

Report to: Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 30/06/2025

Subject: Coproduction in Children's Services

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Summary

In H&F we coproduce with children, young people, families, the community sector, and other partners to build shared solutions wherever possible. Taking a coproduced approach to the design and delivery of community support and services helps us work together with the community to bring to life our commitment to 'doing things with residents not to them'.

Coproduction is a collaborative process that aims to increase the involvement of young people and families and influence in decision making, but it does not guarantee that their wishes will always be implemented, what might be a priority for a group of people may not fit with other priorities of groups or the council, and the coproduction process includes the council as a partner, and does not inherently make children, young people, or families decision makers. When coproduction isn't fully possible, it is important to consider how children, young people and families can be involved in ways such as consultation and information sharing.

Coproduction isn't always possible or appropriate, for example when it comes to statutory decisions that are made in accordance with legal frameworks, the extent which children, young people, or families can be involved varies from project to project.

This paper sets out how Children's services engage, consult and coproduce with children, young people and families to ensure the services we deliver are responsive to need.

Recommendations

To note the report.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Working in partnership to strengthen services for better outcomes for our residents using them and ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are

	heard to help address systemic inequalities and promote social justice.
Creating a compassionate council	Ensuring that we are able to provide the right support at the right time to enable our families and communities to ensure all residents are safe, healthy and thrive to achieve their best outcomes.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Ensuring that the residents voice is the centre of the decision-making process and continue to use their feedback as a way of developing the services.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Coproduction can help identify inefficiencies and unnecessary costs within services. Coproduction can streamline services and eliminate duplication of services.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Coproduction gives people a voice and agency in shaping decisions that affect their lives and environment.

Detailed Analysis

1. Children, young people and their families are seen, heard and valued in H&F. Their participation is widespread, immersive, high profile and influential. Our coproduction values run through the heart of Peoples Services, through the thousands of 'everyday conversations', from developing strategic policies, to influencing our frontline practice. We have open and honest conversations about resources, and strategic priorities in the context of delivering our statutory duties. Listening to and working with people to develop and improve services is a key priority in our partnership approach.

2. As such we have established a range of mechanisms for obtaining feedback and involving children, young people and families.

3. Youth Voice

Youth voice values the voices of young people around the borough. Taking and listening to the experiences of young people and bringing them to the table, to help shape the borough to be a safe and thriving place for young people. H&F Youth Voice is made up of young people of different backgrounds and ages.

4. Youth Council

We co-produce activities, services and opportunities for young people. We want to ensure that young people have access to information and we have debates and discussions based on the experiences of young people and want to help support them the best we can. We also do research projects and plan out events for young people to get involved in.

Hammersmith & Fulham's Youth Mayor and Member of Youth Parliament biannual elections take place every two years bringing new young people into the position.

Anyone aged 11-19 who lives, works or goes to school in H&F can vote. Recently the youth council have defined a series of key priorities and have then worked across several council departments and strategic leads to

implement delivery plans and create clear opportunities for improvements.
improvements. improvements.

5. Family Voices

Family voices aims to ensure our family hubs, and our family information meets the needs of our residents and partners. We do this through termly meetings, and through other feedback options such as parent/carer feedback systems and parent/carer surveys. The family voices group has focused on developing the family hubs offer, the local offer and the marketing and communication strategy. The improvements that came from this work have led to the H&F Local Offer being voted the country's best local offer in the 2024 (NAFIS) award. The family voices group has now met seven times over the last 18 months and representation from families has steadily increased; there were nine parents at one of the most recent meetings. The group includes families who access universal services and specialist services (including SEND provision). Some families are new to the area and have not yet accessed services at family hubs. Since the inception of this group, improvements include greater opportunities to hear the voice of service users and would-be service users, families from under-represented groups, targeted families etc. The input from families have also supported our local offer being recognised as the country's best local offer in the 2024 (NAFIS awards). The family voices group also works to develop the offer to those families who are seldom heard or access family hub services. This work has led to improvements in the timetables design, the family hubs offer, and the ensuring the new services within the network meet family need.

6. Parents active

A parent carer forum dedicated to improving the quality of life for disabled children, young people, adults, and their families in Hammersmith and Fulham. Parentsactive participates in various committees and holds formal consultations and meetings with professionals and council officers, to influence decisions and services for disabled service users. As part of this, they conduct surveys, publish reports and campaign on issues where they can highlight parental concerns and gaps in service provision. Parentsactive are a crucial partner within both childrens and adults, they have coproduced the development of many areas within the council including the Stephen Wiltshire Centre. In recent years they have been a key partner within SEND delivery group and have CHESC. They have also been key partners in developments within adults social care and this relationship is being enhanced with new developments.

