

Report of the Cabinet Member Children's Services and Schools

I will be reporting as follows for Full Council on 18 February 2021:

1. On the Devon Youth Parliament - Make Your Mark results 2020

I have also been asked to report as follows:

2. by Councillor Hannaford on the school's music grant that is administered through Babcock, including coverage, outcomes and general take up.
3. by Councillor Hannaford on the National Tutoring Programme.
4. by Councillor Hannaford on the work being done to ensure that girls and young women have proper access to sanitary products during the pandemic, especially in the context of school closures and access to educational establishments.
5. by Councillor Aves on what support Devon County Council is currently giving the nurseries who are struggling financially.
6. by Councillor Aves on what Devon County Council is doing and planning to do to support all young people who are losing out on the education they would have had if it was not for the pandemic.

Response

1. Devon Youth Parliament

Make Your Mark - 2020 Devon Highlights

"Young people have made their voices heard and now we're ready for action! We've been in post for a year now and despite interruptions from the pandemic, we've worked together to start creating change. Last year we launched the Greener Devon Campaign which we're looking forward to developing in 2021 in line with the Make Your Mark votes. All the material we have already created is fully accessible on the Devon Climate Emergency website (<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/resources-for-community-groups/schools-and-youth-groups/#greener>).

Your vote is in safe hands to make change and here's to getting young peoples' voices heard!"
(Maisie, MYP North and West; and Georgia, MYP Exeter)

Introduction

This report summarises the results of the annual 'Make Your Mark' national youth consultation held in 2020. This work was led in Devon by Devon Youth Parliament, with support from the Participation Team in Children's Services (Devon County Council). Due to the Pandemic, the

vote was held entirely online. Although the participation rate was understandably lower than in previous years; the Devon figures correspond to the national average.

Summary

3667 young people took part across Devon – a 2.8% turnout. The national turnout was 3%.

The top 3 National issues across the UK were:

1. **Free University** We should invest in the young people of today by providing free university. The alternative is that young people will suffer financial hardship and not reach their full potential. (Devolved topic)
2. **Stop Plastic Pollution** If we do not take action now, it is predicted that waste plastics will outweigh fish in our oceans by 2050. Let's reduce single-use and non-essential plastics (UK wide topic)
3. **Support Our Mental Health** More money should be given for young people's mental health. We should be offered mental health support in schools and ensure that teachers know about mental health. (Devolved topic)

The top 3 National issues across Devon were very similar but in a different order:

1. Support our Mental Health
2. Free University
3. Take Action on the Climate Emergency

The top 3 Local Issues across both the UK and Devon were:

1. Domestic Violence
2. Homelessness
3. Access to training & jobs

The National results, including a breakdown of each local authority can be found online <https://2u6szgg3e9x2hmfuy16guf8q-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2020-v2-Make-Your-Mark-Results-with-Infographics.pdf>

What next?

The 2020 Make Your Mark results will be shared with senior leaders and managers at Devon County Council, including County Councillors, and across the [Devon Children and Families Partnership](#) to inform their planning and decision making about the issues that young people tell us they identify as being a priority for Devon.

A copy will also be sent out to the 34 schools, colleges and youth groups that took part in Devon.

The three National issues selected as the National Campaigns will be worked on here in Devon & our elected MYP's will follow the BYC guidance on these campaigns.

More locally, here in Devon, our MYPs will continue with their campaigns for a 'Greener Devon'; Mental Health Support; & Transport. Our MYP's will also begin to explore further the local issues raised through this consultation and how they might be dealt with locally.

2. School's Music Grant

Despite the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Music Hub has demonstrated good engagement with schools during the 2019/2020 academic year: exceeding some national averages as shown below.

- Working with schools on School Music Education Plan: 80% (National average 72%).
- Supporting schools to deliver Whole Class Ensemble teaching: 56% (National average 43%).

From September 2020, DfE guidance permitted most music activities to resume within schools, but with extensive control measures that proved prohibitive in some cases. Working closely with Music Mark, guidance, training and supplementary risk assessment templates were developed to support schools and other stakeholders with planning.

The situation this term is quite different. Schools are making extensive use of online funded digital music technology to support home learning and an encouraging level of music activity appears to be continuing in school with vulnerable and critical worker children.

There are currently 2,077 teachers across 290 schools registered. 14,746 children and young people are using the YUMU online facility to support home learning, representing an increase of 430% over the last calendar year.

All Devon schools have fully funded access to class sets of instruments and while demand for class sets was reduced in the Autumn term, in the Spring term, most schools have opted to go ahead with their requests and around 2,800 instruments are currently on loan to schools.

3. National Tutoring Programme

The government announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up lost time after school closure. This funding included:

- A universal £650 million catch up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time. A mainstream school will get £80 for each pupil from reception to year 11 inclusive. This means a primary school of 200 pupils would receive £16,000 while a secondary school of 1,000 pupils would receive £80,000.
- A £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help.
- The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) aims to support schools to provide a longer-term contribution to closing the attainment gap. The scheme has 2 delivery options:
- NTP Tuition Partners who provide to schools, a heavily subsidised tutoring offer from an approved list of Tuition Partners. The schools can use their catch-up funding to make up the total cost.
- Academic, trained graduates will be employed by individual schools in the most disadvantaged areas to provide intensive support to their pupils.

