



West Cheshire
Children's Trust

Strategy and Standards for the Participation and Involvement of Children and Young People

Updated: September 2015



The Local Safeguarding
Children Board
Working to Keep West Cheshire's
Children and Young People Safe



Cheshire West
and Chester

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What young people told us:

Listen to what children have to say.
Include everyone and not leave
anyone out. Let people know
what's out there so children can
join in

Listen to our views in what we
want within the community. We
also want to be respected more
and not to be stereotyped as
aggressive and uncontrollable

Listen to what children have to say.
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Listen to our views in what we
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also want to be respected more
and not to be stereotyped as
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Hold open days, where children
can go and ask questions and
get them answered...
Get Councillors to visit schools
Invite your MP to meet with children
and make a presentation pack for
the MP to take away and share with
other MPs

In these tough economic times and
services going, they worry about the
services taking over and if they will be
better than what they had previously.
Need to get more young people
involved and use modern technology
for gathering views and opinions

The Aims of the Participation Strategy

- To define participation so that we are all clear what we mean when we talk about it
- To raise awareness of participation and the views and needs of children and young people amongst all organisations across Cheshire West and Chester
- To promote and encourage listening to children and young people and to be clear how they can participate
- To encourage children and young person involvement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services they use
- To encourage all organisations who deliver services to children and young people to have a child focused culture with regard to their involvement and participation
- To develop mechanisms for children and young people's participation in local democratic and service/policy reviews so that their ideas, opinions and priorities are reflected in service delivery
- To give children and young people positive experiences of involvement and participation and access to contribute
- To ensure organisations help develop children and young people's abilities enabling them to contribute towards the governance of services.
- To ensure children and young people are representative of a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. To meet the needs of those diverse communities through an inclusive culture

What is Participation?

Children and young people have the right to have their say when adults are making decisions about their lives.

Article 12 of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child - assures to every child the right to express their views freely and for them to be given due weight in all matters affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity.

A widespread practice has emerged in recent years, which has become known as 'participation'. This term itself does not appear in the text of Article 12 however, it has evolved and is now widely used to describe ongoing processes, which include information sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, this enables children to learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes.

Participation is the process by which individuals and groups of individuals can influence decision making and bring about change. It is about sharing the power with individuals to make a decision. Decision making is shared and is not the same as consultation.

Consultation is the process by which children and young people are asked their opinions. It is a process of dialogue that leads to a decision.

Investing in participation is investing in children and young people's well-being. Not only can it make services and organisations more efficient and effective and therefore better able to improve children and young people's outcomes, but the process will also have a positive impact on children's self-esteem, confidence and skills.



Why do Participation?

When children and young people are actively involved in the processes of decision making they feel more motivated, engaged and valued.

The experience of participation teaches citizenship skills such as listening, negotiating, recognising and valuing diversity, accepting difference and change, making difficult decisions and being accountable.

There is no one purpose for involving children and young people in decision making however, primary amongst the various reasons is the recognition that, on balance they will live with the consequences of any decision for far longer than older people, therefore it is right and proper that they are involved.

From an organisational perspective the lessons learnt from the engagement with children and young people are invaluable in the future development and improvement of services. This is because -

- young people know their needs and have good ideas as to how they can be satisfied. Their involvement and participation makes our job as service commissioners and providers easier, more effective and more sustainable
- young people will have to live with the consequences of decisions made now far longer on average than the people making those decisions. It is only right that young people should at least influence such decisions
- participation contributes to the safety of young people too – by listening to young people, we know better how to keep them safe and find out sooner when they are not.



What Does This Strategy Mean?

It will mean that all organisations that have a commitment to children and young people will have a consistent, sound and person centred approach to their involvement and participation.

All organisations within the Children's Trust will be able to demonstrate a relationship between improved participation and improved service outcome.

All organisations within the Children's Trust will be able to promote children and young people as active participants in the development of their organisations.

This strategy will ensure that participation is not just the work of one person or one organisation. It will enable organisations to develop participatory values and reflect these in their planning, delivery, evaluation and communication processes.

All organisations will adopt an inclusive approach to meet the needs of diverse children and young people.