7. Partners in change

Is working to expand and diversify parent carer engagement and bring different support organisations together. Championing other forums and identifying key themes to raise with the partnership. This meeting is led and chaired by Parentsactive who have determined that the best approach for this meeting is through targeting a key theme. For 2024-25 partners in change has focused on services that are supporting young people with mental health challenges. This has led to the development of a tangible action plan and improved communication between services and partners.

8. Corporate Parenting Board

These meetings are held quarterly through the year and during school holidays. Prior to each board, workshops are completed where both our children looked after, and care leavers are invited to join us to focus on a particular topic in relation to the board's priorities. These have ranged from Mental Health, housing offer, board priorities to name a few. Young people attend these workshops alongside councillors, managers and officers with the service. These workshops give us the opportunity to gain an understanding about the offers available to our care leaving young people, ask questions and respond to developments and various areas of improvement across the service in relation to the 3 priorities for the young people:

- Settled and Belong
- Safe, Happy and Healthy
- Thriving Adults

The feedback from the workshops is taken back to the corporate parenting board. Our participation manager is currently working to establish a representative to YP member of the board who will be able to be the voice in the meeting and then be supported to feedback. This will then allow for greater coproduction and involvement in the actions that take place at corporate parenting board.

Coproduction Roles

9. In Children's coproduction, different groups play distinct roles to ensure that the process is inclusive, effective, empowering and beneficial for all involved.
10. Children, young people and families are central figures, shaping the projects direction and outcome, fostering ownership and empowerment. They are more than just recipients of services. They contribute ideas, skills and perspectives to shape the project. Their feedback is essential for assessing the projects impact. Strengths and weaknesses, and making necessary adjustments. They become advocates for their own needs and the needs of their peers, influencing policy and practice.
11. Practitioners / Facilitators create a safe and supportive environment to encourage participation and expression, they provide resources, tools and technical support to facilitate ideas and creativity and they document the process, gather insights and adapt the approach based on the evolving needs of children, young people and families.
12. The council provide the resource, with funding, staff, materials and expertise to support the projects implementation. The council advocates for policies that promote children's participation and coproduction and collaborates with other organisations to create a network of support, expertise and resources, and share best practices.

The Coproduction Journey

13. When undertaking work on the design and implementation of a new or existing policy, that will have an impact on residents, or the recommissioning or setting up of a new service, the council has coproduction guidance and a checklist to help us shape our coproduction exercises. *These are included in Appendix 1 and 2*
14. By working to the coproduction checklist we can ensure that we identify the needs and priorities of children, young people, and families and assess their capacity to participate in decision-making. We are able to identify potential partners and build relationships and then develop a plan for coproduction, including goals, roles, and timelines.
15. Once children, young people and families have been recruited to participate in the coproduction process, we provide training and guidance on coproduction principles, decision-making, and communication skills. We also offer ongoing support and guidance to participants.
16. Once coproduction is underway, we facilitate shared decision-making processes and ensure that we implement the agreed-upon decisions and monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.
17. After the coproduction process is complete, we then assess the effectiveness of the coproduction process through evaluations and reports so we are able to review feedback, learn from the experience and identify areas for improvement.
18. Our coproduction partners provide reports to feedback how they thought the coproduction exercise went and to evaluate how we can learn from the experience and identify areas for improvement. We may disagree with parts but can then discuss this with the partners, this is an example of the healthy communication that takes place during coproduction and a way for us to assess the effectiveness of the coproduction process.
19. Coproduction is a reciprocal process, everyone involved should feel that they are getting something out of the process and there should be an emphasis on the mutual exchange of value between all participants.

Examples

20. We continue to deliver our commitments to coproduction; by strengthening and embedding coproduction so it becomes the norm. CHS have coproduced extensively for various products, services, commissioning and strategic boards. *Examples of some of our achievements can be found in Appendix 3.*
21. Children's Services has a strong emphasis on coproduction and consultation when developing service priorities. Regular consultation is held with key stakeholders, service users through practice week, school's forum, the youth council, scrutiny committees, resident commissions, customer care

month, corporate parenting board, CL advisory group to inform priorities of the department.

22. We use the Total Respect training programme a unique training course to help all those working with children in care comply with children's right to participate in decision making. Total Respect is led and delivered by our care experienced young people.

