN ROYAL GREENWICH

Royal Greenwich Children's is committed to ensuring the views of children and young people across the borough consistently inform service development and improvement and children and young people are able to have their voice heard.

There are a number of forums for children and young people’s participation in Greenwich including the Greenwich Children and Young Peoples Council, Children in Care Council, Care Leavers forum and the ACE group (board of young people with disabilities).

2. THE BOARD OF DISABLED YOUNG PEOPLE

The ACE group of young people represent young people with SEND in Royal Greenwich. The group have continued to meet monthly to look at issues that RBG ask the Board to review, along with issues they have identified themselves as being important to children and young people in Greenwich with SEND.

Along with the monthly Board meetings, members of The Board also work with RBG staff to help facilitate consultations with other young people across Royal Greenwich.

3. OUR APPROACH

The ACE group moved in 2017 to run from Charlton Park Academy, in order that it is easier for the current group of students to participate, and be actively involved. CPA have supported RBG in this venture with accommodation, and snacks for the session and staff are involved directly in sessions. Recent sessions have been made an integral part of the curriculum on a monthly basis, for a small group of young people, to widen access across the school.

Sessions are flexible and interactive for the young people participating, so that all young people can contribute in a creative and open way that meet their individual communication and learning needs.

The Board has looked at some complex issues this year including:

• The future plans for the group
• Access to leisure activities
• The Local Offer
• Supporting with the evaluation of the bids for the recommissioning of integrated therapies
Sessions are designed to break down these complex issues into a series of tangible activities that the children and young people can understand.

Examples of this can be seen in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Activity description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Session plan image" /></td>
<td>Session plan so young people are fully informed about the content of the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Brainstorm activity image" /></td>
<td>A brainstorm based activity re the future of the group, with a more able student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Circles activity image" /></td>
<td>A “circles” based activity showing what is...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A mat based activity to allow young people to show what they share in terms of priorities with the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

An evaluation tool for Young People to communicate what they thought about the session, and how it worked for them.
4. WHO HAS TAKEN PART?

The ACE group is made up of young people living in Greenwich aged 14-25 with SEND. There are currently 9 young people who are members and the average attendance at a meeting is 5.

The members of the Board vary in their level of need, although most have very significant communication and learning needs. Since September 2016 all young people attending are from Charlton Park Academy (the local severe/complex needs special secondary school).

5. WHAT HAVE THE BOARD FOCUSED ON THIS YEAR?

This year the Board have completed a number of projects including:

- The future plans for the group
- Access to leisure activities
- The Local Offer
- Supporting with the evaluation of the bids for the recommissioning of integrated therapies

6. HOW WE RECORDED OUR INFORMATION

We record information from our consultations in a number of ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Picture Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Book”</td>
<td>We record the purpose and outcome of each session in a large book for the group of young people to review. This helps the young people recall what we have previously covered in sessions and is an accessible record of the meetings for them. The Book includes photographs, symbols, and pieces if “work” from the sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session write-ups</td>
<td>During the session facilitating staff take notes and photographs of what the young people say or create, and formally record this as a session report following the date of the meeting. IPADS are now being used within the session for feedback and to get pictures and records of the activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. WHAT DID WE FIND OUT THIS YEAR?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Integrated therapies bid marking** | • Young People liked the apps there were part of the successful bid  
• Young people liked the bids that provided an accessible version that they could all access |
| **Local Offer website**       | **What did they say?**  
• “I want to take this home and show my mum”  
• “We need more videos”  
• “Photos! Symbols! Videos!”  
  
  The Board felt the website was easy to find but hard to use.  
  They would like the homepage to have more accessible buttons.  
  They felt the pages needed less text and more colour to make them more interesting. |
| **Future plans for the group** | **What did they say?**  
• “I like outdoor activities”  
• “I like adventure”  
• Bowling? – “YES!!”  
  
  The Board would like to meet other young people in Royal Greenwich who are interested in having their voices heard and making change.  
  The Board would like there to be more ACE members.  
  The Board would like to organise fun activities for themselves. |
### 8. WHAT DID/WILL WE DO?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Integrated therapies bid marking** | • We also asked prospective bidders to submit an easy read bid for young people to evaluate.  
• We worked with young people to evaluate the bids submitted for this contract. Young people’s views were worth 5% of the vote, as were parents and carers. |
| **Local Offer website** | • Teams across Inclusion, Learning and Achievement are looking at developing video’s to explain their key services for the local offer.  
• We are working with colleagues on looking at how we can make the presentation of information more simple and will be working with the external provider to make changes to the format of the local offer.  
• Young People have decided to design their own flier and page for the Local offer to communicate about participation. They are meeting with the design team to facilitate this.  
• We have added more options for young people to tell us what they think about the Local Offer and will run another workshop with young people later this year for more feedback. |
| **Future Plans for the group** | • We are meeting with schools, after school clubs and youth groups to set up further ACE groups and to increase membership.  
• A future ACE board meeting will look at planning a fun, activity session to run in the next year. |

### 9. ANALYSIS

**What went well?**

The ACE group run at Charlton Park Academy runs well, and new plans will ensure a wider cohort of Young People will be able to get involved. Running it on site has meant that it is easy to access information about the Young People’s communication and learning needs and make sessions more accessible.

Due to a re-organisation, staffing is now delivered through the Outreach Services, and while this has taken place there has been a lack of continuity in delivering sessions. However, already there are exciting new plans to extend the participation to a wider range of young people, through a “hub and spoke” model and meetings are taking place with a range of different schools and colleges, including Shooters Hill Post 16, Kings Park and The John Roan.

Young People’s input was also recognised formally in the Borough’s “Do the right thing awards” (for more detail see achievements section)

**What could we improve on?**

There is some work to be done on improving the feedback mechanism to young people who have been involved in participation work to let them know what happened with what they told us. This is important to ensure that young people see the value of the consultation work and are encouraged to participate in the future.
ACE has excellent representation of those with complex needs, but it would be a positive development to provide more regular opportunities for those with more developed communication skills to be involved in participation activities. This will open up additional opportunities for disabled young people to be part of more challenging communication contexts such as interview panels etc…

All the participation networks need to be formally linked together, and work is starting to take place with the lead for other areas of participation, to look at how the groups can work together and support each other.

Finally the links between networks for participation activity with families and those with young people need to be created and there are plans to have a joint conference in the next academic year.

10. ACHIEVEMENTS

The achievements of the ACE group were formally recognised, when the group members all won a “Do the right thing “ award, and were invited to a presentation to receive the awards and a gift vouchers to spend in Canary Wharf, in June 2016, from the Director of Children’s Services. Families were also invited to hear more about the work the young people had been doing during the year.
11. OTHER PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

**GYPC**

We have worked with the Greenwich Children and Young People’s council to support a young person from The Board to be a SEND representative.

This was a positive step for the Board as it has raised their profile amongst the wider participation groups in Royal Greenwich and ensured that the views of children and young people with SEND are represented at this level.

ACE will also be working with GYPC on the delivery of their annual event, the Greenwich Young People’s Conference which tackles discrimination.

**SEND Work Experience**

This year we have hosted several Young people with SEND for work experience within the Inclusion, Learning and Achievement directorate. All these young people have engaged in some participation activity as a part of their placement.

**Young Commissioners Project**

This year we have continued to work closely with the Commissioning team in Children’s Service in the development of the Young Commissioners Project.

This project has recruited 8 young people from across Greenwich to be involved in the whole commissioning process across children’s services.
We worked with the commissioning team to support them in making this an inclusive programme and also promoted the opportunity widely amongst SEND young people. We were successful in recruiting 3 young people who identified as having SEND to the programme.

This is a great opportunity to ensure that children and young people with SEND inform commissioning across Greenwich.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Plan in partnership with the young people in ACE what their focus for the next year will be

- Develop a network of participation groups across Greenwich to include Young People with a wider range of communication and learning needs.

- Continue to work with the commissioned provider for other participation activities to ensure that they are confident in making these inclusive to young people with SEND.

- Have a participation conference to include young people and parent participation networks in a single event.

- Develop links with other participation forums for young people across Greenwich