Standards Agreement

The following agency/organisation agrees to:

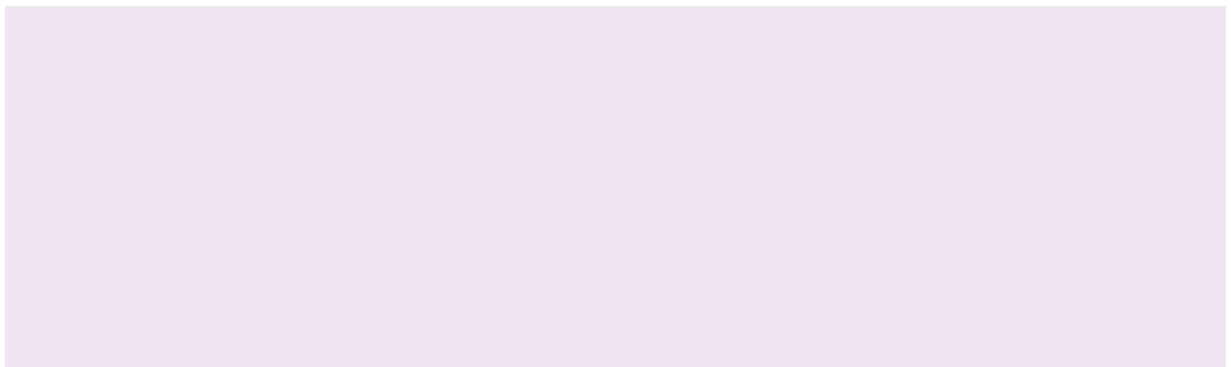
- work to the aims set out in the Participation Strategy
- identify at least one liaison person from each agency to share information, feedback and disseminate good practice through the **Children's Trust Executive**.
- disseminate information, outcomes and results arising from consultations and children and young people's participation
- work collaboratively with others in the ongoing development of the Participation Strategy
- monitor and evaluate participation information and report annually – to be co-ordinated through the Children's Trust
- identify training and development needs which will be met through shared training opportunities
- develop and agree service specific practice indicators to support the standards contained in this agreement

Signature:

Name: Position:

For and on behalf of (agency/organisation): Date:

Name and contact details of nominated liaison person for sharing information:



Please complete and return a copy of this document to:
noonan.blaylock@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Participation Mechanisms that Exist

Youth Parliament and Cheshire West Young People's Senate (National, regional and locally supported by CWaC)

The Council is a strong supporter of UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and we coordinate our local Youth Parliament elections and a survey of 13-19 year olds. A direct election every two years sees two members of UK Youth Parliament chosen and up to three Deputy Members. In 2012 slightly fewer than 9,000 young people voted in the elections. In the 2014 election 10,283 young people took part from 22 secondary schools.

The YP are active in the NW Regional Youth Forum and engage in national as well as borough initiatives.

The Cheshire West Young People's Senate comprises of a nucleus of 20 young people. It is an open group which any Cheshire West resident between the ages of 11-18 is welcome to join. The Senate meets for a day in every school holiday either in CWaC HQ in Chester, Wyvern House in Winsford, Police HQ in Winsford or NHS West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group offices at the Countess of Chester Health Park. Between 20 December 2013 up to 6 June 2015 the current Senate (members and associated young people) has attended 85 different meetings, conferences, workshops and other events. They have made 304 individual appearances at events and contributed 1,286 hours of voluntary activity.

Children in Care Council (C&YPS Directorate supported)

The Children in Care Council (CICC) exists to represent the views and to support children in care and care leavers. Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) has two CICCs. The older council involves young people between the ages of 16 to 25 years and the younger council, 11 to 16 years. The CICCs meet monthly to influence the design, delivery and evaluation of services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. They have two pledges; one for children and young people 8 years and over and one for children 8 years and under. Both Pledges have been fully adopted by CWaC. For information on the work of the CICCs and the participation and Inclusion Policy for Children in Care and Care Leavers, please visit the Children in Care Council website which can be found at www.cicc.org.uk

School Councils (Led at individual school level)

Every school should have an elected school council with representation from across the pupil spectrum by age and vulnerability. When running consultations and workshops the Council will endeavor to invite some or all school councils to participate. The Trust would advocate that schools work towards the Quality Participation Standard for Schools. School Councils also collaborate with the Young People's Senate and some requests made to the latter are passed to school councils where it is deemed more useful to all concerned.

Council Democratic Process (supported by CWAC Democratic Services)

Our locally elected Youth Parliament representatives and other members of the Senate are co-opted on to the Council's Scrutiny Committee to ensure that young people's voices are heard at the highest levels of the Council. For example MYPs, Deputies and senate members have been part of Task Groups undertaking Scrutiny Reviews of Youth Provision in Cheshire West and PHSE/Curriculum for Life.