Future Coproduction

23. Looking ahead, there are a number of opportunities for coproduction in both regular meetings and targeted coproduction in strategy development.
- Speech and language review
 - Children Social Care Reforms – large programme of transformation across Local Authority, Health and Police. Residents and partners will be part of task and finish groups and board overview.
 - Family Voices - Family voices coffee mornings take place every term. They are a great opportunity for our residents and partners to provide feedback on how the family hubs are going and take part in discussions on current developments.
 - Partnership meetings – quarterly meetings where all participants actively shape the agenda, discussions and outcomes.
 - Youth Voice (youth council meetings and activities throughout the year)
 - Coproduction Hub (monthly)
 - Holiday Activity and Food Programme - we meet with a youth board of young people attending our youth service provision in order to co-produce delivery, supporting development of activity that young people want to see.
 - Summer in the City - we are again working with the Youth Council. The Youth Council will be co-designing a week of activity around mental health, working alongside organisations such as Mind. They are also planning to promote the summer activity through a podcast.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Guidance - [officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/hf-communications/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments%2FHF Coproduction Checklist Guidance%20Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments](https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/hf-communications/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments%2FHF%20Coproduction%20Checklist%20Guidance%20Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments)

Appendix 2 - Checklist - [officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/hf-communications/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments%2FHF Coproduction Checklist%20Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments](https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/hf-communications/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments%2FHF%20Coproduction%20Checklist%20Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Fintranet%2Fhf-communications%2FDocuments)

Appendix 3 – Coproduction Examples

Early Intervention Strategy

Throughout the development of H&F's Early Intervention Strategy we incorporated existing feedback from children and young people, gathered via our Youth Voice Coordinator, to ensure we were listening and responding to what our young people want across our services.

The Early Intervention Strategy was coproduced with residents as well as health partners, youth council and youth parliament. We set clear outcomes to what we wanted to achieve but left it mostly open to input from our coproduction partners as to what they wanted the strategy to include.

We also consulted with young people through a borough-wide survey asking about their experiences living in H&F, who/where they would go to for help, and what is important to them about how they receive support. To do this we launched an online consultation for young people in partnership with the youth council, receiving a total of 550 responses.

In July the Youth Council hosted and facilitated an Early Intervention co-production event at Fulham Library which provided important feedback that directly informed the strategy.

The Early Intervention Strategy has adopted the guiding principles and purpose of the Youth Voice strategy, committing to embed co-production to strengthen the reach and impact of youth voice in service design as 'business as usual'.

Members of the Youth Council and their peers were directly involved in ensuring that the right services are put in place in H&F, by participating directly in the tender evaluation process.

Led by EI strategy and coproduction with families and young people, the family hubs coproduction then began, focused purely on family hubs. The journey from the start of the strategy to the opening of the Family Hubs was 3 years and during that time coproduction was incorporated into the design and implementation processes.

Family Hubs

We worked alongside families and young people to co-produce the new Family Hubs across the borough.

The Family Hubs programme has a dedicated coproduction resource. Funding has been provided to VCS organisations to work across the programme with identified members of the community to fully incorporate coproduction into the design and delivery of Family Hubs.

Alongside our coproduction partners, Action on Disability, ParentsActive, Mencap and Young Hammersmith & Fulham Foundation, we hosted sessions with families, parents, and young people to understand what Family Hubs meant to them and what they thought Family Hubs should look like.

March 2024, we carried out session with young people to coproduce the design a mural at Tudor Rose Family Hub and Old Oak Family Hub. For Tudor Rose, Mia Harris, a local artist, combined designs from H&F Youth Council. Mia did the same at Old Oak from young people who were part of Harrow Youth Club, reflecting the Old Oak tree and how they felt about their local community.

We held a user research workshop with children SEND and young people back in February to help design the website. During the workshop, there were specific focus groups and one-on-one usability testing. This included the participants to draw and note down what is important to them when it comes to the Family Hub site. The day was a great success, providing valuable insights to what children with SEND and young people need from the Family Hub Site.

Alongside our coproduction partners, we have hosted numerous sessions with families, parents, and young people to understand what family hubs mean to them, what support they would most benefit from, how they would best engage with the offer available, and how the family hubs should look and feel as a safe community space. Additionally, we hosted two welcome events at the north and south localities where we invited residents to the buildings for food and drinks and provided an open space for them to discuss what a Family Hub is and their ideas of what it could look like in each location.



Once the Family Hubs were implemented, our partners compiled a coproduction evaluation report, outlining the process, what went well, and the challenges they believed there to be throughout the process

Youth Council and Youth Voice

We have an active and inclusive Youth Voice Network and Youth Council in H&F. Listening to the experiences of young people and bringing them to the table, to help shape the borough to be a safe and thriving place for young people.

Highlights and Achievements of our Youth Council include:

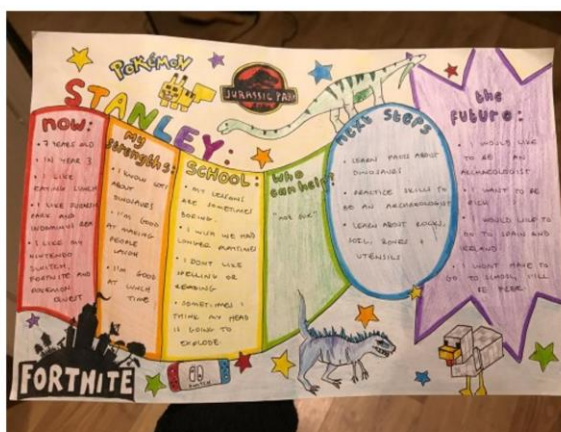
- Action on Disability Signing of the Inclusion Charter
- Policy Oversight Board
- Art In The Park
- House of Commons
- International Day of a Girl with L'Oréal
- Youth Council Open Days
- Young People Forum
- Meeting with Strategic Leads
- Lets Talk About It Podcast

The Youth Voice Priorities are driven by young people and is now driving our future work, where it can. The young people had identified priorities focusing on life skills and work readiness. We have then included these priorities in the criteria for our third sector investment grants, so that funding can be provided to address the priorities our young people have specified. We then continue to work with young people and their priorities to build them into whatever we can where it is suitable depending on the commission and if it is in our power to do so.



SEND Outcomes Framework

The Local Area Partnership has recently coproduced the SEND Outcomes framework with children and young people to understand the outcomes that are important to them, and to act as a mechanism show how coproduction is leading to positive change. Our SEND Scorecard measures key metrics against these outcomes to demonstrate impact.



Parent Carer Forum

Our well-established and active Parent Carer Forum coordinate the parent/ carer voice across the partnership, working closely with partners to share the lived experience of families in H&F.

The Parent/Carer Champion Network is run by ASE and funded by the Violence Reduction Unit. ASE work with parent/carers in the community, who may themselves have been, or their children have been, involved in youth crime, and train them to become Parent/Carer Champions to support and mentor other parent/carers whose children are at risk of criminal exploitation.

Corporate Parenting Board

Corporate Parenting Board workshops takes place 4 time a year and are designed to help the board and Children's Services to understand and improve their practice in supporting children in care. These workshops are open to all young people with representatives from the board and Children's Service attending. The workshops aim to enhance the council's ability to have greater insight into the needs of children and young people in care, and the actions young people feel is needed to improve their

outcomes. The workshops foster collaboration between young people and different services across H&F.

Examples of Workshop Topics:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection:**

Reviewing safeguarding practices and ensuring that children are protected from harm.

- **Promoting Educational Opportunities:**

Exploring how to support children in care to achieve their full potential in education and can access employment opportunities.

- **Supporting Children's Health and Well-being:**

Providing guidance on how to promote children's physical and mental health and well-being.

- **Developing the Housing Strategy:**

Working together to develop a strategy that outlines how the council will fulfil its corporate parenting responsibilities ensuring that all young people have a safe place to live.

The Lead Member for Housing, Cllr Umeh, and housing colleagues have played an active role in the work of the Corporate Parenting Board. We held consultation and engagement sessions in 2023 and 2024 with young people aged 16-24 led by the Leaving Care Team Manager alongside:

- Housing Advice and Homelessness Manager,
- Participation Officer, and
- Cllr Umeh.

