



# **Young People's Engagement Annual Report**

**2016 - 2017**

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## **1. Introduction/context/background**

Since 2014-15, a Young People's Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (YPNSCB) was in place, but during 2015-16 attendance became very low and unrepresentative of the county. It was then agreed that young people's engagement during 2016-17 year would shift focus and concentrate on obtaining the views from a larger number of young people via schools and other youth forums. From 2016, the young people's engagement work of the Board was led by Nicola Hicks, a dedicated Project Officer employed to undertake this work as part of her role with the NSCB and the Early Help Partnership Board.

## **2. Governance and accountability, links to objectives**

The purpose of this report is to provide the NSCB with an update on progress and the work undertaken with young people during 2016-17. The Young People's engagement work reports directly into the Executive Support Group and Board.

The 2015-2017 NSCB Business Plan contained the following objectives for a Young People's NSCB which was formally introduced in 2014-15. As stated above, the formal Young Peoples Meetings ceased in 2015-16.

- To explore the use of the Viewpoint tool to establish a voice from children and young people on key safeguarding issues;
- To ensure the voice of the young people is heard when identifying the priorities of the NSCB; and
- That young people inform and influence NSCB priorities through formal and informal structures.

## **3. Progress/services/provision (including progress on actions arising from recommendations in previous annual report)**

An NSCB priority as outlined in the Annual Report 2015-16 was to "Engage with children and young people to shape the provision of services" it stated this would be done by "Consultation with both existing and new School Councils with an aim to engage with a cohort of young people from schools to strengthen the Young People's LSCB, with broader membership. Similar approaches are planned with a series of targeted events and consultations with Further Education Colleges, Primary Schools and other youth groups.

Progress against these actions has been steady throughout the year with engagement with a number of Schools, Shadow Board, Shooting Stars and the Children in Care Forum, with consultation on raising awareness of the NSCB and the Young Northants website. A specific piece of work was undertaken to support the development of the Young Northants Website with the views and opinions of young people input into the site's accessibility and effectiveness and if young people would use it and find it valuable.

Nicola worked with a number of young people at Shadow Board and Northampton Academy to develop a Young People's NSCB service leaflet which was promoted at various engagement events.

Ensuring young people were engaged with the way services are shaped, a group of young people were invited to attend the 2016 Annual Conference, where they were invited to tell partners and practitioners what made them feel safe and unsafe. The aim of the session was for practitioners and partners to take the views of the young people back to their own organisations when delivering services directly to young people, as well as supporting their own engagement work. Feedback on this section of the Annual Conference was very positive with some comments received below.

**What are the key messages that you'll take from the event?**

*"Hearing the voices from the young people, especially Joe & Carl. This should be shared with all frontline practitioners."*

**What are the key messages that you'll take from the event?**

*"The young people were the highlight! We could all learn lessons from them."*

**What are the key messages that you'll take from the event?**

*"Hearing young people talk about their real life experiences and how professionals can work better to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people."*

The Annual Conference also enabled the NSCB a forum to feedback to young people the results of the 5 challenges that young people had set the previous year, which are also available on the website in an easy read format for children and young people.

#### **4. Outcomes/performance/successes/achievements**

During the year, meetings were held with a number of local schools, young groups and other professionals, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, 16 Secondary Schools, Early Help Locality Forums, Shadow Board, Shooting Stars, Young Carers etc. The following number of young people were engaged with from the following schools and groups:

<b>Group/Setting</b>	<b>No. of Children &amp; Young People</b>
Huxlow Science Academy (Student Council)	20
Northampton Academy	4
The Lowdown	3
Young Carers	5
Shadow Board – attended a number of meetings	20
Shadow Board launch of the legal highs leaflet	6
Children in Care Market Place Event	8
Mental Health Young People Focus Group	10
Danetree and Southbrook Learning Village (Student Council)	14
Shooting Stars	15
<b>Total Interactions</b>	<b>105</b>

In addition, the development of the Young Northants website was supported by consultation with 85 young people. Of the 85 young people questioned only 4 (6%) were aware of the Young Northants site. However, following the sessions all 85 (100%) young people said they would use Young Northants in the future.

Young people were asked if they liked the look and feel of the website. This included the layout and colours. A total of 81 of the 85 young people interviewed, which equates to just over 95% liked the look and feel of the website. However, 1 young person from each of the groups surveyed felt that there is too much text and they would like to see more videos on the website.

Young people surveyed felt that the website was easy to use and that the search facility was efficient. When using the website search facility the young people told us that they found what they were searching for very quickly. We wanted to know from young people if the information and content of the website is current and relevant. Again all of the young people felt positively about the content although anecdotally

one of the young people (Young Carers) highlighted the lack of information and support for young mothers on the website.

During the NSCB Annual Conference, 6 young people participated to give their views and opinions on safeguarding. 2 young people attended from the Children in care Forum to give the perspective on what it is like to be a child in care in Northamptonshire and these young people gave their views and opinions on what made them feel safe and unsafe as well as what they look for from good workers and services provided to them as a looked after child. Full details of the presentation given can be found on the NSCB website [here](#).

The Annual Conference also included a panel discussion with young people from Northampton Academy, The Lowdown and Children in Care Forum where they were posed a series of questions about what made them feel safe / unsafe and what they would like services to do to ensure they are kept safe from harm. This section also included the feedback on the 5 challenges based on the NSCB priorities (CSE, FGM, Neglect, Radicalisation and Domestic Abuse) that young people had issued at the previous year's annual conference, the response to these challenges can be found on the link below.

[Response to challenges set by young people](#)

During 2016 / 2017 the Shadow Board were consulted on how they would like to be communicated with such as by social media or other communication methods open to the NSCB. The views gathered were that a Facebook page or other type of social media engagement would use too much memory on their phones and not be an effective consultation tool. As a result the Board are in the process of exploring how to best engage with children and young people that will offer value for money.

## **5. Challenges/issues/developments/opportunities**

Engaging with young people via schools and other groups became increasingly difficult during the year due to term times and the planned activities with these settings. However, the Project Officer worked hard to find other new young people to engage with as it has become apparent that many young people attended multiple groups giving their views on a number of different occasions.

Whilst engagement with some schools has been very successful, gaining access to pupils in schools has proven a challenge again due to the number of different agencies also wishing to engage with young people through this method.

During the year the NSCB developed a survey to be completed by young people to gain their views on future safeguarding priorities. This was due to be sent to all schools requesting young people complete, but unfortunately this was put on hold as a result of it clashing with another much larger Public Health survey also being sent via this method.

## **6. Next steps/plans/priorities/actions**

Following the integration of the Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Boards into an Integrated Business Office there is an opportunity to learn from the engagement work carried out by the adult's Board Expert User's Group. To ensure the NSCB are fulfilling its duty in engaging with young people to gain their views and opinions the following actions have been set at Board.

- To ensure all partners are actively engaging with young people to gain their views about the services they provide and ensuring these services are keeping them safe from harm;

- To actively work closely with active groups of young people already meeting in the county to ascertain their view on future safeguarding priorities; and
- Partners will report to Board each quarter on their engagement activities.

## **7. Conclusions/recommendations**

In conclusion, it can be said, that during the year the NSCB has undertaken some very worthwhile and proactive engagement work with young people including the positive impact having young people attend the annual conference had on the practitioners in attendance, the NSCB awareness raising sessions and the consultation and development on the Young Northants website.

Young People's attendance or participation at future conferences will be explored but other means such as filming will be considered. This leads to the following recommendation being made.

*Young People's attendance at the NSCB Annual Conference should be explored to give views and opinions on the specific topic area being discussed at the conference.*

As we have seen from the amount of work undertaken and the unsuccessful attempts to engage with both schools and new groups of the young people directly, the following recommendations outlined in section 6 are proposed.

- To ensure all partners actively engage with young people to gain their view and opinions about the services they provide and ensuring these services are keeping them safe from harm;
- To actively work closely with active groups of young people already meeting in the county to ascertain their view on future safeguarding priorities; and
- That partners report to Board on a quarterly basis to share their engagement activities, what is working well and what could be improved.