

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 5 March 2019

What kind of Edinburgh?

Item number	7.9
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 invite children, young people and champions from What kind of Edinburgh? to make a presentation on their work and its outcomes to the next meeting in May.
 - 1.1.2 note the progress of What kind of Edinburgh?

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What kind of Edinburgh?

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 What kind of Edinburgh? has involved children and young people from across the city working in partnership with senior staff involved with the work of the Children's Partnership over the past eight months. The final session on empowerment and participation will be held on Wednesday 6 March 2019. Participants are keen to share the outcomes of their work with the Committee and discuss how to increase and develop children and young people's participation in decision-making as part of the commitment towards Edinburgh as a children and young people friendly city.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2017, the Children's Partnership delivered a pilot project on engaging children and young people in decision-making with funding from the Scottish Government. The project consisted of three events and was based on an adaptation of the SNAP (Scottish National Action Plan on Human Rights) model, and was grounded in a children's rights-based approach. Children and young people met first to consider what supports them to be healthy, happy and safe in Edinburgh and what prevents that from happening. Adults – senior staff from across the Children's Partnership – then met to consider the same issues, taking part in the same activities. Finally, both groups met and worked together and the session ended with adults making pledges on what they would do to in response to what they had heard from children and young people. The sessions were facilitated by the Children's Parliament and Young Edinburgh Action.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Following on from the success of the initial three events, the Partnership considered a proposal from the organising group to develop the approach and use a similar methodology to explore children and young people's views and experiences in relation to the Partnership's key strategic outcomes. The programme would again be facilitated by the Children's Parliament and Young Edinburgh Action and would support 40 children and young people to take part throughout the process.

- 4.2 The proposal was agreed with funding secured from Communities and Families and a contribution from NHS Lothian.
- 4.3 Children and young people were recruited from across the city through schools, youth agencies, social media and community groups. The children and young people reflect the diversity of the city and the vast majority had not been involved in children's or youth participation activities before. Staff from the Children's Parliament and Young Edinburgh Action therefore undertook preparatory work so that the children and young people felt more confident and better able to participate in the programme. In order to participate successfully in engagement work of this nature, this preparatory work was essential for the children and young people and consequently, they have participated effectively and on more equal terms. It has also helped them to get the most out of the sessions in terms of their own confidence and skills. This is not to say that children and young people always need to undertake preparatory work before they can participate in engagement activities. However, given the intensive nature of this programme, working directly with senior managers, it was felt to be a necessary part of the process.
- 4.4 The aim of the programme is to develop relationships so that adult decision-makers understand things better from the child/young person's point of view, use this understanding to deliver better services and make sure that children and young people know whether or not they have followed up on the commitments they have made. The key question running throughout the programme is: 'What kind of Edinburgh?'
- 4.5 The initial meeting focussed on participants getting to know each other as well as on sharing hopes and expectations for the project. Subsequent sessions have been based on the Partnership's strategic outcomes, with sessions on 'Equity and fairness', 'Best start in life', 'Health and wellbeing' and 'Attendance and achievement'. The final session will be held on Wednesday 6 March and will focus on 'Empowerment and participation'. It will consist of reflections on the programme, evaluation of its impact, and sharing ideas about how to take forward the outcomes and children and young people's participation in general.
- 4.6 Each session has used a range of creative, children and young people-friendly approaches so that the engagement is based on, and respectful of, the lived experience of those taking part.
- 4.7 Adult participants, known as 'champions', have come from the Partnership Board and Children's Services Management Groups with staff from NHS Lothian, Communities and Families and other parts of City of Edinburgh Council, the voluntary sector and the police. From the outset, the importance of participation throughout the programme was emphasised so that relationships could be developed. Although there have inevitably been some fluctuations in attendance, participation in general has been consistent and feedback has been positive.

- 4.8 As part of each session, champions make pledges in relation to what they have heard in the session and what they will do about it. At the start of the following session, some of these pledges are revisited and progress is shared.
- 4.9 Children and young people's rights have been at the heart of the programme and the methodologies that have been employed throughout, with activities that have used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a key reference point. The Children's Parliament and Young Edinburgh Action are widely recognised for their work in this field.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The final session will enable participants to reflect on the programme and the key messages that have come out from it. It will also consider how these should be shared and with whom. Plans to share findings with the Children's Partnership and with its strategic outcome groups have already been suggested and tentative discussions have already taken place about links with YouthTalk which is currently underway in localities. Work is also underway to identify and agree how best to articulate What kind of Edinburgh? with the wider remit of the Youth Participation Team (Young Edinburgh Action and Scottish Youth Parliament). The children will also be making presentations in their respective schools.
- 5.2 Another suggestion is that some of the children, young people and champions should prepare a report for E,C & F Committee in order to share the work that they have been involved in and discuss its implications for future children and young people's participation across the city. This should be linked in with the theme of Edinburgh as a children and young people friendly city.
- 5.3 The recommendations emerging from What kind of Edinburgh? should also be channelled via, for example #MakeADifference to better connect and communicate with existing children and young people's networks and to open up channels for conversations on current and new issues to better influence policy.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The total cost of the programme was £60,000. Communities and Families contributed £50,000 and NHS Lothian contributed £10,000.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The programme is specifically about developing a way to engage strategically with stakeholders which will have a range of positive impacts on communities and across the city.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 The report on the Scottish Government funded pilot (see 3.1) is available at:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/model-engagement-children-young-people-planners-development-childrens-services-plans/>

9. Appendices

None