Appendix 1

Young People's Participation Reference Groups

Name of Group	Purpose Open to	Group	Contact
Children in Care Council	Support and reference group made up of children in care and care leavers	Children in care and care leavers	Participation and Inclusion Team Tel: 0151 356 6859 Text: 07747764742 childrensparticipationandinclusion@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk http://www.cicc.org.uk/
UK Youth Parliament	Organises the local elections and supports the elected MYPs to do their jobs	All 13-19 year olds	TBC
Youth Parliament reps (MYPs and Deputy MYPs)	Represent the young people in Cheshire West at the national Youth Parliament	13 – 19 year olds	TBC
School Councils	To represent the views of pupils in schools across Cheshire West	All children in schools.	Headteachers and/or designated teacher/support worker within each school
Information Advice and Support Service	To support parents, carers and disabled young people and those with additional needs	All young people with additional needs	Angela Steadman Angela.steadman@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Youth Federation	Supports the development of youth services and youth involvement	All young people	Jessica Achilleos jessicaa@youthfed.uk
West Cheshire College Students Union	Represents students at WCC	All WCC students	Stephanie Garret s.garret@west-cheshire.ac.uk
Mid Cheshire College Students Union	Represents students at MCC	All MCC students	Richard Hollywood RHollywood@midchesh.ac.uk

Name of Group	Purpose Open to	Group	Contact
Voluntary Community and Faith Sector	Representative and coordination group for voluntary organisations working with young people in Cheshire	All voluntary groups	Pauline Ruth Pauline.ruth1@gmail.com
Young Carers	Reference and support group for young carers	Young people who care for a family member	Mary Beaumont, Charity Manager info@youngcarersnetwork.co.uk Tel: 0151 356 3176
Service User Reference Forum (SURF)	Housing (Supporting People) sponsored participation forum	People in supported and social housing	TBC
Buzz Youth Activity Group	Cheshire Centre for Independent Living	Promote and support independent living for people with disabilities	Melanie Hinde Tel: 01606 331853 Melanie.hinde@cheshirecil.org
School Champion Group	Co- production group for policy and practice in CWaC, including the Local Offer	Children and young people representatives from special schools and a main stream	Angela Steadman Tel 0300123 7001 Angela.steadman@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
FE 16+ Young People Group	Supporting the development of the Local Offer	Young People with disabilities or additional needs and attend our FE Colleges	Angela Steadman Tel 0300123 7001 Angela.steadman@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

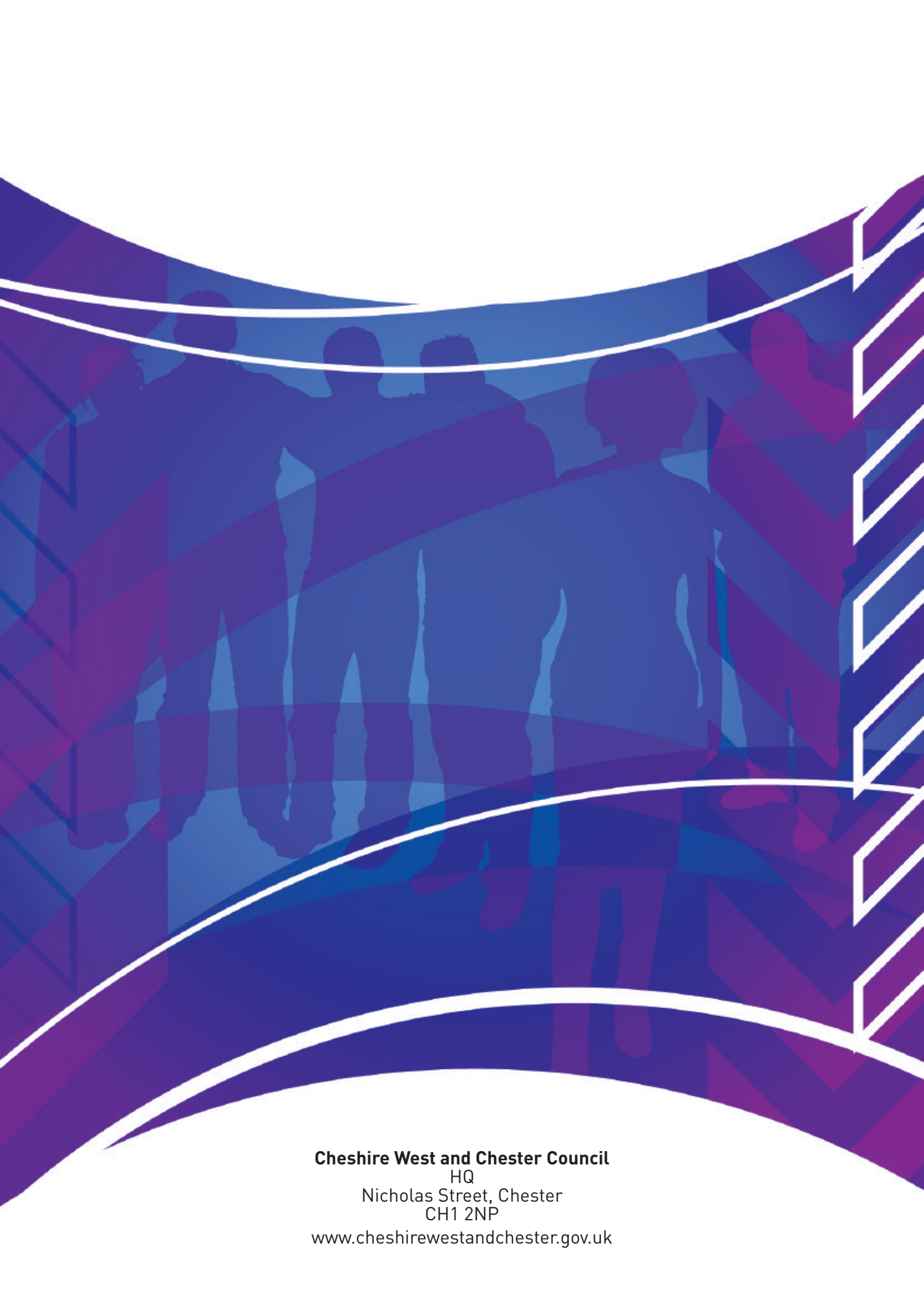
Some Useful websites:

Name of Group	Purpose Open to	Contact
Local Offer	Information and Services for Adults and children in west Cheshire	www.westcheshirelocaloffer.co.uk
My Mind	Website supported by the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust dedicated to helping young people with mental and emotional health issues	http://www.mymind.org.uk/
School Help Advice Reporting Page (SHARP)	Website supported by Cheshire Constabulary to help young people report and get confidential help with in-school issues	http://www.thesharpsystem.com/
Kooth	Website supported by Cheshire West and Chester Council for young people to get counselling help with emotional health and other issues	https://www.kooth.com/
Healthwatch Cheshire West	An independent network of people and organisations who want to improve health and social care services in Cheshire West and Chester	http://www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/
Children in Care Council	<p>The Children in Care Council is a group of young people who are all cared for by Cheshire West and Chester Council.</p> <p>The Children in Care Council gives children and young people the chance to shape and influence the parenting that they receive at every level, it gives young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives.</p>	http://www.cicc.org.uk/

Appendix 2

People/Organisations who are Members of the Children's Trust

	Board Member	Organisation/Representing
1	Gerald Meehan (Chair)	Cheshire West and Chester Council Strategic Director, Children and Families
2	Alison Amesbury	Cheshire West and Chester Council, Strategic Housing
3	Helen Brackenbury	Cheshire West and Chester Council Temporary Head of Integrated Early Support
4	Lorraine Crane	Cheshire West and Chester Council Senior Manager, Children's Commissioning
5	Nick Evans	Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
6	Gill Frame	Local Safeguarding Children Board Chairman
7	Alistair Jeffs	Cheshire West and Chester Council Head of Strategic Commissioning
8	Tony Sharples	Cheshire West and Chester Council Consultant in Public Health
9	Tracey Matthews	NHS Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Group
10	Councillor Nicole Meardon	Cheshire West and Chester Council – Cabinet Member for Children and Families
11	Councillor Margaret Parker	Cheshire West and Chester Council – Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
12	Isabel Noonan/Sarah Blaylock	Cheshire West and Chester Council Policy Manager
13	Dr Sue O'Dell	NHS West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group
14	Mark Parkinson	Cheshire West and Chester Council Head of Education
15	Pauline Ruth	Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Hub
16	Emma Taylor	Cheshire West and Chester Council Head of Children's Social Care
17	Paula Wedd	NHS West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group
18	Detective Superintendent Nigel Wenham	Cheshire Constabulary
19	Luke McDonnell	Cheshire Constabulary
20	Partnership Inspector Ian Stead	Cheshire Constabulary



Cheshire West and Chester Council
HQ
Nicholas Street, Chester
CH1 2NP
www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk