



Wigan[♥]
Council

PARTICIPATION REPORT 2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT



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Introduction



Welcome to 2024-2025 Annual Participation Report, the third report for the Participation Strategy 2022-2025. This year we have continued to ensure that children and young people feel heard and respected. Youth voice is about more than being heard, it is about taking action based on what young people are telling us. During this reporting period, children and young people have been instrumental in holding senior leaders and professionals to account for progress made against the Participation Strategy.

Young people have said that they want investment, time and resources into creating spaces where they can share their views. This report has not been designed to be read from cover to cover, instead it is intended for you to use as reference, please look up any service you are interested in and you will see evidence that when adults listen and collaborate with young people, the resulting decisions are more inclusive and impactful. This year has been exciting for everyone as we all continue to work together as a partnership with our children and young people. Next year, the Annual Participation Report will feature how young people have been consulted in line with the Participation Strategy as it is refreshed for beyond 2025.

After reading year three of the Annual Participation Report hopefully, it will be clear to see that we have developed a shared understanding, connection and involvement to the Participation Strategy as well as the corporate Progress with Unity principles. There has been a large increase in Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise organisations actively involved and represented across all aspects of the Participation Strategy including Participation Community of Practice, Youth Inspectors and Progress with Unity Children's Board. Organisations have had the opportunity to upskill their workforce in relevant participatory practices and training with no additional cost to themselves. Participation with children and young people across the borough has been further highlighted and promoted, thus raising the profile and impact of this work. In turn there has been an alignment to the delivery of the corporate Progress with Unity missions, by ensuring service developments and delivery will include the voice of children and young people.

The biggest thanks for the progress made this year against the strategy is to our children and young people for giving up their free time to represent their own views and the views of others, to ensure that real change through participation has been achieved. Their passion and determination to ensure their voices are not only heard but genuinely influence, is inspiring and brings the best out of organisations, alongside the professionals who support them. We are tremendously proud of their achievements and can't wait to see what else we can do together over the next year.

Young People's Foreword

Hello! We are Connected Family, a care leavers group that are made up of care experienced young people aged 17-25. We work together to create a space where we can positively challenge and influence the Leaving Care service, as well as other services, and improve them for other care experienced young people in the borough.

We are proud to be providing the foreword for this year's participation report, as it is important to ensure that all young people across the borough are listened to, making them feel valued and respected. It is great that Wigan Council have adopted the Lundy Model of Participation, and that it is being promoted throughout the Local Authority, alongside partner organisations, with training and awareness.

Since the last Annual Participation Report, we have continued to work alongside Corporate Parenting Board to be involved in decisions, promote the views of Care Leavers and be supported with events that you will read about in the report.

We hope you find this Annual Participation Report enjoyable and informative as you explore participation across the borough. Perhaps the brilliant examples will spark even more inspiration!



Participation Strategy

2022-2025

The 2022- 2025 Children's Services Participation Strategy outlines how the council pledges to consult and engage with children and young people in the borough to ensure that they have a real say about the key services and decisions that affect their lives. Ultimately, the ambition of the strategy is to increase the amount of co-production that takes place with children and young people, as this will improve services and the impact they have.

Our Participation Strategy is overseen by a Strategic Group who work together to implement the directorate wide strategy for Participation across the borough with inclusion from partners. Participation is monitored with a 12-month forward plan of activities across the directorate through the participation plan on a page.

The group ensure there is clear evidence that the participation work is meaningful, that views have been acted upon, and feedback is regularly provided to children and young people in line with the participation pledge. The group is responsible for monitoring service engagement with children and young people and for reporting progress and impact through the annual report.

The Scrutiny Group and Youth Cabinet report to the recently established, Progress with Unity Childrens Board (PwUCB) as well as specific services also reporting to their own relevant Boards, for example special educational needs & disabilities (SEND), youth offending team (YOT), early help and safeguarding partnership. Young people will have a standing agenda item at the PwUCB, where they can directly scrutinise services delivered across the local partnership.



The Lundy Model Training

We have continued to offer the opportunity to attend Lundy Model training to all professionals in Wigan working with children and young people, delivered by our partners, Youth Focus Northwest. The training is part of our strategic commitment to promote consistency and best practice via the partnership via the internationally recognised Lundy Model participation framework. This ensures that the four key concepts of space, voice, audience, and influence are embedded across all our work with children and young people.

Youth Inspectors

Youth Inspectors was launched in May 2024. The programme has enabled local young people from a range of lived experiences, who have undertaken specific youth inspection training, to visit settings across the borough to look at how effective services are for young people. Youth Inspection focuses on giving feedback to projects, organisations, services, funders, or other bodies that are connected to young people, including our VCFSE partners to help them improve the quality of their work.

Since the start of the year, Youth Inspections have gained momentum. More services are seeing the value of young people inspecting their offer and are signing up to inspections on a regular basis.

So far, we have successfully inspected and awarded in 2025:

- Wigan Youth Zone Seniors Initial Inspection
- Wigan Youth Zone Juniors Initial Inspection
- Awarded The View 5 stars!
- Team Wigan Experience Mystery Inspection. A further Inspection was completed with 12 Youth Inspectors.
- Be Well Wigan at Howe Bridge Initial Inspection
- Awarded Ladies Lane 5 stars!
- AYSE Program Initial Inspection
- The BASE



The upcoming inspections include:

- CAHMS
- Leigh Youth Hub
- Be Well's Second and Final Inspection
- Staying Together Team
- Fostering
- Virtual School Team
- Care Leavers Hub
- Locala
- Family Hub at Formby Avenue

Youth Inspectors Training



In total at Wigan, we have 53 trained Youth Inspectors, and 35 Youth Inspector Supporters since the launch in May 2024.

Highlights

Team Wigan Experience

The Youth Inspectors inspected the Team Wigan Experience twice; one was a mystery inspection where the Youth Inspector blended seamlessly with other members of staff and said that he was treated like an adult. The other inspection was planned for the February 2024 half term and 12 Youth Inspectors attended! Our highest attended youth inspection to date.

During both inspections, the Youth Inspectors reported back that they made to feel welcome, they had the opportunity to talk to staff and young people. Their views and recommendations were respected and will now inform service development plans.

The Youth Inspectors were pleased with the vouchers and transport money and want to share a big thank you for acknowledging their hard work.



The Meadows

The Meadows was our first ever completed inspection. They were awarded 5 stars.

Quotes from Youth Inspectors:

"It has been heartwarming to see the successes of the service and how young people are flourishing through their support." Ayisha, Youth Inspector and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament.

"The professionalism and insight of the youth inspectors were truly inspiring." The Meadows Team.



Highlights

The View

The View was inspected and awarded 5 stars.

Quotes from Youth Inspectors:

“Before we started the inspection the Youth Inspectors were nervous. But within a couple of minutes they took charge and were asking the staff about The View and the service they offered. Their confidence grew throughout, and us practitioners were just observers – which is fabulous!”

Deb Thomson, Youth Inspector Practitioner.

“We are over the moon...Thank you so much to our youth inspectors they were great.”

Vicky Hanlon, Residential Manager.

Bimonthly Scrutiny and Youth Inspectors Panel

The Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee and Youth Inspectors Panel are held bi-monthly at Wigan Youth Zone or Leigh Youth Hub.

The meetings are important as they help strengthen communication and bonds between the Youth Inspectors and Youth Inspector Supporters.

The meetings provide a space where young people's voices are empowered to share ideas on how to improve the Youth Inspection process.

Ladies Lane

Ladies Lane was the first service to be awarded a 5-star rating from their first inspection.

Quotes from Ladies Lane:

“I really appreciate the time the inspectors gave, they remained professional at all times, asked so many relevant questions that gave me the opportunity to showcase the service which we are proud of. It was beneficial to us have a young person's perspective on a young person's home.”

Julie Whitehead, Service Manager Lead for Ladies Lane.

“You [Youth Inspectors] were the best and very friendly.”

Children of Ladies Lane.

Quotes from Supporters

The Youth Inspector Supporters are an integral part of the Youth Inspectors Programme.

The young people would like to acknowledge the commitment and support from Eliza Meekings, Deborah Thomson, Sarah Lockwood, Gaynor Shepherd, Julie France, and Paula Keenan. They have been instrumental in their role as Youth Inspector Supporters.

“I have really enjoyed supporting the young people on youth inspections, seeing the young people take responsibility and lead with confidence has been great to observe. It has also been a great opportunity for staff to look into the amazing work different services have on offer.”

“To have supported and observed the dedication and commitment from the youth inspectors programme has been rewarding and inspirational.”

Participation Highlights

2024-2025

Wigan & Leigh Youth Cabinet at Wigan Youth Climate Summit 2024

In 2024, 15 young people from Youth Cabinet attended the Youth Climate Summit as guest speakers. This year's theme was 'Empowered Youth, Conscious Consumers: Building a Sustainable Future', where young people learned about how the things we buy effect our planet and our mental health, including the excessive production of waste, destruction of natural habitats and the effects that the pressure to buy has on our mental health. The summit explored the possible solutions such as rethinking our spending habits, working with nature and exploring alternative technologies. Links were made with other organisations with invites given to visit Youth Cabinet in the future.

Wigan and Leigh Housing, Tenant Voice & Engagement

Young people from Wigan & Leigh Youth Cabinet expressed an interest in the new Passivhaus eco homes. Hannah from the Tenant Voice & Engagement team and Laura McBride (Project Manager) arranged for young people to visit the site so they could see the homes.

Angela Durkin welcomed the group to the Ince site and gave an overview of how the Passivhaus concept works. Young people asked questions to find out more about what benefits the homes have to the environment, the council and future tenants.

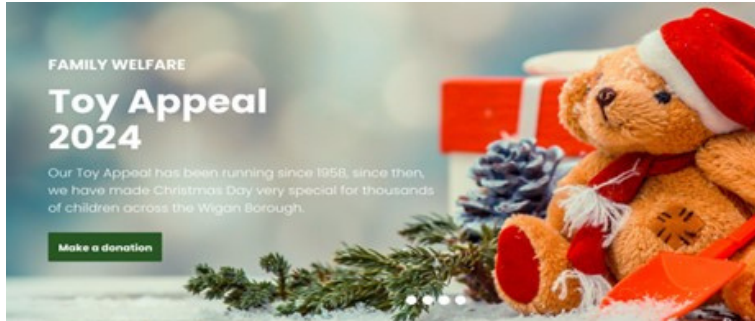
Young people said it was great to see the homes in various stages of development, especially the membrane and ventilation system which make these homes ultra-low energy buildings.



Participation Highlights

2024-2025

Family Welfare



Family Welfare is a long-established charity offering free, independent and confidential counselling, advocacy and community development services to people across the Wigan Borough. Their services are accessible to adults, young people and children from the age of 5 upwards.

Family Welfare have, for over 66 years, offered Christmas gifts to those young people, who may for whatever reason, not be able to receive any gifts. It became clear that this year, 16 organisations across the Borough were collecting gifts. So Family Welfare offered to take the lead in co-ordinating the gift collection to manage multiple referrals being made and to avoid some families receiving many gifts whilst others received fewer. Young people identified the unfairness in some families not getting gifts while others had many. As a result, Family Welfare were able to offer gifts to over 1000 young people this year.

Wigan Athletic Community Trust, Premier League Kicks

Kicks Youth Voice Christmas Social Action Project

Premier League Kicks enables Wigan Athletic Community Trust to provide free football and dance sessions for 8 – 18-year-olds across Wigan, Leigh and Skelmersdale every night of the week. Alongside regular sessions, staff also provide tournaments and workshops to support participant's youth voice and teach key skills to improve their life chances and raise their aspirations.

During November 2024, the Youth Voice team applied to Wigan & Leigh Youth Cabinet's 'Youth Aspiration Fund' for £500 to complete a social action project linked to the Kicks Christmas Cracker Party. The young people proposed to create 70 Christmas bags for young people from deprived areas who might not have a great financial support system at home. Youth Voice planned and budgeted the cost of what would go into the bags with a vision of supporting those through the current cost of living crisis. They then gave up their time on an additional evening to pack them ready for the party.

Participation Highlights

2024-2025

Participation Community of Practice Group (CoPG)

The Participation Community of Practice Group (CoPG) has gone from strength to strength, with many partners now having a 'Participation Plan on a Page'. This is a 12-month forward plan of activities around participation with children and young people and is evidenced within this Annual Report. The CoPG seeks to develop a shared culture of valuing children and young people's views and being proactive in facilitating their participation. It promotes a joined-up approach to participation between all partner organisations and, utilising the Lundy Model encourages practitioners to develop and embed participation in their service area, department, or organisation.

Children First Progress with Unity Board

March 2024 saw the introduction of the 'Children First Progress with Unity Board'. Wigan & Leigh Youth Cabinet are co-chairing this system-wide leadership board to improve outcomes for children and young people. This places young people at the heart of decision-making and ensures the council and all our partners are accountable for how they deliver services for children and families across the borough.

At the launch in March, there were presentations and videos from our young people, including Alex Crompton MYP for Wigan Borough. Youth Cabinet also set out their key priorities (which agreed by the Board) for children and young people in Wigan Borough: to be healthy and active, to have hopes, dreams and opportunities to succeed, are safe from harm, feel supported and feel that they belong.



Participation Highlights

2024-2025



Connected Family - The Care Leavers Hub continues to grow!

You Said: You wanted a bigger room to relax in.

We Did: We gave you the biggest room!

Young people shared that they felt the young people's room at the Care Leavers Hub wasn't big enough and asked if the rooms could be swapped around as the meeting room was bigger. This was explored with young people measuring the rooms to check the furniture would fit and making floor plans for how they would like the space to look. It was agreed by management that young people could have the bigger room, and young people continued to redesign the space including choosing wallpaper and a dart board.

Be Well

Be Well is Wigan Council's health and wellbeing service, supporting individuals and families to lead healthier, happier lives. They offer a wide range of activities across our seven local leisure centres, at community venues, and in parks and green spaces. They also provide advice and support with a variety of issues, and work in schools and at the heart of our neighbourhoods to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages.