The National Tutoring Programme has been available since November 2020 and is expected to run for the 20/21 and 21/22 academic years. We are aware that some Devon schools have

signed up to the National Tutoring Programme, others, due to further lockdowns, will have been unable to plan this catch up programme yet.

There is a question about the capacity of the National Tutoring Programme as some schools have reported being told by providers that they cannot meet their requests at this time.

It should be noted however that the catch-up premium funding (as described above) is provided directly to schools who use their funding in a way that suits their cohort and circumstances. They are expected to use this funding for specific activities which will help pupils catch up on missed education.

4. Access to Sanitary Products

All learners are able to access free sanitary products in their place of learning if they need them (for example if they have forgotten their products or if they cannot afford them). The scheme which is fully funded by the DfE allows schools and organisations for 16-19-year olds to order products, free of charge, from Personnel Hygiene Services Limited (PHS). Other manufacturers also continue to send free items to schools.

Outside of the school setting Devon has provided funding to community organisations who support vulnerable children and families with food and other vital supplies including hygiene/sanitary products. The Council recognises and is responding to the needs of women and girls in this context.

The Council has provided £300,000 since December to Devon Community Foundation (DCF) for this work and several of the DCC food programme applications have included hygiene/sanitary provision, as part of a wider offer, and this has been included within the 80% food/fuel allocation (of the Winter Grant).

Further, there have been 3 applications since December which had more of a focus on hygiene/sanitary products and these have been included in the 20% essential items allocation. DCF would welcome more grants to support this work and to support food-related projects <https://devoncf.com/apply/community-food-programme-2/>

In addition, the Council's direct funding through the Covid-19 Fund continues to provide vital support to people and communities. For example, week commencing 8th Feb, the Council is funding a project for community partners to get the much-needed hygiene and cleaning products to those most in need in North Devon.

The Council continues to support applications from projects and communities to support this work. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/covid-19-fund/>

5. Financial support for Nurseries

There have been various financial support offers from the Government during the COVID-19 pandemic, so we have planned our financial support over the past year alongside other funding available for Early Years settings. When the first lockdown was announced, all Early Years settings received all of the DfE funding they were expecting for the Spring term regardless of whether they were open or closed.

The settings were asked to remain open for children of critical workers and those deemed vulnerable but without the additional hours paid for by parents, this meant settings would have

operated at a loss. In order to secure enough places, we set a new funding mechanism in place to support those providers that remained open. This ensured that provision was available to those vulnerable groups and helped ensure the sustainability of longer-term Early Years provision.

In the Autumn term, the government decided to use the previous year's census figures to ensure that all settings received the same funding as in Autumn 2019.

Currently, Devon Early Years has a small amount of sustainability funding available and some remaining pandemic funding. Support is available from the Early Years & Childcare Advisor Team for any setting that has financial concerns. They can assist them with their business model, signpost them to any Government financial support and assess whether short-term sustainability funding may be required.

We are aware of the challenges of Early Years providers and Out of School Childcare settings and continue to review the budgets we have available to us to support those settings

6. Support for young people's education

The DfE has provided funding directly to every school to support children to minimise learning gaps that have developed during lockdown. This can be used for a variety of approaches to ensure the impact of lockdown is reduced for all pupils.

The council has supported all schools by providing advice on how to access the funding available and the ways in which it may be used. Additionally, a Catch-Up Premium Conference delivered by Babcock LDP focused on how to identify areas for development in a child's learning and provided appropriate strategies to improve the quality of teaching in all classrooms.

Curriculum Advisors are currently working with schools to develop a county wide system of sharing pupils learning and any gaps in order to support transition between primary and secondary school. This will ensure secondary teachers have the consistent information to support catch up work regardless of which school the child moves from.

In order to be able to access the support available, children need to be able to attend school and while most children are keen to return to school others are more anxious. The council has therefore focused on supporting all children to return to school and this has included working directly with families to help reduce anxiety, especially for those children with an Education Health and Care Plan or where there may be other medically vulnerable members of the family.

Training sessions have also been made available to school staff on developing strategies for managing children's emotions and behaviours and to help them support and understand feelings of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem.

Specifically, for Children in Care we have:

- Put in place additional support to engage children in care who display anxiety-based school avoidance or mental health issues.
- Ensured all Personal Education Plan meetings are attended by the Virtual School with the focus on progress and maintaining high quality learning. Individual catch up plans are agreed at these meetings where needed e.g. Virtual School providing tutoring, school providing 1-1 sessions outside of lesson provision and school to offer additional support to children to avoid school anxiety on return.
- Informed all schools of the offer of SPACE youth work for young people to gain support.

- Relunched the Plymouth Marjon University Trainee Teacher Scheme with all Devon secondary schools. This scheme provides children in care with face to face or online tutoring in key subjects at no cost to the school.
- Invested with Babcock Educational Psychology Service to provide more spaces on the Re Engage Programme for any anxiety-based return to school issues.
- 73% of our children in care are attending school so gaps in learning are being addressed well in small class environments with high levels of staff support. Additional tutoring has also been put in place for some pupils who are not able to attend school.

James McInnes

Cabinet Member

Children's Services and Schools