These were focused on preparation for independent living, moving in process and post move and support. The consultation with young people led to the setting up of a working group with Children's and Housing colleagues. This group was tasked with developing the Joint Housing Protocol. The Corporate Parenting Board will be responsible for receiving regular updates on the effectiveness and outcomes of this Joint Housing Protocol, providing oversight and scrutiny, to ensure we continue to meet our corporate parenting responsibilities towards the young people leaving our care. Some of the commitments made through the protocol to date are:

- Increasing the Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA) to £3000
- Providing flooring and white goods for young people moving into Council tenancies
- Introducing a dedicated Care Leaver's Housing Officer
- Setting up a 'flag' for care experience on our housing system so that the Housing Officer knows to alert the Leaving Care service if there is any risk to tenancy

The most recent Corporate Parenting Board workshop in April 2025 focused on mental health and wellbeing. There were 11 young people who took part in the workshop, alongside Councillors and members of staff from the Council. The young people facilitated a world café to review the mental health and wellbeing offer. Actions from the workshop to develop and improve the offer included better

communications with accommodation providers to avoid schedule conflicts, more group activities and provide drop in sessions among others.



Young Inspectors Programme

One example of our focus on Quality Assurance for our children in placements is the introduction of the Young Inspectors Programme. The programme is youth led and offers young people the opportunity to quality assure, co-design and shape services. The programme includes a series of inspections of service provision for young people, by young people and a feedback loop to create meaningful change. Strengths and areas for development are identified. Young inspectors compile a report and outline recommendations based on what they have found. The report is shared with commissioning and providers to make changes to improve their services.



Young Interviewers

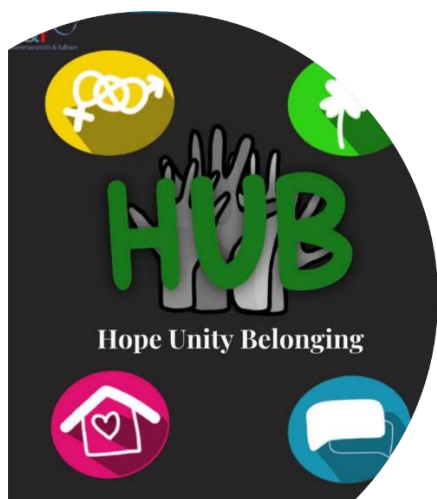
We know that good social workers can make a big difference in young people's life. That's why we want young people to be involved in the recruitment of social workers who will be working with H&F children.

Young people join interview panels across Children's Services and facilitate group interview panels for newly qualified social workers. Young people panels are also offered when recruiting to Senior Leadership roles.

We have also used young people to sit on evaluation panels for our commissioned services. For the Early Intervention contracts a panel of young people reviewed, evaluated and scored the submissions from providers and their views and scores were included in the overall evaluations of the tenders.

Care Leavers Hub

A dedicated hub for care leavers was a council manifesto commitment – spaces for studying, life skills and group work, as well as a music room and staff office. Young people and staff were engaged from the project's inception and fed into the design and plans for operation e.g. our care experienced young people chose the HUB name. A full range of work experience opportunities were offered as part of the refurbishment. This was a cross-partnership project with support and involvement from the Leaving Care service, Children's Commissioning, Corporate Property, Facilities Management, Resident Engagement, Finance and external partners. A disused Council property was identified and works completed as part of Keirs' social value commitment. The HUB opened in October 2023 and provides a base for partners and departments across the Council to engage with our young people.



'Foster with West London' Regional Fostering Recruitment and Support Hub

Foster with West London, operation since May 2024, forms one strand of the DfE Fostering Recruitment and Retention Programme. The Hub delivers a sub-regional approach to fostering recruitment with the aim of increasing the conversion rate between initial enquiry and application, operating as a centrally run front door. Development of the regional hub was led by a series of task and finish working

groups, bringing together colleagues across eight local authorities in the West London region to co-design the operating principles and processes. In addition, foster carers across the region were engaged at key periods. Following launch, the hub continues to co-design future iterations and developments in practice with LAs involved across the region with new models and ways of working collaboratively developed with our LA partners, including through ongoing monthly management meetings.

Family Assist

Family Assist recently (March 25) invited parents, carers and young people to share their experiences of working with the service. The session was carefully designed to create a safe and supportive space for open and honest feedback, featuring contributions from a young people, a parent, and a grandmother (carer) with her grandson. Each participant spoke powerfully about the positive outcomes they had experienced as a result of their involvement with Family Assist.

This feedback is helping to shape and inform how we develop and deliver services going forward. The session made use of a reflecting team approach, which enabled those giving feedback to engage in meaningful, structured conversations with trusted practitioners, while being observed by the wider team. Grounded in systemic practice, this model allowed for a deeper understanding of lived experience and promoted strong relational practice. It was a clear example of how we can work with families to better understand what's working well and where we can do more. This is an approach we are keen to grow across services to support meaningful and authentic family participation.