Let's Get Movin' Family Programme

Be Well Let's Get Movin' team support children, young people (aged 2 – 17) and families to create healthy habits for life through education and intervention programmes. Be Well invited the Youth Inspectors to inspect one of their Family Be Great Programmes at Howe Bridge Leisure Centre. The Inspectors were pleased to award an overall rating of 4 / 5 for the programme!

Some of the feedback included:

"All the staff were very approachable, and it was clear that the young people, parents and carers trusted and felt comfortable around the instructors."

"The session offered a whole family approach which encouraged participation."

Participation Highlights

2024-2025

Aspiring Futures

Aspiring Futures are a careers support service for young people in Wigan aged 15-19 (and up to age 25 if having SEND). Careers Advisers, Progression Advisers and Mentors support with job searching, applications to college, university, study programs, apprenticeships, or traineeships.

This year the team supported a group of young people to access a funded beauty programme in Atherton. We had identified a gap in learning provision through listening to young people and what they wanted to learn about. Following this course the young people were supported with advice on self-employment, and how they can follow their dreams of working within a beauty salon.



Aspiring Futures delivered Greater Manchester 'Success for Life' programme alongside Wigan and Leigh College during the summer 2024. The programme supported 10 young people who are looked after by the local authority, to raise their aspirations and deliver a smooth transition to post 16. They increased teamwork skills, boosted confidence, learnt about budgeting as a student and gained knowledge on higher education to make smart choices about the future. All the young people moved on to different post 16 provision and all felt that they were better prepared for the transition.

Child Friendly Plans - Children in Care Service

Young people said that they wanted to be involved in plans in their lives. We consulted with children and young people and A Million Voices about a child friendly care plan. Young people told us that the overarching emphasis was for the plan to be colourful, with pictures and to include a question on bullying and being happy.

90% of children in care now have a child friendly care plan.

YOUTH GROUPS ACHIEVEMENTS



Connected Family

Connected Family is a support group for young people who are leaving or who have recently left the care of the local authority. The group meets weekly and provides activities in the Care Leavers Hub.

Care Experience Video

You Said: You wanted to challenge the stereotypes care leavers can face. These stereotypes can have a direct impact on care leavers' lives.

We Did: We supported you to create a video sharing your views on this.

STEREOTYPES OF CARE LEAVERS

Space: Young adults were able to participate in this video in a variety of ways, for example, from their own home. This ensured that they could be a part of this project without coming to a group or to the Hub if they didn't want to.

Voice: Young adults felt it was important that they had the opportunity to challenge stereotypes and raise awareness. They chose to create a video as it was something that could be reused and utilised in lots of different ways to continue to destigmatise and educate on these stereotypes.

Influence: Presenting this video at a Corporate Parenting event helped the senior leaders to understand some of the challenges care leavers face and to consider this when implementing service change.

Audience: The video was viewed by many senior leaders at a Corporate Parenting event, showcasing young adults voice and the stereotypes that they feel they face.

Impact: Understanding care experience has led to Senior Leaders making pledges to support care leavers in their services.

Connected Family

Fundraising Event

You Said - You wanted to raise money for a premature baby charity and neonatal unit.

We Did – We supported you to make this happen and involved Corporate Parents in the preparations as well as inviting them to the event.



Space: The preparations for the bake sale took place at the Care Leavers Hub, a safe and familiar environment for the group.

Voice: One of our care leavers said that they would like to raise money to support The Smallest Things charity and the neonatal unit at Bolton Hospital, where their niece was cared for and would like some support with this.

Influence: At the bake sale held at the town hall, the young adult's event was supported by many people, including the Chief Executive of Wigan Council, Alison McKenzie-Folan and Director of Children and Family Services, Colette Dutton. The event raised £502.16.

Audience: Young adults were supported with the baking by corporate parents Kathryn Perry, Assistant Director for Housing Services alongside Hannah Lee, Tenant Voice and Engagement Officer.

Impact: Being supported to raise money for charity strengthens the connections with Corporate Parents and provides evidence of being listened to by those supporting them. The young adults who arranged this bake sale achieved a sense of pride.

Quotes/Feedback:

"I am very proud."

"I know how much it will have an impact on the families that will be supported by the money we've raised."

Wigan and Leigh Youth Cabinet

London House of Commons Visit 2025

In February 2025 two of our elected Members of Youth Parliament were invited down to London into the House of Commons as part of UK Youth Parliament.

Other young people from Youth Cabinet spent two full days experiencing new challenges in an unfamiliar city, such as visiting Big Ben and taking a river cruise on the Thames. The Members of Youth Parliament had planned, prepared and delivered their speeches to their supporting peers the night before, one of which was picked to speak in front of the entire congregation on the Friday.

Space: Members of Youth Parliament were given the space to speak in the House of Commons on behalf of young people aged 11-18 from across the country.

Voice: Members of Youth Parliament prepared their speeches alongside support from the other voices in Youth Cabinet to feed into the important topics.

Influence: Members of Youth Parliament were able to raise the profile of topics that young people are passionate about. This provides opportunities for young people to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning.

Audience: Members of Youth Parliament presented to the audience of the House of Commons on their selected topics.

Impact: The Youth Parliament's 2024-2026 manifesto contains 110 different issues, and the National Youth Agency is working with Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport to create a second-year programme so that members can continue to campaign on the other policies areas identified, as well as the two priority areas selected in Parliament.

Feedback from young people:

"Really enjoyed my time in London and the opportunity to see important landmarks while having fun with my mates."

"Going to London was one of the best experiences of my life. I really enjoyed going and doing all that we did especially the Houses of Commons visit, where I got the chance to speak in front of MYP's. It was incredible, and I wouldn't bat an eyelid at the chance to go again."

Wigan and Leigh Youth Cabinet

Speaking at Full Council

To find out more visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oKlyQe0z2Q>

Mayor Debbie Parkinson offered the Members of Youth Parliament for Wigan and Leigh the chance to address the Council chambers to share some of the exciting projects that they are involved in both nationally and regionally. Three Elected Members of Youth Parliament spoke individually about their personal manifestos to bring positive change for the young people within the borough.

The young people gave members of the Council an insight into the projects that Youth Cabinet are involved in such as Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority. This is an inclusive body comprising 42 young people aged between 11 and 18 (or up to 25 for those with additional needs) from 21 different youth organisations from across Greater Manchester. The young people made it clear they wanted to work closely with Elected Members to bring about positive change for the youth of this borough. Youth Cabinet have recently been given a dedicated seating area within the chambers and attend every monthly meeting. This was an immensely proud achievement for the group.

Space: The young people were given a safe, confidential and supported space at Wigan Town Hall which they felt comfortable to speak about projects they are working on individually and as a group.

Voice: The young people worked together with their peers and staff to write speeches to present at the full council. This was based on what topics they are passionate about and what Youth Cabinet are involved in nationally/regionally.

Influence: Raising the profile of topics that are important to young people in the borough and pledging to work alongside Youth Cabinet to support progress. This will ultimately influence policy and decision making.

Audience: The audience which the young people spoke to in the chambers were all of Wigan and Leigh's Elected Members including the Mayor of Wigan Debbie Parkinson, the CEO of Wigan Council, the Leader of Wigan Council and many employee's including directors.

Impact: Young people listened to and that they are making a difference. They felt an improved confidence in public speaking, whilst raising awareness of their own manifestos. This has developed into Wigan and Leigh Cabinet having a regular agenda item at Full Council meetings.

Feedback from young people:

"I felt as I walked down to the stage that the entire council waited in anticipation. I believe we proved to the council our capabilities. Alex, Thomas and I showed the council our strength as a group, and a generation. Councillors all nodded and extremely respected us!"

Wigan and Leigh Youth Cabinet

Ashton Regeneration Project

Ashton-in-Makerfield was awarded £6.6 million as a part of the then 'Levelling Up' scheme to improve funding and support in northern towns/areas. As a part of this, Youth Cabinet went to three high schools and four primary schools, consulting with a massive 3490 young people, within the Ashton area to discuss the main points that the regeneration board wanted/needed to focus on, as a part of the funding deal. We have 7 young people from the local schools that are still involved, attending and feeding into the monthly stakeholder group meetings. The findings have also been forwarded to the consultants to be considered along with those proposed from the adult board members.

Space: The Regeneration Board arranged to meet at a time suitable for young people; in a safe, secure and friendly environment in Ashton that was local to the area.

Voice: The regeneration process allowed young people to have a voice on the board to put their findings of the wider community of young people forward. The recommendations from the young people included thoughts on spaces for community events, design of shops, lighting in the town centre, green spaces, improving traffic, art trails as well as specific young person items such as a youth hub, sensory garden and soft play.

Influence: Young people have been heard directly by the Regeneration Board who can consider their ideas and views, putting them forward to the consultants.

Audience: Young people met regularly with the Ashton Regeneration Board which includes membership from different sectors eg. community, police, NHS. They also carried out consultations with three primary schools and four high schools totalling almost 4,000 young people.

Impact: The impact from this is very positive for the young people of Ashton hoping to bring about positive change. The young people are presenting all of their findings to the Board in 2025 and are excited for this.

Feedback from young people:

"The Ashton regeneration project has been very beneficial for getting young people's voices heard from all across Ashton. I have really enjoyed shaping what Ashton will look like in the future, and I am looking forward to presenting our findings from our survey."

"I feel immense pride knowing I've played a role in the consultation and helped to shape the potential future of this town for all who work, study and travel here. I cannot wait to see the results."

A Million Voices

Low Bank Ground 2025

A Million Voices recently visited Low Bank Ground adventure centre in Coniston for a two-night stay. Residential activities for children in care play a crucial role in their development and wellbeing.

Low Bank Ground has a team of qualified and experienced instructors who have been providing high quality outdoor adventure courses for over 25 years. A Million Voices were rewarded with this residential trip for their efforts in the planning and organising of the annual children in care celebration event which took place in September 2024. The recognition and awards received at the end served as tangible evidence of their efforts and achievements, fostering a sense of pride and motivation to pursue further goals.

The young people spent two full days away taking part in various activities which helped them come out of their comfort zones and take on new challenges. The young people took part in kayaking, raft building, ghyll scrambling, canoeing and various other team building exercises, forming new friendships, and creating new skill sets.

Quotes/feedback from young people:

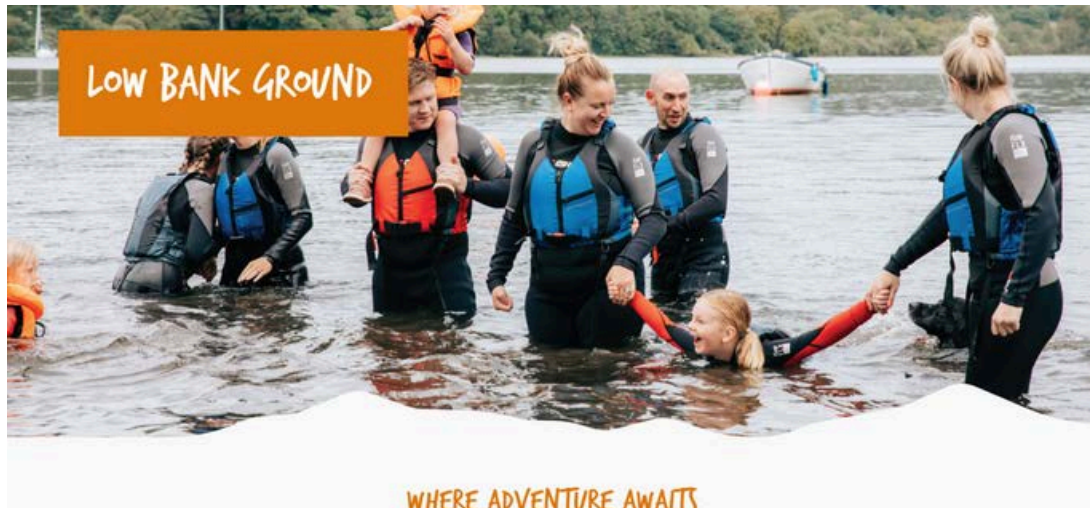
"My favourite part of the residential was kayaking."

"I learnt new skills such as canoeing and ghyll scrambling."

"I enjoyed having a laugh with people."



A Million Voices



Space: The young people have previously attended a trip to Low Bank Ground and have expressed a strong interest in returning to the centre. They said that that the last residential gave them opportunities to create lasting memories that they can look back on with pride and happiness. They also felt it was accessible for young people and gave them the space to bond with their peers/support staff.

Voice: The planning leading up to the residential was discussed in the weekly A Million Voices meetings. The young people discussed which activities they would like to take part in, as well as setting out clear rules/boundaries for the trip to ensure their safety. The young people chose this example for this year's participation report as it had meant so much to them.

Influence: The trip to Low Bank Ground gave the young people an opportunity to share their experiences with members of the Corporate Parenting Board. They also took the opportunity to share the life story folder that they had coproduced with staff as the memories of the residential would be something they could include.

Audience: The young people discussed the trip to Low Bank Ground with Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) members and shared their plans for the trip and how much it meant to them.

Impact: The impact from the residential allowed young people to experience opportunities they may never otherwise get the chance to. The young people were able to thrive in a new environment and step out their comfort zones without the immediate support of their usual caregivers. These experiences promoted resilience, independence, and social skills, providing invaluable benefits that have extended far beyond the duration of the activity. Young people will have the opportunity to record their experiences in the life story folder that they have coproduced.

A Million Voices

Step into Residential Training Programme

A Million Voices teamed up with Wigan and Leigh college to promote their new adult learning course 'Step into Residential'. Residential is the term used for young people who are living in a children's home. The young people created a bespoke training package to deliver to students aiming to give them an insight around being a child who is looked after by the local authority. The training was young person led, and they decided on the different ice breakers, activities and overall running of the training.

The young people included an emotionally moving activity called 'A Day in the Life.' The activity consisted of the students acting as different professionals who a young person could be involved with. The young people read a story which consisted of the challenges they may face and the different professionals they interact with all in the space of 24 hours. The activity was a real eye opener for some of the students and allowed themselves to see life from the perspective of a looked after child.

The young people made it clear that they wanted to keep the training programme young person friendly. To achieve this, they incorporated an interactive activity called 'Scenario Sweet Pong', which consisted of the students throwing a ball into a cup and reading out a scenario which was placed in the cup. The activity acted as a question and answer session and allowed our young people to help and guide the students with their answers and responses.

Space: The young people had a safe, confidential environment at Wigan and Leigh college which they felt comfortable in expressing views, delivering training and talking about sensitive subjects.

Voice: The young people had complete freedom in the planning and delivering of the training session. They expressed that they wanted to keep the training exciting and young person friendly which was respected by staff.

Influence: The training package was influential to the students as it helped guide and support them through the Step into Residential training course. The training course focussed on a looked after child's perspective which ultimately will support students in the next stages of their residential worker career.

Audience: The audience which the young people delivered training to are all relevant professionals/students who wanted to listen to young peoples' experiences to gain an improved understanding of their future role.

Impact: The tutor and students found the training so impactful that it has been requested again for the next round of recruits. This training aided the students understanding of the role of children's residential care and therefore better prepared students to go and work in this sector.

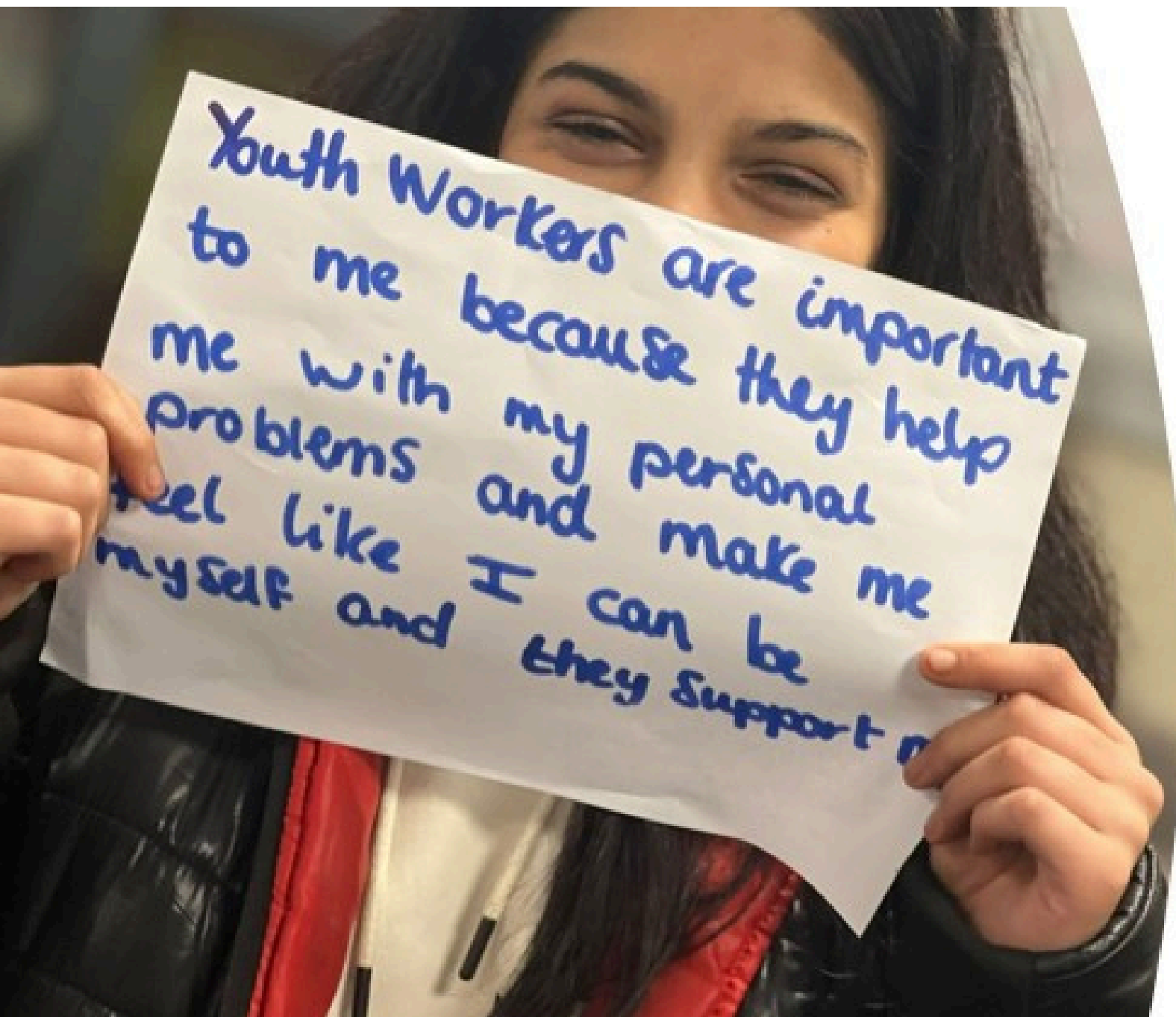
A Million Voices

Step into Residential Training Programme

Quotes/feedback from young people:

"It was a great opportunity to provide training to students who could potentially be staff that support looked after children like me."

"I enjoyed being able to pick and choose the different ice breakers and activities."



A Million Voices

'You're A Celebrity, Get into The Jungle' Celebration Event

The annual Children in Care celebration event took place in September 2024. The event is an opportunity to commend all the achievements from the past year of our wonderful young people who are currently cared for by the local authority. A Million Voices planned the themed event which was titled 'You're a Celebrity, Get into the Jungle', as young people from A Million Voices decided they wanted the theme of the event to be jungle themed.

The event included bushtucker trials, a visit from Critters Interactive, Circus Sensible, a bushtucker buffet, inflatable activities and a tiki-hut which offered critter inspired treats. The event also received a special visit from the popular band The Lathums as well as the Mayor, who all offered their support. The event was attended by approximately 200 young people, families, and professionals who all play a crucial role in supporting looked after children.



Quotes/feedback from young people:

"My favourite part was the inflatables and circus."

"There were loads going on and something for everyone."

"I wished the event could go on for longer."

Space: The young people planned the event in their weekly A Million Voices meetings, which is a time and place selected by the young people.

Voice: The whole event was organized by young people to ensure that it is a fun, meaningful event for all looked after young people.

Influence: Young people secured funding from sponsors via the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure that the event was a success.

Audience: Young people met regularly with the Corporate Parenting Board to provide regular updates on the planning for the event and identify any opportunities for support.

Impact: The impact from the celebration event allowed professionals across the borough, as well as foster carers and young people, to celebrate their achievements and hard work. Different professionals also gathered and had their own stalls to share their services showing the support they have on offer to looked after young people. This increased the knowledge of children and carers of services available to them. The event highlighted the many talents of the children.

Monday & Wednesday Club

Monday Club – partnership with Wigan Youth Zone

Monday Club is a collaboration between the Reach Service and Wigan Youth Zone to provide looked after young people with a specific, personalised activity session. The group enables children and young people the opportunity to engage in a wide range of different outdoor/indoor activities such as: the climbing wall, baking, arts and craft, karaoke, Xbox, skate part and many more exciting areas!

ReThink Project

Monday Club have continued to work with Coram Voice to contribute to their ReThink project. Over the course of 2 years, the young people have provided support with Coram Voice's research around young people transitioning from primary school to secondary school. The young people contributed with their opinions and ideas and shared their own personal experiences around transitions. The research is due to be finalised by the end of 2025 and their results/evaluation will be shared amongst the young people.

Space: The consultation work which was undertaken by Coram Voice was in the young people's safe space where they meet each week. This ensured they felt comfortable, and their time was respected.

Voice: The young people were given freedom to share their experiences and express their opinions based around transitions. The young people also expressed who they think the research would be useful for when collated.

Influence: The information which young people have provided will help the researchers nationally, and results will be shared to relevant professionals working with young people who are going through transitions.

Audience: The young people suggested the research should be shared through schools and passed through to teaching staff. It was also suggested to use social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook to share their findings.

Impact: The impact that the ReThink project has created will allow practitioners and relevant professionals to take the young people's input and share them to support young people through transitional phases.



Quotes/feedback from young people:

"I think the information should be shared with the professionals who work with kids to help us through transitions."

"I liked being able to share my own experience on transitions to help with the research."

Monday & Wednesday Club

Wednesday Club – partnership with Leigh Youth Hub

Wednesday Club is a collaboration between the Reach Service and Leigh Youth Hub to provide looked after young people with specific, personalised activity sessions. The session aims for young people to positively engage in a variety of activities including access to a health & wellbeing suite and catering kitchen. The group take part in a range of activities such as football, gaming competitions, pool tournaments, cookery lessons and access to the sports hall facilities.

Programme Planning

The young people from Wednesday Club provided feedback around the sessions and gave their ideas for the future. They made suggestions such as incorporating more sports and cookery into the next quarterly plan.

Space: The young people meet weekly in a safe environment which is comfortable for them to complete light consultation work. This space is familiar to them.

Voice: The young people requested that we incorporate more sport into their weekly sessions, we listened to their input and booked the sports hall in which they took part in basketball and football. The young people also requested to incorporate more cookery into their sessions, therefore we booked the kitchen for several sessions.

Influence: The young people are always encouraged to give their feedback at the end of every 12-week quarter. This allows the staff to acknowledge their ideas and be able to make positive changes.

Audience: The young people gave their feedback to trusted members of staff who had the ability to incorporate their ideas and form a 12-week programme plan based around what the young people wanted. The staff were also able to feedback the young people's ideas with other relevant professionals.

Impact: The young people from Wednesday club feel a sense of responsibility when giving back feedback, knowing their ideas are being valued by staff.



Quotes/feedback from young people:

"I liked using the sports hall I want to use it more."

"I liked making pizza wraps."

"I love coming to Wednesday club, I have made new friends."

Global Friends



Global Friends in Partnership with 'Everything Human Rights'

Global Friends is a youth group for Wigan & Leigh young people from different ethnic minority backgrounds. The group aims to give young people a say in their communities, run campaigns for change and make a difference for other young people.

Violence Reduction Unit & Manchester Metropolitan University Consultation Feedback

Last year Greater Manchester's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) commissioned the Manchester Centre for Youth Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University to undertake a short project that will feed into the development of their new strategy, which was launched in November 2024. The project engaged 28 young people from Global Friends. The purpose was for young people to explore their understandings of violence, causes of violence, feelings of safety and knowledge and / or participation in diversionary activities funded by the VRU.

Young people had the opportunity to give their feedback on some of the initiatives arising out of the recommendations to the VRU's strategy. On Tuesday the 3rd December 2024. Colleagues from MMU and from the Violence Reduction Unit attended Global Friends to give young people feedback on the final published research report. They took the time to answer young people's questions about local policy.

Space: The feedback session took place in young people's hub where they meet every week and where they feel comfortable and supported by youth workers.

Voice: Young people had the opportunity to give their feedback on some of the initiatives arising out of the recommendations to the Violence Reduction Unit's Strategy.

Influence: The group members were able to give their opinions on what diversionary activities they would like to see locally within Wigan Borough for young people.

Audience: The consultation and feedback meetings between young people, the Manchester University Researcher and Violence Reduction Unit colleagues, enabled young people to share their views and opinions on the causes of violence and receive feedback on local findings and potential developments.

Impact: Young people's involvement with VRU helped to create a 10 year strategy for preventing and reducing violence which included recommendations such as funded transport for activities, youth groups for girls, mixed youth clubs and sports for boys.

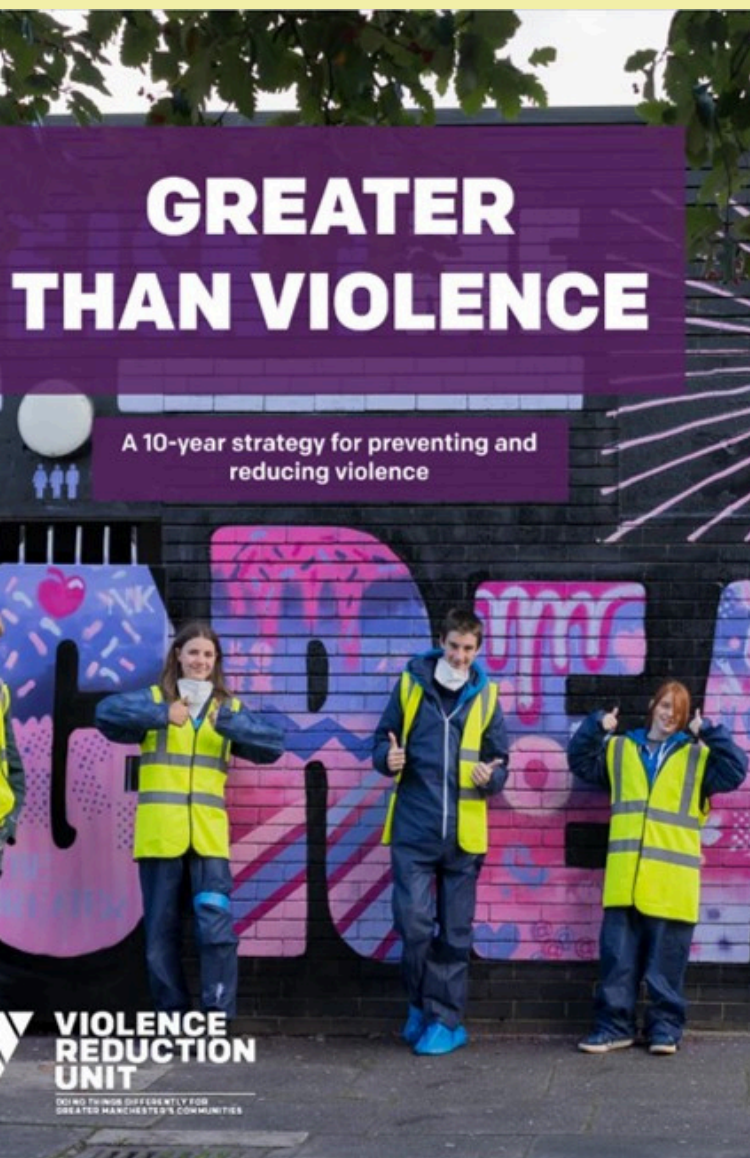
Global Friends

Feedback from young people:

Dr Kate Westwood (Manchester Centre for Youth Studies) - "I just wanted to say a big thanks for last night! It was great the young people got to meet Hannah and Dan, and hopefully this gave them an idea of how their voices are communicated in bigger picture issues."

"After all the research we took part in it was good to be able to get some feedback and have discussions about potential new projects, policies and developments."

"It was really nice for Kate and Dan to come into Global Friends to explain what was happening with the research and good to know that our voices are being taken on board."



A youth group for young people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (LGBTQ). The group aims to give young LGBTQ people a voice on a regional and national scale.

Wigan Pride

You Said: Wigan Pride is the most important date of the year for BYOU, and you wanted to be at the centre of all decisions when planning for it.

We Did: We supported you to run the Believe Square Stage, write and deliver the opening speeches as well as leading the parade. We also supported you to engage in several mini projects leading up to the event. These included auditions for performers on the stage, an art project to design a banner to parade with, and a fashion project to perform a drag race for.

Space: BYOU conducted the planning for the event at their safe space at The Venue. They also hosted auditions from here, and they were given space at the Wigan Youth Zone to design a new banner constructed from a patchwork of all their individual expressions. BYOU also had their own marquee at Believe Square as a place for them to gather and meet each other.

Voice: Young people selected 'Unity' as the theme of Pride. They wrote introductory speeches to open the event. They also selected all the performers for the Believe Square stage through hosting auditions at the Venue. The compere of the stage was also a member of BYOU.

Influence: The theme of Pride was 'Unity' - Young people chose this theme because it can sometimes feel like the world is falling apart with wars in other countries frequently in the news, hate crime on the increase, particularly towards trans people and deeply polarised opinions often expressed on social media. Pride was an opportunity for BYOU to spread positivity and togetherness.

Audience: Thousands of people attended Wigan Pride and witnessed the efforts that BYOU put into the day. A new addition at this year's Believe Square stage was to have lots of seating for audience members to relax and enjoy the entertainment.

Impact: True ownership of the event empowered young people.

BYOU

Wigan Pride

Quotes/feedback from young people:

‘Seeing young queer people able to be themselves in the town centre is impactful for me to see. I think we often take for granted what Pride means to people when you’ve been out for a long time, so I think its really important to have this celebratory event for the community.’

“I like Pride and Believe Square because it allows a chance for small queer artists to perform.”

“It’s important to me to be able to have a safe space to fully express myself and I’m glad that Pride is able to provide that.”



BYOU

School Network

You Said: You wanted to improve the level of support offered to LGBTQ+ young people within schools. Young people also wanted to showcase the 'Anxiety' video that they had created to try and get schools to use it as an educational tool.

We Did: We supported you to host a school network event for a full day of information sharing and delivered LGBTQ+ training to school staff and pupils.

Quotes/Feedback:

'I liked the school network because many people expressed interest in BYOU and the Pride event.'

'I made new friends. I liked that they actually wanted to be there and were listening.'

'My highlight was talking to students about their experiences good and bad.'

Space: Young people hosted this event at St Peters Pavilion; a place that young people thought was suitable as it was a location accessible for most schools across the borough.

Voice: Young people designed the activities that were delivered across the day. Young people hosted a question-and-answer session, delivered the LGBTQ+ training, and selected the food that was served at lunch.

Influence: BYOU designed the day to help improve the support given to LGBTQ+ community within schools. They collected information about the issues affecting LGBTQ+ young people in schools across the borough. They delivered LGBTQ+ training to upskill teachers and students on up-to-date terminology, LGBTQ+ history, and gave an understanding about the Trans community.

Audience: Both students and teachers from schools across the borough attended, with over 60 attendees from 11 different high schools and colleges.

Impact: Each section of the School Network event was designed by BYOU to have different impacts. The mental health video, 'Anxiety', aimed to be a relatable tool to help with discussions with students. The information gathering section enabled BYOU to develop some new training around how to be a Trusted Adult within schools, and to also gain insights into the issues being faced by LGBTQ+ young people. This will have a positive impact on the level of support offered to LGBTQ+ young people within schools.

Group With No Name (GWiNN)

Group With No Name is a small, safe environment for victims of youth crime who come together to share their experiences and help to develop support that is offered to other victims.



You Said: The impacts of youth crimes on you, left you feeling isolated, anxious and scared to go out. You had lost friendships and confidence, with low self-esteem and experiencing mental health difficulties

We Said: We facilitated consultation sessions with a small group to listen to them about what they would like the group to do and achieve. We then collated all the reflections of the young people to see if they would like a group to be set up. This then led to a group being set up and named Group With No Name (GWiNN). Since the launch, they have been meeting fortnightly and attendance at the group has grown. The group have successfully obtained Youth Inspiration Fund (YIF) monies and have attended several team building activities, including bowling.

Space: We held consultation sessions for the children and young people to share their perspectives in a safe environment, where refreshments were provided.

Voice: The group is facilitated in a way in which the voice of the children and young people is central, and they direct how they would like the group to evolve.

Influence: The children and young people are improving good practice with victims on a national scale. They have recently been asked to talk about their views on crimes which has been filmed and shared on social media and at a Restorative Justice National Conference.

Audience: Group With No Name (GWiNN) are likely to feature in the HMIP thematic report when it is published. In March 2025, HMIP commented that the partnership work in Wigan addressing the needs of children in the youth justice system is particularly strong.

Impact: The children and young people have increased their confidence to a point where they are prepared to speak at a national meeting, on the topic of how social media effected their experience of being victims.

Quotes/feedback from young people:

"We all know the reason why we are here, but we don't know each others stories and we know we don't have to talk about it if we don't want to but it's really good for our well-being."

"Improve mental health and give children good experiences when bad things have happened, help with boosting confidence and helps us to socialise."

"My daughter comes home and is glowing. She can be herself there."

Youth Independent Advisory Group

The Youth Independent Advisory Group gives young people a voice to positively influence police processes that directly involve children and young people. Greater Manchester Police, have consulted with the group on 'Stop and Search' processes for young people. They have influenced police recruitment training and advised the police on ways to engage children and young people when they visit schools, to help break down barriers.



Visit to the Police Station

You Said: The young people said that they would like to see more of the day-to-day environment that police officers work in. There are some young people are also interested in becoming police officers in the future and they are curious about what police work is like. They also said they would like to imagine how it feels being in custody.

We Did: We took the group to Wigan Police Station for a guided tour around the custody area, the desk sergeant showed them around to help to understand what it would be like for a young person in custody. This added to the group's growing knowledge of policing. The young people enjoyed the experience and provided some great ideas and suggestions for improvements.

Space: The young people asked for this visit and enough space was created to ensure everyone could take part. The station was used out of hours to ensure it was safe for the young people to feel relaxed.

Voice: Young people were assured that their queries and insights would be taken seriously, creating an environment where their contributions could influence policing practices, potentially being adapted to better serve young people.

Influence: The visit was highly worthwhile as it went beyond a simple informational tour. By engaging with the custody suite and the officers, the group gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of policing and the realities of the custody process. This experience has the potential to inform future interactions between young people and Greater Manchester Police, helping to foster a mutual understanding and influence how custody practices are communicated, and experienced by, young people.

Audience: The police officers and facilitators of the visit were the intended audience for the group's questions and observations. They listened to the young people and engaged in their discussions.

Impact: The session fostered close relationships with partners, young people, and the police. It's important that young people have their say on issues in their community and they can raise concerns. Through this visit, young people were not only informed but also empowered to share their perspectives, embodying the core principles of the Lundy Model by ensuring that their participation was meaningful and impactful.

Youth Independent Advisory Group

'Stop and Search'

You Said: Young people had asked for an interactive/ fun experience unique experience to learn more about stop and search. The young people were interested in the reasons behind why a stop and search would be necessary.

We Did: An Inspector from Greater Manchester Police attended a special session to discuss 'Stop and Search'. The Inspector brought along two Police Constables to demonstrate exactly how the stop and search process works. For some of the group their only experience of stop and search comes from TV shows or second-hand stories, so this was an opportunity for the group to ask questions and learn how the system is meant to operate fairly and safely.

Space: The young people were given a dedicated room that they could relax and feel confident to become part of the task. Young people enjoyed having the space to move around and having time with the police officers.

Voice: The importance of communication between officers and young people was central to the session. During the session, the young people stressed that being approached by police can be intimidating, especially if the officer doesn't explain clearly why a search is happening.

Influence: After seeing the stop and search demonstration, young people offered feedback to the police and suggested ways to improve the process, especially when it comes to how young people are treated. The officers acknowledged that their input could help create a more respectful and understanding approach between the police and the younger generation.

Audience: To recognise the importance of listening to young people, the Inspector attended many sessions with the group to ensure that their views are fed back to the constabulary.

Impact: The group are actively helping to shape how Greater Manchester Police works with local communities. This session will help to shape future policies within the police department and as a result, improve relationships with communities and young people.



CHILDRENS SERVICES ACHIEVEMENTS



Reach Service – Anti-Social Behaviour Engagement Team

The Anti-Social Behaviour Engagement Team cover all areas boroughwide responding to any evidence of continuing anti-social behaviour. The team are both pro-active and re-active in their approach to dealing with issues. The team pro-actively collaborates with partners such as the Police, Housing, Fire and Central Watch to identify where in the borough they are experiencing issues, to then deploy the ASB colleagues to investigate the issues.

Safe 4 Summer Project

You Said: There was nothing to do to in the local area of Platt Bridge to stop young people getting into trouble. People who live on the estate blame us for anything that goes wrong.

We Did: We located an area of Platt Bridge to host a Community Fun Day. This helped to foster community cohesion between the young people, residents and local businesses in the area.

As part of the 'Safe 4 Summer' campaigns, youth workers provided positive diversionary activities as an alternative to anti-social behaviour, while delivering informal education on how to keep safe across the summer months. A key success was the Platt Bridge Community Fun Day 2024, which engaged over 300 attendees, with a variety of activities such as inflatable fun, free ice creams, games and sports.

Quotes/feedback from young people:

"Please come back next week – we've loved today!"

"I didn't realise there were so many things I could get involved in locally."

"It's great to have something positive happening in the area – it really brings people together."

"I used to hang around with nothing to do, but now I feel like I have people who actually listen and care."

"Since partnering with you (ASB Youth Engagement Team), we've seen a positive shift in how young people interact with our business. It's made a real difference."



Reach Service – Anti-Social Behaviour Engagement Team



Space: The activities took place where young people live in their community and around the local estate where they felt safe. The Fun Day took place next to local businesses, where the food for the day was purchased. This all took place in the centre of the Platt Bridge area so all could attend.

Voice: Young people said they wanted more activities on the estate, so they had 'something to do' to avoid the label of always causing trouble.

Influence: The young people, residents and local businesses came together to learn more from one another about their needs and ideas on how to support each other in the future. Feedback from the Fun Day highlighted the need to have events like these more often so as not to lose the relationship's made.

Audience: Greater Manchester Police, Wigan Council representatives and local businesses took time to truly engage with young people, banishing stereotypes of the police, how young people's behaviour can impact on businesses and the community.

Impact: The Safe4Summer Project strengthened trust between young people, the wider community and ASB engagement youth workers. The project helped to decrease ASB reports and incidents in targeted areas across the summer period. To further support businesses, guidance was provided on how to report ASB incidents effectively. The event also raised awareness of available support services for young people.

Reach Service – Staying Together Team



The team specifically focus on delivering edge of care and prevention support, as part of the Council's strategic objective to improve outcomes for children and young people through early intervention and prevention

Summer Programme

You Said: We have limited access to positive, trusted relationships and activities, especially over the summer school holidays.

We Did: We brought all the young people together with skilled, trauma informed staff, by providing transport, food, and undertaking activities decided by them.

Space: Each young person open to the team were spoken to individually, in a safe space at a time suitable for them by their dedicated support worker.

Voice: All the young people shared their ideas on what activities they would like to see happening in the summer programme.

Audience: Senior managers listened to what the young people where telling them and agreed that their ideas would be helpful for the young people and their families to support them to stay together, especially over the holiday period.

Influence: The young people's feedback directly influenced service delivery as now this programme is something the team offer on a regular basis during holiday periods.

Impact: We have extended the number of adults that young people have trusted relationships with, through meeting the wider team. This also increased the likelihood of the young people accessing support at weekends which can be a time of tension at home.

By taking part in the activities as a group, this fostered a sense of belonging which in turn improved young people's self-esteem, confidence, and emotional wellbeing. The programme works towards increasing resilience into adulthood, improving conditions for children and young people in their own family, who may otherwise have come into (or remain in care), therefore improving the likelihood of better outcomes for these children and young people in the longer term.

Reach Service – Complex Safeguarding Team

The Complex Safeguarding Team support children and young people who at risk of, or experiencing, criminal or sexual exploitation or other exploitative behaviour.

'Week of Action'

You Said: Young people were particularly interested in learning about exploitation in a more creative way, such as watching videos and discussions.

We Did: We completed visits to Wigan Athletic Girls Group, Brownies, Leigh Youth Hub, Wigan Youth Zone, Reach Youth and Community Groups, visits to Family Hubs and local sports centres to educate young people on exploitation.

During the week of 17th March 2024, the Complex Safeguarding Team dedicated the week to reaching out to our local community and local groups to raise awareness and support our young peoples' understanding of exploitation. We took along lots of resources for young people to explore and offered space and time for questions. Training sessions were also delivered to many professionals including Wigan & Leigh College, to help them to understand exploitation and how they can support the children they are working with.



Reach Service – Complex Safeguarding Team



Space: During this week of action, we visited spaces in Wigan where children and young people regularly attend, using environments where they feel safe and supported. We gave them an opportunity and space to talk, listen and ask questions.

Voice: At the Wigan Athletic Girls Group the young people were particularly interested in learning through watching, so the Complex Safeguarding Team collated several different videos on both Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation to help their understanding and raise awareness. This was respecting their preferred method of learning.

Influence: Particularly at the Wigan Athletic group, the girls were very involved in discussions and asked lots of questions. This positive experience has generated more conversations and education around the topic of exploitation.

Audience: Children and young people attending the youth provisions alongside the professionals that support them. Partner organisations also received information and training on exploitation to educate them further when working with young people.

Impact: Delivering safety education in a child centred way and in a trauma informed approach is crucial for children's safety and wellbeing, as it reduces the likelihood of young people entering unsafe situations. Feedback from young people told us that we have helped them start conversations on how to respond to unsafe situations with each other as well as in schools. This has been especially important following curriculum changes making relationships and sex education statutory.

The workshops have also increased young people's sense of confidence, and knowledge of their personal rights.

Reach Service – Youth Justice

The Youth Justice Team work with children and young people aged 10-17 in the youth justice system or at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB).

‘Safe Spaces’

You Said: Young people said they were worried that the details about the nature of their behaviours would be discovered by family members, neighbours or peers. They were particularly concerned that people may see youth justice staff during home visits, and this would lead to questions being asked by family members or peers about who we were and why we were seeing the child.

We Did: We took the views and opinions of young people into account and looked for alternative venues where direct work could be completed with young people, which would allow them to feel more comfortable and not worried about other people seeing them during their sessions. We were able to find a ‘safe space’ in a community building, which located in the heart of a local neighbourhood.

Space: We found a ‘safe space’ that enabled us to see young people in a private and confidential venue. We made sure the space was in the local community to ensure it was easily accessible to them.

Voice: We listened to the voice of children who were telling us they were not happy with the places we were choosing to see them. We responded by acting upon the voice of the children and making sure we found somewhere that they felt comfortable and private to complete their sessions with us.


Influence: We made sure we involved the children in the decisions regarding where their sessions would take place. We made sure these discussions took place as early as possible. By doing this we ensured children were involved in plans that affect their lives right from the start.

Audience: We took care to ensure that we provided an effective communication pathway for children and their parents / carers to comfortably share their views with us. This enabled them to build resilience and self-confidence in the actions we would take once we had listened to them.

Impact: Working in the ‘safe space’ had a positive impact on the young people and enabled them to feel reassured that the work could be completed in a safe and most importantly, confidential way, promoting personal privacy and anonymity.



Reach Service – Youth Justice



‘Child and parent / carer feedback’

You Said: At the end of their involvement with the Reach Youth Justice service young people and guardians wanted the option to send their feedback to us in a confidential and anonymous way.

We Did: We created online feedback forms for children and parents / carers to access so they could submit their feedback at a time that best suits them and in a method that enabled them to utilise technology to send information confidentially, rather than having to write out feedback manually on paper forms.

Space: By changing the formatting of the feedback forms from paper copies to an online survey, it gave children and parents / carers the opportunity to complete the feedback forms in a safe and confidential space, at a time and date that best suited them.

Voice: The online feedback forms gave all children and parents / carers the opportunity to have their say in a method that enabled their views and opinions to be listened to and respected.

Influence: By moving the feedback surveys to be completed online, it enabled children and parents / carers to complete them to a level of detail that they suited them. Previously, the paper copy forms would often be completed with the individual by the worker, meaning some answers had the tendency to be tokenistic in nature and not true reflections. However, following the changes, the greater level of freedom and choice in completing the forms has yielded richer, more detailed feedback.

Audience: The online forms gave a clear and effective communication pathway for children and parents / carers to share views in a safe and confidential way. The responses are then sent to workers / managers to facilitate future service improvements.

Impact: The impact of this feedback has helped to ensure appointments are held at the same time and location which suits young people and often with also providing food at the session. We have utilised an outdoor education facility to support activity-based interventions and developed a youth voice forum where children can feedback directly to the police on some of their experiences, helping to improve relationships and police practices.

Reach Service – Youth Justice

Youth Justice Agreement with Young People

Young people open to Youth Justice were asked their opinions on a document called 'Young Persons Agreement.' This is used when young people undertake reparation (to repair the harm caused to others) with a youth justice support worker. The agreement allows for preparation and expectations of the session to be set out to the young person and the work which will be involved. This work asked young people what their thoughts are on the agreement, to ensure it meets the needs of the young people and their supporting workers.



Space: Young people were asked if they would take some time as part of their sessions to look at the current young person agreement.

Voice: The young people worked through agreement and gave feedback on each section. This was written on the original document to ensure it was captured accurately.

Influence: Young people's input will enable us to make collaborative changes to the agreement. It is essential the agreement is meaningful and is achievable for all young people.

Audience: We are hoping to expand the audience of our agreement to involve young people receiving Intensive Supervision Support and young people working with the Staying Together Team. We would like their input into agreements' specific for their needs.

Impact: The children said they were finding it difficult to engage positively in reparation sessions as they were not always planned in a child first manner. By speaking with children prior to arranging their reparation sessions, we were then able to tailor them in a way which we knew would better meet their needs and individual learning styles. By adopting a more child first approach, we found that this improved engagement rates during sessions. Children feel more involved as we included them in the planning stage of their work with us.

In terms of impact on victims, we have also noted a positive response. By ensuring the voice of the child is incorporated into the design of the work, we have then been able to tailor restorative practice with children as and when it is appropriate. For example, when a child is not in the right place to engage in restorative work, we have been able to identify this and not try to engage them in work that is not suited to their needs.

Family Help Service

(previously Early Help and Prevention)

Family Help offer support, advice and guidance for families with children 0-19, (or 25 if they have learning or additional needs), who are at Level 3 of Wigan's threshold of need. Support is offered via an Early Help Plan and utilises multi-agency involvement.

Mind of My Own App

The Mind of My Own App is an inclusive tool to empower young people to participate in their lives and communicate their views to a trusted adult. The app is visual, with simple pictures and child-friendly words, designed for children and young people to share experiences, feelings and views on topics that reflect important moments in their lives. This was piloted by Family Help as well as other identified teams in children's services.

You Said: You told us that you wanted more ways for us to hear your views, wishes, feelings, and to celebrate your achievements.

We Did: We listened carefully to you, and we spent a lot of time looking for an exciting app that could help you to share your thoughts, views, wishes and feelings while also celebrating your achievements. We have purchased an app called 'Mind of My Own' and are in the process of demonstrating what the app can do to all the staff in children's services, so they can share this with you.



Quotes/Feedback:

"The App has helped to plan next steps and direct work for the young person. When we discussed some of their statements, they could see that I had taken the time to read and acknowledge what they had shared. I feel that this really helped to start a trusting relationship with them. I feel If we had not used Mind of My Own that building the trust with the young person would have taken longer."

Space: The Mind of My Own app can be used either face to face with you and your worker/carer or, on your own in the privacy of your own home or bedroom. It is a safe digital space where you can be confident that your information is private and secure.

Voice: We listen very carefully to what you tell us, act on it where we can and tell you if it is not possible to do the things you are asking us to do.

Influence: The app will not only help you to contribute fully to your plan but also improve the whole service directly from your feedback.

Audience: Your feelings and views are shared with your individual practitioners but also with our Workforce Development Lead and Senior Managers.

Impact: The app allows young people to share their experiences in a young person friendly way. This means that practitioners are able to consider experiences and views in a timely way when considering plans and can evidence how they are doing this to young people.

Quality Assurance



Our team of Quality Performance Officers undertake proactive quality assurance visits that benchmark services against quality standards informed by legislation and recognised best practice. In addition to this, they also perform reactive visits to services where concerns are expressed by a third party. These reactive visits are often in response to intelligence from health and social care professionals, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), service users, their relatives, a member of the public and staff who may seek to whistle blow.

The Caring Hearts Awards 2025

The Caring Hearts Awards gives children, young people and their families the opportunity to recognise the impact that staff from Children's Services have on their lives when working in collaboration with them. The Awards are now in their third year of celebrating professionals' dedication to children, young people and families.

You Said: A Million Voices wanted to celebrate the help, support and care young people receive from their practitioners. They wanted to choose the colour theme and the buffet. They also wanted to choose the runners up, the winners and present some of the awards.

We Did: We worked with you to arrange the awards ceremony to celebrate those practitioners who received nominations. We went with the colour theme and the buffet you chose when we met with you at the group session. We discussed with you the shortlisted anonymised nominations so that you could vote and choose the runners up and the winners. You presented some of the awards alongside Senior Managers from Children's Services.

Space: We came to visit you at your regular group session to talk about the awards, and then returned with the nominations, so you could make decisions on them in a space that you were comfortable with.

Voice: You took your time in reviewing the nominations and shared that you were looking closely at the qualities the practitioner had displayed as this was important in your decision making. You also said that the difference their work had made was key to your final judgement.

Influence: Your ideas for the Awards evening and decision making in selecting the runners up/winners enabled practitioners to be recognised for their dedication to children, young people and families across the borough.

Audience: You worked collaboratively on the event with the Workforce Development Manager and the Principal Social Worker, presenting runner up/winner awards alongside Senior Managers, the Director Children's Services, Assistant Directors and the Elected Member for Children's Services.

Impact: The process of nomination raised a positive profile of staff and encouraged families and young people to consider how they had been helped and supported by their workers, this in turn raised morale among staff. The awards were meaningful to practitioners as it was the young people who were the decision makers.

Family Safeguarding Teams

Implementation of the Family Safeguarding Model

We aim to work with families and partner agencies to co-produce plans that identify sustainable solutions that require the least amount of professional intrusion in family life. We seek to offer support at the earliest opportunity to help families to solve problems or reduce the impact of problems that have emerged so that families remain together. We also aim to help families move from worries or danger to wellbeing or safety. We are determined to deliver excellent outcomes for the children, young people, and the families we work alongside.

You Said: You wanted to feel safe, supported and for your voice to be heard. You tell us that you do not want to keep repeating your story and that you want to build relationships with your social workers.

We Did: We are embedding the Family Safeguarding Model to support you staying with your families safely, ensuring you feel part of all aspects of care planning and that we are working with you and your family rather than 'doing' to you.

We have ensured our social workers have developed their skills through motivational interviewing so they are able to both listen and hear what you are telling them to ensure we can support you with effective change and help you to reach your full aspirations.

We continue to work with our recruitment drive to try to ensure we can limit the changes of social workers that you have and can have the ability to form strong and sustainable relationships.

We have spoken to you about what is important to you, and we are including this in our refreshed practice standards.

Quotes/Feedback:

"I'm always asked first when we have meetings. I'm an equal part of the discussion."

"Thank you for asking how it felt living with mum, it was a hard experience, but I got through it."

"She is fantastic. She goes out of her way to help and support."



WIGAN BOROUGH

Family
Safeguarding

Family Safeguarding Teams

Space: We have looked at creative places we can meet with you as we know school and home are not always the best place to see you. We ask for our social workers to explore with you where you would want to be seen.

Voice: All our practitioners have completed the Motivational Interviewing training to ensure they can listen effectively but also hear what you are telling them. We are also ensuring that they have the tools and resources to engage you creatively rather than sitting in face-to-face conversations which can feel difficult at times, We have introduced the Mind of My Own app to encourage children to share their views in a different way.

Influence: We are very open and transparent with children and their families to ensure they have realistic expectations of what we can support them with and what we can deliver to them.

Audience: We are working with our partners to update them on the Family Safeguarding Model, and we are embedding health reflections into our practice for our children we are most worried about, to ensure we are capturing their voice and creating effective care plans.

Impact: Feedback for children, young people and their families is recognised in our practice learning framework as a key measure in which to evaluate their experiences. We are now clear that as part of our monthly collaborative case file audits, each auditor should (where appropriate), speak to the child or young person themselves. This means we have a better understanding of our strengths and areas for development in implementing the model. We have used the voice of our children and young people to influence our refreshed practice standards, which are due to be launched.



Children with Disabilities Service

The Children with Disabilities Team (CWD) works with partners and agencies to provide support for children and young people with disabilities.

One-page Profiles

You said: You wanted to improve the relationship with your Social Worker from the CWD team.

We Did: We have created One-page Profiles for all of our staff which are shared with children, young people and their families. They are also shared with our short break provisions. A One-page Profile is a brief introduction to the staff member, capturing key information on a single sheet of paper. It is a page full of positive information about the staff member which enables the child, young person and their family to get to know them.

Case Study from Elective Home Education (EHE) Team

You Said: You felt that you weren't listened to in school, this influenced your parents' decision to withdraw you to Elective Home Education.

We Did: We produced a report that included your voice and the voices of other young people who had been home educated, this was captured in a session that took place in the college. This was then shared with the college and senior education leaders in the council. It was also shared anonymously with your former school. This then also informed our Education and SEND Strategy Delivery Plan.



Quotes/Feedback:

"It has made me more confident about exams and resources to learn more. I've learned a lot more at college and actually made friends. I didn't feel like some sort of caged animal, I feel like I'm treated as a human and not a work machine."

Children with Disabilities Service



Space: We try very hard to understand the reasons why parents make the decision to home educate. We now run Back on Track meetings for pupils wishing to return to school. This is a space to discuss concerns previously experienced in school and to ensure that a firm plan is put in place to help young people reintegrate into a formal educational setting.

Voice: Our staff use relationship-based practise in home education meetings to encourage an open conversation. We record the young person's thoughts and feelings on home education as part of our assessment.

Influence: Where concerns are raised, we share these with school so that they can understand your family's decision to home educate and apply that knowledge to how they work with families in the future.

Audience: We regularly communicate and liaise with schools to ensure our learners' voices are heard by the correct people, which in turn allows them to be acted upon in a timely manner.

Impact: Your voice gave the college confidence that the re-engagement with education offer was valid and was helping young people, such as yourself, who had negative experiences in school. This has helped to create a longer running offer that continues to expand. The college was nominated for a Beacon Award for this work. In addition, education leaders and schools now have a better understanding of how it feels to make the decision to withdraw from a school education to home education.



Engagement Centres



We offer targeted specialist educational support for young people who are having difficulties in school in three centres across the borough. This may include not attending school and/or students with additional needs that require extra support.

Making Science Fun!

You Said: During a group work session, you said that science is unpredictable in a good way and that you wanted more of it!

We Did: Staff now provide dedicated weekly practical science experiments that have exciting reactions which stimulate young people's minds. This has developed the self-confidence of young people and has helped promote discussion.

Space: We have effectively utilised both our outdoor and indoor spaces to ensure that science experiments can take place without interruption.

Voice: From discussions with young people, we have designed science experiments that involve practical activities that are interesting and stimulating to young people.

Influence: Student voice and responses to science investigations and experiments are shared with Teaching Assistants and Leaders, which are being used to inform planning of future lessons. Staff and students reflect on areas for development and discuss how investigations can be carried out more effectively.

Audience: During induction meetings, children and families are introduced to the key adults in the centre and aspirations boards are visible in which some children have stated that they wish to become scientists. We always discuss each child's aspirations and future career ideas to help plan effective lessons that will grip them and increase their enthusiasm to learn.

Impact: Children are now exposed to a variety of different science experiments and investigations that take place both within the classroom and outside in the playground. Investigations have focused on creating active volcanoes, creating bubble machines and bubbles that will not burst, demonstrating the absorption of ink through different materials and exploring which materials are the best insulators or protective coatings.

Quotes/Feedback:

"The science activities are awesome."

"We never know how an experiment is going to work out."

"I never knew that science could be so much fun!"

Engagement Centres

Corridor Libraries

You Said: “I like reading after English.” “I want more variety in the library.”

We Did: New fictional and non-fictional books have been purchased and reading areas developed within each classroom. A corridor library has been developed at each engagement centre with a range of book genres on offer. There are, ‘What am I currently reading?’ displays within each classroom. There is also dedicated time built into the day to ensure that reading time with a teacher is protected and always occurs. ‘This is Me’ displays were created to gather ideas on the types of books that the children enjoy reading. We invited the children’s author Simon James Hunt to talk to the children about how he came up with the ideas for his books “Billy The Bottom Burping Pirate” and “Delilah Rose – The Bogey Princess.”



Quotes/Feedback:

“There are so many choices of books in the centres now.”

“I wish my school let me read so much.”

“I can’t believe we met a real author.”

Space: Dedicated book corners developed in each classroom. Bookshelves were purchased and filled with an array of genre types. ‘What am I currently reading?’ displays evident within each classroom.

Voice: Through pupil voice and the completion of the ‘This is Me’ activity, staff were able to gain an understanding on which genres of books the children enjoyed reading.

Influence: Across the centres’, staff and young people are actively discussing what they are reading in their spare time which has encouraged relationships to flourish. We have found that through books and novels, some children have increased their ability to communicate and develop self-confidence through a common love of reading.

Audience: Children are being encouraged to read with a partner, with an adult or in silence on their own. There is more emphasis on getting the children to read from the board and this has increased interactivity within lessons.

Impact: There has been an all-round increase in the discussion around reading amongst both children and adults within the centres. The session with Simon James Hunt was truly inspirational for the children and they were amazed by the different stages that are involved in creating a book and getting it published. Their confidence in asking questions was a delight to see.

Engagement Centres

Playground Update

You Said: “We want more playground equipment and activities to use at break time.”

We Did: We purchased a whole array of playground equipment ranging from basketball hoops to gardening tools. An outside container at Larch Avenue was re-organised with new playground equipment. The break time provision was improved with the purchase of activities and games such as Magnatiles, Mega Blocks, Playing cards, Scratch Art pads and Fidget Tools.



Space: Dedicated storage units purchased to help keep playtime activities organised. The use of the Storage Container at Larch Avenue and shed at Cavendish Street has meant that the playground equipment can be taken out and stored away safely at the end of the day.

Voice: Children were given the opportunity to have their say on activities and games that they enjoyed at home. These then formed the basis for items that we purchased.

Influence: All staff were asked for their input on potential break time games and outside activities that could be purchased. Some of us had not seen Magnatiles in action or even heard about them but now we all use them in the centre based on the recommendations of one of our staff members.

Audience: The manager for the engagement centre listened to the young people and staff suggestions about improving the playground area, not just for one centre but for all three.

Impact: Pupils were much-more engaged in playing together and in groups rather than on their own. The children's faces were amazing when they saw that we had purchased the items that they had requested. Their creative skills increased as they loved to use the scratch art pads and we saw an improvement in their design and construction skills using Mega Blocks, Lego and Magnatiles.

Quotes/Feedback:

“Wow! I can't believe how much more equipment there is outside.”

“Today, I did a slam-dunk in the playground.”

“We have lots of choice during break times.”

Fostering Team

The Fostering Team is made up of social workers that recruit and supervise foster carers, who can provide a loving and safe home to who young people who are looked after by the local authority.

A Million Voices and Wigan's Fostering Recruitment.

A Million Voices are a key part of the fostering recruitment process. Once a month, the young people come together to meet prospective foster carers who are going through the assessment process to train them on how to actively listen to young people that they will be looking after in their homes.

Space: The training session is held at The Venue where A Million Voices hold their weekly group meeting. This space is comfortable for the young people and is also welcoming for the new applicants. There are ground rules in place for the applicants to ensure that this is a safe space for them; whilst there are no limitations on what children may choose to discuss, the prospective applicants are instructed not to ask any personal questions.

Voice: A Million Voices plan and run the training by themselves, often including interesting and fun icebreakers for the fostering applicants which gives them an insight into how the applicants interact with children. They also have the support of the same social worker from the fostering team at each session. This promotes consistency and has enabled the children to develop a trusting relationship. The children provide feedback about the applicants at the end of each session, which then contributes to the applicant's assessment.

Influence: During sessions, applicants can ask the children questions with regards to what they can do to make children who come to live with them feel more comfortable, or what not to do. The children often provide good and insightful advice which directly impacts how foster carers later go on to welcome children into their homes and ensure they feel comfortable.

Audience: Children can provide advice and feedback directly to prospective foster carers which then impacts how they go on to interact with any children who might come into their care. The children also provide feedback to the supporting social worker about prospective carers which is then considered within the assessment process.

Impact: Foster carers report that the session with A Million Voices gives them important insights into the lives of children in care and the role of foster carers. In turn, this better motivates and supports them to provide the best possible family for children they will care for.



Provider Services – Commissioning Team

Independent Visitor Service

The Independent Visitor Service provides support by a reliable, consistent, and dedicated volunteer who will promote a sense of normal life to the young people. The Independent Visitor will promote the young person's welfare including their social, emotional development, education, religious, and cultural needs and ensure these have been met.

You Said: Young people told us all the qualities that they thought were important for an Independent Visitor. They produced a list of questions that they wanted potential providers to answer which asked about what is important to them in an Independent Visitor Service and what they would like to know about the service.

We Did: We utilised young people's views and input on what qualities were important in an Independent Visitor to shape the new Independent Visitor Service, this was included with the service specification.

Young people from A Million Voices were involved in every stage of this procurement process. A Million Voices were engaged with and produced 'Section A – What is Important to our Young People' within the Service Specification. A Million Voices also produced the questions for the first section of the Invitation to Tender Document; this is the document that invites providers to submit a bid for a service. We received 7 bids in total for the Independent Visitor Service. A Million Voices reviewed the answers, they provided feedback on each of the providers and ranked them from most favourite to least. The moderation panel considered and took on board the feedback from A Million Voices with the provider that A Million Voices ranked with one of their favourites being awarded the Independent Visitor Contract.

Wigan Youth Zone was successful as the chosen provider; this service and has continued to liaise and engage with A Million Voices to shape and develop how this service will operate in Wigan.

Throughout the duration of this contract Wigan Youth Zone will continue to engage with young people not only to capture young people's feedback on the service but to continue to shape the service so that it is delivering an excellent Independent Visitor Service for our young people.



Provider Services – Commissioning Team

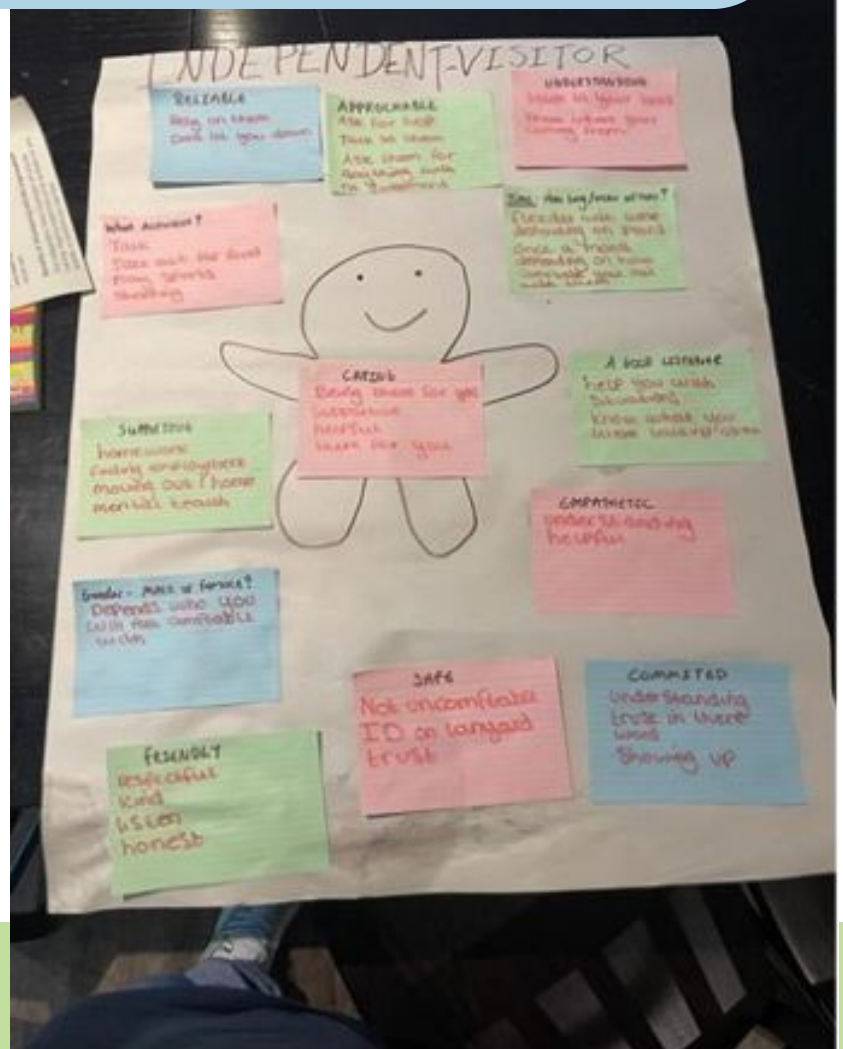
Space: Engagement with children and young people took place within the existing A Million Voices group sessions at a time and place that was comfortable and convenient for them.

Voice: Children and young people shared their views on what was important to them and were able to feedback on the bids that were received to participate in the procurement process fully.

Influence: Children and young people were able to share their views, shape the service specification and influence the decision-making process.

Audience: A Million Voices is the local authority's children in care steering group who consulted on and engaged with the development of the service, as it is this cohort of children and young people who would benefit from this service offer.

Impact: The commissioning of the Independent Visitor Service has been and will be further informed by children in care, which will ensure it is developed in the best way possible to meet their needs.



Provider Services – The View & ATOM

The View Children's Home is registered for three children between the ages of 8 – 17 years old. The home provides care and accommodation under an immediate referral or planned short break. The home has an attached outreach offer, ATOM, that supports children with a plan of fostering or reunification home. ATOM clinical team support the staff with training and consultation, reflection and direct intervention with families.

Chill room

Our chill room was created and provided welcoming calm space for our young people whilst in the home.

This space is fully equipped with comforting objects and soothing materials that can promote mindfulness, breathing and reflection. The overall goal of this room is to provide the child with a space in which they feel safe, recognising and regulating their emotions in a healthy way. Within our room we have the colours that are considered tranquil and calming. A campfire is one of the images that was painted to encourage communication. This was mentioned by a young person to a staff member when taking part in bush craft - they thought a fire was relaxing and a cosy campfire on a cold night is hard to resist, especially at the end of the day. The young people also chose the Lego men on the walls and bean bags, and one of the walls is white so if the feature wall is too busy, they can turn round and can relax by viewing the blank white wall.



Space: The chill room provides a therapeutic space that is warm and welcoming and provides a safe space to share opinions and welcomes opportunities to talk.

Voice: The young people may express themselves during artwork and creativity or just by relaxing.

Influence: The room was created after a spontaneous comment at dinner by one of our young people during a conversation about what would make The View even better.

Audience: Young people can express their feelings in the right way in a safe environment. Our young people's views are taken seriously and acted upon.

Impact: The impact on our young people is evident in their smiles they feel happier, calmer safe and know that their voice has been heard.

Provider Services – The View & ATOM

Magazine and Feedback Box

You Said: We wanted to know more about what was on offer at The View and an anonymous way to feedback to staff.

We Did: We created a Magazine and Feedback Box for our young people. The magazine is a great opportunity to give our children a voice and provides updates on activities, visits, plans and a reminder to give ideas and leave feedback. The magazine is a reminder of our journey as a family at The View and the things we did that month.

We also created a feedback box. One of our young people expressed they wanted to be quiet one evening, and the member of staff that was on duty was quite loud, this may have been too embarrassing or uncomfortable to say to them directly - the feedback box is anonymous and checked regularly to ensure our children's voice is heard. We could then have that conversation on their behalf and arrange a calm relaxing atmosphere for them that evening.

We recognised our young people use their mobile phones a lot and created a QR code to make feedback, feelings and ideas easier to express the code directs you to a survey to complete.

Space: The magazine and feedback box are ideal for our young people to share ideas and opinions whilst remaining anonymous. They can read it and use them in their own time.

Voice: Young people can feature in the magazine and prompts young people to speak to staff/use the QR code if they wish to be in the magazine or give feedback anonymously.

Influence: We action any feedback and where possible we make it happen.

Audience: The magazine is all about The View and aimed at the young people who we care for. The feedback gathers information from all who live and visit us.

Impact: The View have received external feedback on the strength of practice in listening and acting on the views of young people.



Provider Services – Ladies Lane

Ladies Lane provides planned short break overnight care for children and young people who may also have additional health care needs arising from physical and sensory impairments. Some of the children and young people are unable to use speech as their main source of communication, so we need to support consultations in many different ways to capture the voices of all the children and young people who spend time here. We invite and encourage participation as we believe the children and young people's involvement is valuable and rewarding.

The 'Garden Redesign Project'

You Said: Young people said that they like to spend more time in the garden, it has a trampoline and a great selection of garden games, but it required improvement. The young people wanted the garden to be made more sensory, so all could join in activities whilst outside.

We Did: We linked in with the Environments Team to look at how to make the garden more accessible and inviting.

Each aspect of the garden has a purpose – 'Smell' all the plants have a distinctive aroma – 'Touch' all the plants have different textures – 'Grow' all the plants will be planted by the young people, they will watch them grow and then enjoy eating them! We discussed ideas to improve to make it more sensory and engaging for all the young people.

Space: Through discussions in the centre, young people felt comfortable to express their ideas about improving the garden to create a space that was accessible for them.

Voice: Young people were very specific in voicing that the garden needed to meet their sensory needs as well as physical needs.

Influence: The young people's voice influenced the staff to contact the Environments Team to make the improvements required.

Audience: The Environment team were able to design the garden based on the information provided by children and families.

Impact: All those that visit Ladies Lane can enjoy the garden alongside their families and support staff.

Quotes/Feedback:

"We are all looking forward to warmer days to spend time in our new revamped garden!"



Provider Services – Leisure for All

Leisure for All provide weekly group sessions and holiday activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Leisure for All is based at the Drumcroon Centre in Wigan.

Decorating Leisure for All

We worked with children and their families through an open house event to enable children to have a say in the decoration of the centre they visit during their leisure time. Children and their families chose colours for walls and had the opportunity to talk about what they liked about the service. Throughout the evening, staff sat with children using catalogues and pictures and discussed what new toys and equipment they would like in the centre once the decoration was completed.

Space: Both the open house event and discussions about toys took place at the Drumcroon Centre. Activities were set out in ways that were easy for children to look at and choose from. For example, use of painted samples for the colour choices giving a visual cue for children to see. Children who attend Leisure for All can have difficulties concentrating and could come in and out of the activity at their own pace.

Voice: We used the wishes and voice of the children and their families to inform the decoration of the centre.

Influence: Children and families have been involved in the decoration planning and we sought their views so that when discussions were taking place with senior managers their choices could be put forward and listened to.

Audience: Children were shown physical representations of the colour choices for when the decorating takes place. Children chose items from catalogues with pictures for the wish list.

Impact: The building has been decorated in a child friendly but more neutral manner, using colours chosen by children and their families. New equipment and toys are now actively being enjoyed by children during their sessions. We have included the addition of an indoor adult size playhouse which is widely used by several of the children of all ages. Children have actively seen their choices come to life, as the building has now been decorated and items they requested are available for them to use.



Provider Services – Leisure for All

Leisure for All Sleepover

You Said: You would like to have a sleepover at the Drumcroon Centre and for the service to have further funding to plan similar activities across 2025.

We Did: We applied for a Short Breaks Award Grant to provide an overnight stay in 2024 and extra evening activities on a Saturday in 2025 and a Halloween party on 31st October 2025.

Space: The overnight stay was at the Drumcroon Centre, as requested by the young people that use the service regularly. They felt safe and secure in familiar surroundings.

Voice: Children requested the overnight stay and played an active part in choosing what activities were provided.

Influence: Overnight stays are something that children and families have requested in previous consultations. The Short Breaks Award Grant has been influential in holding these stays across 2024 – 2025.

Audience: Senior managers and staff listened to children and families, seeing the benefit the overnight stay provided for them and sought to enable more events to happen like this by securing funding.

Impact: Children who attended the overnight stay expressed their enjoyment of it. One of the children present completed her own diary sheet talking about the activities that they had taken part in.



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Service (SEND)



Website Transformation

You Said: Change the layout of the Children and Young Person's sections on the website to be more useful. You wanted us to do this by changing the layout of the webpage, so it is easier to find information. You also wanted more videos, icons and media so that the information is more accessible. Additionally, you wanted us to add an explanation on what each of the sections are about so we know where to find information with wording so that you could understand it.

We Did: We have held a 'development session' with young people at the A-Team Hub to gain feedback on the Local Offer website. The SEND team have set up a steering group to ask teams to review their content and language we are using on our website. The steering group will also look at how to reduce the number of 'clicks' to find information. We have reviewed the layout and format of the pages, by drawing on pages and sites young people preferred and if this can be incorporated into our site. We have also reviewed landing pages to include information boxes to help children and young people know what that section means.

Space: Consultation was held at the A-Team hub, in a space young people are familiar with. We encouraged a safe, positive environment to allow them to give open and honest feedback.

Voice: The young people were given opportunities to share verbally, and through written/pictorial formats. Young people were given opportunities to feedback on the Local Offer Website, they could choose where we visited and discussed. It was explained how the information they provided would be used.

Audience: The steering group will review the feedback the young people gave and see how it is applicable to improving the website.

Influence: The feedback the young people have provided will support the improvement of the website so that more young people can access the Local Offer in an accessible way.

Impact: The Engagement Officer and A-Team Voices have agreed to meet regularly to ensure the changes are implemented on the website at different stages. The website will also be monitored to see if there has been increased visitors by young people.

Quotes/Feedback:

"I didn't know all this was in offer."

"Some artwork or something would be cool. I like the pages that have the icons on."

PARTNERSHIPS ACHIEVEMENTS



The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - also known as CAMHS - work with young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties, and their families. We support young people up to the age of 18 who have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties which are causing difficulties in their school, family or social life.

Recovery Academy - 'You're Not Alone' Animation.

The project was to co-produce an animation between the Recovery Academy and Wigan & Bolton CAMHS. The aim of this project was to empower young people to shape mental health conversations, breaking down barriers to emotional expression and strengthening relationships through understanding young people's lived experiences.

You Said: Young people from the Recovery Academy and Wigan CAMHS shared they often felt nervous about opening-up about their emotions fearing judgement or saying something wrong, impacting on friendships/relationships.

We Did: Wigan CAMHS, and the Recovery Academy collaborated with young people to create an animated series titled, 'You're Not Alone.' These animations explore the challenges of emotions, breaking down fears of judgement, showing the importance of open communication and supportive relationships by using real experiences and insights from young people.

Space: Young people were given a safe, supportive environment to share their experiences and ideas for the animation.

Voice: Young people's personal insights and feelings shaped the content, ensuring the animations reflect real concerns and experiences.

Influence: The project ensures young people's voices have a lasting and impressionable impact, providing a relatable resource that aims to support others in opening-up about their emotions and relationships.

Audience: The animation will be shared widely across CAMHS, the Recovery Academy, and social media to reach a wider audience of young people who may be struggling.

Impact: We now have a product which can be used as a tool to support young people to talk about their feelings and appreciate that they are not alone in feeling anxious about this.

Quotes/Feedback:

"This group made me feel welcome and supported I really enjoyed creating this video and being able to express how I felt when I tried to explain my emotions. I have also made some great friends that I wouldn't have, if I did not attend Recovery Academy."

You're not alone



CAMHS

Youth Leads UK, Participation Wigan CAMHS and MHST

Young people came together to design a newsletter with guidance from Youth Leads UK. Training was also delivered to young people on interview skills using role play and education to build confidence when interviewing future Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS employees.

You Said: Young people wanted better access to mental health information, resources and support in a way that was young person friendly, no jargon, engaging and relatable.

We Did: Young people from Youth Leads UK, CAMHS and Mental Health Support Team came together and co-designed a newsletter, created for young people by young people. It will provide all the information and services that are available in the community and in the schools such as conversations starters to tackle stigma, fun quizzes, facts, and real advice from those with lived experiences.

Space: Young people were given a platform to create a newsletter that meets their needs and interests in a safe, inclusive space where they could express their views freely.

Voice: Young people provided the ideas, experiences and creativity to produce the content.

Influence: By leading this project, young people are actively shaping how mental health support in schools and community services/spaces is communicated, making services more approachable and reducing stigma.

Audience: The aim of the newsletters aim is that they will be shared within schools, CAMHS buildings and, community spaces, this will allow young people direct access to the newsletter.

Impact: By shaping the content themselves, young people ensure this is a relevant, engaging and valuable resource for peers. The young people received certification for completing this training awarded by Youth Leads UK CAMHS. The young people were also invited to a celebratory lunch on the last day of training.

Quotes/Feedback:

"I feel more confident after doing this training especially in design and interviews."

"I am glad I did this training because I have made friends and learnt some new things."

Leigh Youth Hub is a safe and inclusive space where young people can relax, learn a new skill, make friends and more! Leigh Youth Hub is open to all young people aged 8-18 or 25 with additional needs or disabilities. All evening sessions are FREE to young people.

Delivery of art-based activities

You Said: During open access sessions, young people expressed a strong interest in creativity and self-expression through art.

We Did: The introduction of The Arts Award.

Leigh Youth Hub invested in a staff member to undergo training to be able to deliver and accredit Bronze and Silver Award. This is delivered weekly across February-July and will take on a new cohort each year. In addition to this we have embedded art opportunities into our weekly open access delivery called "Artist Escape", an event named by young people.

This has been a great way to engage with young people, grow their confidence, and foster collaborative work with Holi Festival canvas, which will be displayed within the Hub's common room.

Space: Young people were given a safe space to enable them to feel confident in sharing their opinions and have open avenues to share their ideas with the trusted adults on youth work sessions.

Voice: Young people have been given the opportunity to voice areas of interest and the development in delivery activities.

Influence: Leigh Youth Hub members who attend sessions provided by Leigh Youth Hub. New members who see the diverse offer which attracts them to Leigh Youth Hub.

Audience: Leigh Sports Village Steering Group, Senior Managers at Leigh Sports Village, Youth Work staff have worked hard together to implement and coordinate the delivery of the program to ensure it aligned with young people's voice.

Impact: Children and Young People will build skills from participation in the award scheme and will feel a sense of pride and achievement as they succeed. This is evidenced in the quotes below.



Quotes/Feedback:

"Arts Awards lets me achieve something from doing art which is my passion but I still learn new things."

"Arts Award is amazing and I love showing off my work to others."

"Friday sessions are great because we have different types of art and crafts to do each week – We can't wait to see the canvas on the walls."

Leigh Youth Hub

SEN Youth Club

You Said: Young people with special educational needs voiced that they were overwhelmed by the numbers, noise and activities ongoing when attending the open access evening. Young people voiced that they still wanted to engage in something at the hub but on a small scale and less intensive.

We Did: Workers consulted with young people and parents/carers to remove the barriers of them attending sessions at Leigh Youth Hub. This grew into the development of Leigh Youth Hub's monthly SEN Youth Club.

Young people support in planning the monthly session, the activities range from chill out in the Sensory Room, to hamma beads as a firm favourite activity, movies and artwork. This session has encouraged young people to grow in confidence, get to know the building, build relationships with staff and transition into open access session and Holiday Club at their pace.



Space: Young people in the borough with special educational needs now have a dedicated space to enable them to grow in confidence and try new things without outside pressure.

Voice: Young people were given the opportunity to share with workers about how we could remove barriers for them attending Leigh Youth Hub.

Influence: Through a consultation process, young people with special educational needs have influenced Senior Managers to see the creation of a dedicated group.

Audience: Leigh Sports Village Steering Group, Senior Managers at Leigh Sports Village, Youth Work staff have worked hard together to implement and coordinate the delivery of the program to ensure it aligned with young people's voice.

Impact: Leigh Youth Club will have a more inclusive offer for children and young people as a result of the dedicated space and attendance at the hub will increase.

Together for Adoption is a regional adoption agency that covers Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, St Helens, Warrington and Wigan. We welcome adopters from all walks and life and our friendly and expert team are here to support adopters in growing their family.

Youth Voice in Adoption – National Event, Leeds (October 2024)

You Said: Young people in our adoption support group expressed a desire to have their voices heard on a larger scale, particularly in influencing adoption policy and practice.

We Did: We supported two young people from our Teenager Adoption Group to attend the Youth Voice in Adoption event in Leeds, alongside two staff members.

The national event, attended by over 100 delegates, was the first of its kind and was designed to give adopted young people from various regions a platform to share their views and experiences. It also aimed to inspire professionals to strengthen youth voice initiatives in their own regions. The young people attended presentations from seven youth groups and heard from a guest speaker who shared his personal journey in youth advocacy. Young people engaged in discussions around the Adoption England Three-Year Strategy. Live illustrators captured the themes of the day, ensuring young people's feedback was visually represented.

Space: The event provided a dedicated space for young people to come together in a national forum where they felt safe and empowered to speak openly.

Voice: Our young people actively contributed to discussions and shared their perspectives on adoption support and youth voice representation.

Influence: Their feedback was submitted to Adoption England, with a strong message that the most important aspect of the strategy for young people is ensuring genuine opportunities to influence change.

Audience: Their views were heard by professionals, policymakers, and adoption agencies, reinforcing the importance of embedding young people's voices in decision-making.

Impact: The event amplified the voices of adopted young people, fostering a sense of community and shared experience across different regions. The two young people who attended expressed that they would like to participate in similar national events in the future and have more opportunities to connect with other adopted young people.

Quotes/Feedback:

"It was great to be with other adopted teens however we would have valued more opportunity to take part in activities rather than sit and listen most of the day."

Together for Adoption

Guest Speaker Initiative – Social Media & Virtual World Awareness

You Said: Young people in our Teenage Adoption Group (TAG) expressed an interest in having guest speakers attend their sessions to talk about relevant topics. They wanted people who could provide useful advice and relatable discussions.

We Did: We arranged for Jean, an expert (and social worker on our team) in the virtual world and social media, to visit the group. Jean provided valuable insights into online safety, digital identity, and how young people can navigate social media in a healthy way. The session was highly engaging, and the young people responded positively.

Space: A dedicated group setting where young people felt comfortable discussing their online experiences and challenges.

Voice: Young people were actively involved in discussions, asking questions and sharing their perspectives on digital safety.

Influence: Based on their feedback, we committed to bringing in more guest speakers on topics they will find relevant.

Audience: Jean tailored her session to the young people's needs, ensuring the discussion was meaningful and accessible.

Impact: The success of this initiative was reflected in the young people's enthusiasm for future guest speakers. They appreciated that Jean spoke at their level and that the session felt relatable and engaging.

Following the success of this session, Jean came back to our group, where she was welcomed as part of the team. This demonstrated the lasting impact of her first visit and the young people's desire for more external speakers.

Quotes/Feedback:

"Jean was great—she explained things in a way that made sense to us."

"It's really good to have people come in and talk to us about stuff that actually matters."

Wigan Youth Zone is one of the largest Youth Zones in Europe. It is home to state-of-the-art facilities that young people can find all in one place, from a climbing wall and radio station to a skate park, gym and dance studio.

GMCA Shaping Care Fund Project

Wigan Youth Zone were asked to gather children and young peoples' views on how they would like to be involved in the ongoing design and delivery of the Greater Manchester's Regional Care Cooperative (RCC).

Space: Wigan Youth Zone provided a trusted, youth-friendly space as part of our closed sessions on a Monday for looked after children, where young people felt comfortable and valued. Through consultations young people could reflect on their experiences in care and hopes for the future in a non-judgmental and empowering setting and then choose their favourite medium to express it.

Voice: Young people chose art to express their voice, allowing them to share their priorities in ways that felt natural, accessible, and powerful. We were able to hire an external facilitator and renowned graffiti artist Evan Barlow to support young people to create their pieces. This creative medium made it easier for young people to communicate complex feelings and ideas, particularly for those who may not express themselves easily through traditional consultation methods.

Audience: The outputs of the Shaping Care project, artworks and the top five priorities were shared with senior decision-makers involved in shaping the Regional Care Co-operative. This ensured that the voices of young people were not just heard locally at Wigan Youth Zone but elevated to a regional platform.

Influence: The young people's top five priorities; regular time with their Social Worker and for that relationship to be protected, regular meetings with Decision Makers to share their ideas, aspirations and concerns, a cross borough vote on new services or consultation on issues that affect them, and review and offer amendments not just from one Youth Voice group but from all looked after young people. They would also like a Care Leaver or Mentor to support those in midst of care and who can advocate their concerns.

Impact: Since the project we have received further funding to extend this feedback loop and create a steering group of young people to continue to influence ongoing changes. We have also begun an Independent Visitor programme funded by Wigan Council, set to launch in June 2025, which has also consulted with looked after young people and will be able to offer a befriending service across Wigan and Leigh.

Wigan Youth Zone

Inclusion Club

You Said: Some of the young people found that the open access sessions felt overwhelming for their individual needs. They felt they needed a quieter space within the building.

We Did: We created a safe space with inclusive opportunities for young people to make friends, build confidence and try new things.

Space: A dedicated weekly Sunday session (11:30am–1:30pm) was designed by young people for young people exclusively for children aged 8–11 with SEND who find mainstream provision overwhelming.

The space was physically and emotionally safe: separate entrance, quieter environment, consistent staff, smaller group sizes, and access to the Sensory Room. Activities were structured yet flexible, allowing young people to explore their interests in art, music, climbing, and sports at their own pace. Young people chose weekly activities and helped plan themed sessions (e.g., party days), making the space their own.

Voice: Creative methods were embedded to help young people communicate their views, especially for those with limited verbal communication. Feedback was also gathered through one-to-one conversations, informal check-ins, and observation.

Audience: Young people's ideas were taken forward by staff and also presented to Short Breaks to gain additional funding for the project to continue.

Influence: Young people's feedback directly shaped session structure, activity choice, and future planning.

Impact: Several young people re-engaged with the Youth Zone on other days – showing the confidence and connection built through this programme. Reflections from the children informed the development of inclusive practices and will be used as a business case for long-term integration. So far, over 35 individual children with SEND engaged, contributing to over 350 attendances. 40% began attending the Youth Zone beyond Sunday sessions – showing deeper integration. 100% made at least one new friend, 88% tried something new.

Smart Body Sports



Smart Body Sports is dedicated to improving children's health and wellbeing through sustainable, diverse, arts enriched sports and education.

Marsh Green Library Project

You Said: Children and young people using the library expressed the want for more activities in the community, this would reduce them 'hanging around and causing trouble'.

We Did: On Thursday and Friday, the highest reported anti-social behaviour period, Smart Body Sports provided diversionary activities such as sports and awareness raising workshops.

Space: A variety of outdoor sports and indoor enrichment activities delivered by Smart Body Sports directly in community at Marsh Green library and the surrounding open spaces in the area.

Voice: The children dictate what type of provision they participate in through a series of youth voice activities, led by the young people and supported by the Smart Body Sports and Library staff team.

Audience: 83 different individual young people attended Thursday and Friday sessions delivered by Smart Body Sports between January – March 2025. An average attendance of 23 young people per session, per week. These young people aged between 6-14.

Influence: The Marsh Green provision has allowed the young people to increase their knowledge and understanding on safe internet, becoming resilient, understanding what a team player looks like. We also challenged the children to become more aware of litter in their local area. An influx of new memberships for the library of both parents, carers and children since January 2025.

The weekly sessions have provided more opportunities for young people in the Marsh Green and the Worsley Hall area. We have seen an Improved connectivity between the shops, school and library with the young people and sports coaches.

Impact: There has been a growth of community togetherness. The young people who attend school are now signposted to the library to become members, participate in the activities run by the staff and coaches at Smart Body Sports. Parents and carers of the young people are now attending the library more often and paying more attention to what is on offer.

Quotes/Feedback:

The library staff have fed back some great feedback and that the sessions seem to be helping and are being enjoyed by the children.

Supporting Skills & Futures



The Supporting Skills and Futures Team aim to develop young people's skills, talents, and independence, to enable them to lead a more fulfilled life, in which they will feel included and valued.

"Do We Look Autistic?" Book

You Said: Young people felt there was a lack of awareness and understanding around autism and how it feels for individuals.

We Did: In partnership with Wigan Council, the book 'Do We Look Autistic' was created with young people.

Space: Young people from Embrace's Adventure Group were consulted at their regular meeting space. The two main characters are based on two young people from the group.

Voice: Young people shared personal experiences and comments on what autism means to them, what are some of the challenges autistic children may have, things they feel are great about being autistic and what key messages they want to be shared with young people who read the book. The common statement that young people said was "I'm sick of being told I don't 'look Autistic!'" and helped to give the title name of the book – opening-up a conversation about what does that statement actually mean and helping to shape the theme of the book. There was also an additional character was created from a competition to be in the book.

Audience: On Saturday 2nd November 2024, Leigh Library hosted a book launch to mark the release of the book. The event offered a meet-and-greet with Alex, and Lisa Williams (the illustrator), and included speeches from Wigan Mayor, Cllr Debbie Parkinson, and Andrea Glasspell (Co-chair of the All-Age Autism Partnership Board), praising the key message of the book as well as the importance of getting them into local schools.



Supporting Skills & Futures

Influence: The characters are based on real local people reflecting the authentic voices and experiences of the borough's autistic residents. Co-produced with young autistic people, the Do We Look Autistic children's book aims to debunk myths, celebrate diversity, and emphasise the importance of understanding and acceptance. The book has highlighted the call for additional publications on a range of other conditions and milestones, such as ADHD, Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), school transitions, employment, health, and wellbeing.

Impact: The book has enabled readers to better understand autism in an engaging and compassionate way while realising that everyone is different and unique in their own way. 'Do We Look Autistic?' is a great example of coproduction to support inclusion and understanding. This has already been achieved by people sharing their own experiences and how they can relate to key topics raised, as well as challenge to introduce other ideas of how others can experience autism. All proceeds from sale of the book will support the promotion of lived experience voices locally and additional children's books to raise awareness and celebrate diversity.

Quotes/Feedback:

Alex Winstanley, author, shared "I'm equally excited that, as with all my books, the characters are based on real local people."

Wigan Today – "Wigan celebrates diversity and inclusion with new children's book launch."



WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR 2025-2026



What to look out for 2025-2026



Wigan & Leigh Youth Cabinet Project

Leigh Regeneration Project has been given £20 million by the Government as part of a regeneration project to develop the Town over the next 10 years. Following on from the success of the young people's involvement with Ashton Regeneration Project, young people have been invited to be part of a subgroup for the Leigh project. The subgroup will enable young people's involvement from around the borough in the consultation of where the money should be spent. The project that will be developing throughout 2025 and the young people from Youth Cabinet are excited to be involved.

A Million Voices & Our Safe Space – Foster Carer Training Video

A Million Voices have been working closely alongside Our Safe Space to create a training package which the service can deliver to potential Foster Carers. Ideas were shared around how the package can distribute to Foster Carers to help support them in their journey.

The idea of the training package is to give foster carers an insight into how our looked after children feel when moving into a new home and how to support them on their journey in care. The young people suggested to make a training video using animations and their voices in a question-and-answer style. The young people are due to take on some more consultation work from April 2025 to start the filming process for the training.

Progress towards Wigan's Adolescent Safeguarding Hub

To enable our Reach service to support young people across the borough, we have sourced a building that will be the Adolescent Safeguarding Hub. The main building we will be using was previously a youth centre and it is fantastic that it will be utilised once again for the benefit of Wigan children across the borough. The Hub will act as the main base for Reach practitioners, supporting us in achieving further collaboration and integrated working across the different teams that make up the service. With its central location in Hindley, it is accessible for young people to easily travel to. The team are excited to get started on engaging with our young people and co-producing with them on how we can bring this space and 'blank canvas' to life, so it becomes a truly vibrant and welcoming hub. It marks an important milestone in the development of our service and a place to call 'home'.

What to look out for 2025-2026



The View

We are currently creating a garden that has an improved bush craft space, a play space including a trampoline and a chill space with a pagoda, hammock and tepee. We welcome wildlife in our garden by creating our own bird boxes and feeders with a resident squirrel who also doesn't want to leave. We have plans to also grow our own vegetables and create other flower beds with the results to be shown in the next annual report.

Together for Adoption

Panel Member Q&A Initiative

Young people have developed a set of questions to be asked in adoption panel meetings to ensure their voices are represented. This initiative is still in its early stages and will be updated in next year's participation report.

Be Well



Be Well Pass Consultation

You Said: Young people wanted activities at Be Well Leisure Centres to be fun, that are affordable with no hidden costs and flexible around other priorities such as exams.

We Will: We have developed some activities that will be trialled from April 2025 that incorporate what young people have asked for.

The Be Well Service is on a mission to transform their services for those who need them most. Wigan Council have partnered with Baxendale (an independent healthcare consultancy) to lead a research project exploring how to increase the usage of Be Well Leisure and Health Centres. This research is fundamental for informing the future of health and leisure services across Wigan, so they are more accessible and effective for all. This includes the future of the Be Well membership scheme and the cost.

What to look out for 2025-2026

Young Carers

At Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre we provide a range of services to support young carers from ages 5-18, including tailored assessments, information and advice, financial assistance, training and workshops, peer support groups, health and well-being programs, and emotional support.

As part of a service improvements, we are consulting with young people to look at our offer to the Young Carer's community.

You Said: Young carers expressed the need for more tailored support services in the community to help them manage their caregiving responsibilities alongside their personal lives. Young carers highlighted the importance of having opportunities to meet with other young carers who share similar experiences.

We Will: We will develop and implement a range of support services specifically tailored for young carers. This will include group support, one to one support, emotional support, and creative activities to promote well-being. We will organise regular young carers outreach in locations across the borough. This will provide young carers with opportunities to connect with other their peers within their own local communities, aiding better opportunities to build lasting friendships.

We are excited to be forming a new Young Carers Voice Group. The main goals of the Group will be to provide a platform for young carers, who are our experts by experience to have a voice, express their views, share their experiences, be heard and contribute to the development and delivery of future services and support for young carers.



Compassion in Action

Compassion in Action Community Cadets, commencing in May 2025, is our second group of wonderful young people. The purpose of the group is to involve young people in learning about our community and experiencing new things through fun and exciting activities.

We believe all people should be responsible and active members of their society. We encourage this by giving our Cadets a sense of community spirit, opening their eyes to new opportunities and adventures, and most importantly a sense of purpose in life. Our Community Cadets will go on to gain new skills, abilities and qualities which will help shape their future.

What to look out for 2025-2026



Wigan Council Place Directorate – Tenant Voice & Engagement Team



You said: The Tenant Voice Team attended the Climate Summit on 9th October 2024. Here officers engaged with young people to find out what mattered to them where they lived and what things we could improve on. Through working together young people had some amazing suggestions such as estate clean ups, estate inspections, community gardens, youth cafes, outreach activities and sports sessions.

We did: The Tenant Voice Team proposed a Youth specific element that could sit within our Better-Connected Community Fund. This will be a £10,000 pot of money to support small community projects that are led by young people living in our social housing communities.

The Youth Better Connected Community Fund will launch in spring 2025. Young people will be able apply for funding up to the value of £2000 to support projects that will benefit communities and offer opportunities for other young people to get involved. Ensuring the voices of our young people are not only captured but listened to and acted on where possible. We have also added a young gardener's category to this year's tenant gardening competition following suggestions from young people at the climate summit.

SEND



The Local Offer Steering Group are developing the content of the Local Offer. Based on the feedback, we are exploring possible opportunities for children and young people to get support the coproduction of pages, and how the website can be developed. We are working towards coproducing our pupil/ child's voice during Annual Reviews in our EHCP processes, listening to their views on how our documents can be shaped. We are hoping to involve children and young people in future planning of the Local Offer Live event.

Concluding Remarks

We hope you have enjoyed reviewing the vast amount of engagement, participation and co-production that has taken place across many services for children and young people across Wigan Borough. You will see examples of deep listening both on a borough wide and at neighbourhood level.

The Greater Manchester Bee Well Survey is also a recommended read for those who wish to learn more about the important issues for young people across the combined authority area. To find out more about the survey, click the link below:

[#BeeWell survey highlights wellbeing priorities and challenges for young people in Greater Manchester - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

And click the link below to watch a video from the young people about the survey:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KX8oGeBAsU>.

