

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 20 June 2023

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for decision/report and options

1.1 This report presents a refreshed Engagement Framework, Curiosity and Influence.

1.2 The framework provides a tool to help our residents feel engaged and able to share their honest and holistic viewpoints about what it is like to live and work in the borough which will support us to deliver ambition five of our corporate strategy, *Making Bromley Even Better*: “to manage our resources well, providing value for money, and efficient and effective services for Bromley’s residents”.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1. **Members of the Children, Education and Families Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and endorse the updated engagement framework (Curiosity and Influence) replacing the existing User Voice Framework.**

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact:
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Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
 2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority (*delete as appropriate*):
 - (1) For children and young people to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home.
 - (2) For adults and older people to enjoy fulfilled and successful lives in Bromley, ageing well, retaining independence and making choices.
 - (3) For people to make their homes in Bromley and for business, enterprise and the third sector to prosper.
 - (4) For residents to live responsibly and prosper in a safe, clean and green environment great for today and a sustainable future.
 - (5) To manage our resources well, providing value for money, and efficient and effective services for Bromley's residents.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre:
 4. Total current budget for this head: £
 5. Source of funding:
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (*current and additional*):
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: No Executive decision.
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Impact on Health and Wellbeing

1. Summary of Health and Wellbeing Implications:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users or customers (*current and projected*):
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1. All successful and well-run organisations are shaped by the people who use their services. As part of our corporate strategy, *Making Bromley Even Better*, we have committed to putting the voice of our residents at the heart of our decisions to make sure that we truly serve our residents effectively and appropriately.
- 3.2. The framework provides a tool to help our residents feel engaged and able to share their honest and holistic viewpoints about what it is like to live and work in the borough which will support us to deliver ambition five of our corporate strategy:

“to manage our resources well, providing value for money, and efficient and effective services for Bromley’s residents”.

- 3.3. Engagement is a key underpinning tool to help us do this.

THE FRAMEWORK

- 3.4. The Council has had a strong framework for engagement with children and their families since 2018 (called the User Voice Framework). ‘*Curiosity and Influence*’ builds on this framework.
- 3.5. Engagement is a process of working with and through identified groups of people who are connected by special interests or similar situations, to enable them to influence their own set of circumstances. It proactively invites people into a conversation to influence improvements to systems, policies, programmes and practices.
- 3.6. Our approach is driven by professional *curiosity*. This means that we need to have the capacity and communication skills required to explore and understand what is happening within someone’s life rather than making assumptions or accepting their versions of events at face value. When put with the second essential element of engagement, *influence*, we provide our residents with the ability to offer suggestions to improve our systems, policies, programmes and practices.
- 3.7. The framework consists of four key Principles which enable us to hear the voice of children in Bromley and affect change across our work.
- 3.8. **Principle 1 - Shaping our casework.** Our direct work and practice is driven by the Bromley Relationship Model to ensure the wishes and feelings of children and their family is sought, heard and considered. Examples include:
 - Ensuring children are seen during assessments and visits to inform our casework.
 - Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) for those subject to child protection and those in care are timely and robust, with escalations as necessary.
 - An independent advocacy service ensures that those who need it are supported to influence our casework.
- 3.9. **Principle 2 - Shaping our systems.** Capturing personal experiences to help us understand the pathways and journeys that our children and families go through when using our services. Examples include:
 - Surveys and engagement activities on particular topics, such as Brightspots surveys of our care experienced children and the Food 4 Thought consultation style meetings for young people in care (aged 17+).

- An independent complaints service which responds to and compiles systems learning from complaints which is fed back to senior managers and Councillors.
- Representation in our governance structures, such as the Corporate Parenting Board. This including thoughtful assisted preparation for young people to provide meaningful feedback to senior managers on key decisions.

3.10. **Principle 3 - Shaping our place.** Opportunities to influence our role in shaping our local community. Examples include:

- Forums of children and young people, such as Living in Care Council, Change for Care Leavers, Youth Council and school councils who also influence our key partnerships include the Children’s Executive and Safeguarding Partnership.
- Forums for parents and family members, such as Bromley Parent Voice, Your Voice in Health and Social Care, Children and Family Centres management committees, Fostering and Adoption Panel and School Governors, to enable direct and continued improvement to key services.
- Key involvement in commissioning to inform service design and delivery, examples include the children’s integrated therapies project and the emerging tender for a new contract for a Weekend and Holiday Short Breaks Service for children with disabilities.
- Key involvement in strategy refreshes, this includes informing and influencing our refreshed LAC Sufficiency Strategy, our first Autism Strategy for Bromley, and the development of our position statement and support for Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

3.11. **Principle 4 - Corporate intelligence.** We build skills and corporate intelligence across our whole organisation to engage in good quality, ethical and impactful user voice activities. Examples include:

- Delivering a broad Engagement Framework with six monthly reports on our progress to delivery to scrutiny committees and partnership boards.
- An Engagement Framework “digital library” (launched 2021) the Childs Voice Hub to share learning and engagement best practice tools across the children’s partnership.
- Regular ‘Director Surgeries’ and Chief Officer REAL value sessions for the whole workforce to ensure that we deliver services through the lens of Respect, Empowerment, Ambition and Learning.
- Training and awareness raising sessions delivered by young people, such as the Nothing Like Tracy Beaker film for foster carers, Reviewing Officer training and the Motivating Young Minds project for mentors

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.12. Listening to the voice of our residents sits hand-in-hand with our corporate REAL values of Respect, Empower, Ambition and Learn. These four words define the fundamental standards which govern the behaviour of our staff and underpin all of our engagement work.

3.13. We have a set of four key behaviours that we believe are fundamental to building and maintaining the kind of organisation we want to be: accountability and responsibility; building relationships; communication; and continuous improvement. They form the core of our competency framework for all our staff and are at the heart of everything we do, which is why they sit hand-in-hand with our engagement approach.

- 3.14. The principles and approach outlined in ‘Curiosity and Influence’ underpin our practice philosophy in our services for both adult social care (known as *Making Practice Personal*) and children’s social care (known as the *Bromley Relationship Model*).
- 3.15. Additionally, engagement forms an essential element of our service and strategic commissioning approach. This can happen at various levels depending of the commissioning process that we are going through. For example, the recently launched b-HIVE website (the Bromley Therapy Hub) was co-produced with parents, carers and other professionals, whilst the Cudham Playground improvements programme sought feedback from a survey of residents and users. What’s more, through the SEND Governance Board, for example, parents are helping to set the strategic direction of SEND services in the borough which in turn shapes our strategic commissioning. By building engagement into our service and strategic commissioning process we can make sure that the services that we are commissioning meet the needs of our residents now and in the future.

Non-Applicable Headings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial implications • Personnel implications • Legal implications • Procurement implications • Property implications • Carbon reduction/social value implications • Impact on the local economy • Impact on health and wellbeing • Impact on vulnerable adults and children • Transformation/policy implications • Customer impact • Ward councillor views
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Report number CEF22056