Item No. 8

Meeting Date **Wednesday 11th November 2026**

Glasgow City Integration Joint Board Public Engagement Committee

Report By: **Karen Dyball, Assistant Chief Social Work Officer, Children's Services**

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Stronger Together: Children's Rights and Young Person Participation

Purpose of Report:	To present the Stronger Together January 2025 to March 2026 report as an example of rights-based participation and co-production, and to provide assurance on how children and young people's views are informing individual decisions, practice and service development.

Background/Engagement:	Stronger Together was developed with care-experienced children and young people. Fifteen young people helped plan and design the report; most chose to contribute written material, with individual support and an optional group session. Around 100 children and young people also contributed to work on the service name and visual identity.

Governance Route:	The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development. HSCP Senior Management Team ☐ Council Corporate Management Team ☐ Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐ Council Committee ☐ Update requested by IJB ☐ Other ☐ Not Applicable ☒

Recommendations:	The IJB Public Engagement Committee is asked to: a) Note the participation and co-production described in Stronger Together; b) Note the influence of children and young people's

	views on individual decisions, practice, guidance and service development; and c) Support continued reporting on participation, feedback and demonstrable change.

Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:
Supports the strategic commitment to person-centred, rights-based services and meaningful involvement of people who use services in their design, delivery and improvement.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:	Relevant to outcomes concerned with quality of life, positive experiences of services, and services that are responsive to people's needs.

Personnel:	No direct personnel implications arise from this report. Continued delivery requires staff time to support safe, accessible and meaningful participation.

Carers:	Participation can improve understanding of the experiences of children, young people and those who care for them. No direct change to carers' services is proposed.

Provider Organisations:	The report reinforces the expectation that providers listen to children and young people, promote access to advocacy and demonstrate how views influence practice.

Equalities:	Participation must be accessible and flexible so that age, disability, communication needs, care setting or other barriers do not prevent involvement. No service change is proposed by this paper.

Fairer Scotland Compliance:	Not applicable. This is an information and assurance report and does not propose a strategic decision or service change.

Financial:	No new financial implications arise from this report. Activity described was delivered within existing resources.

Legal:	The paper reflects the right of children and young people to express views and have those views given due weight. It also supports the rights-based duties arising from the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

Economic Impact:	None identified.

Sustainability:	Positive social sustainability through inclusive participation and improved service responsiveness. No material environmental impact identified.

Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	Not applicable.

Risk Implications:	The principal risk is that participation becomes tokenistic if feedback is gathered without clear feedback loops or evidence of influence. This is mitigated through recording themes, reporting change and explaining where change is not possible.

Implications for Glasgow City Council:	Supports corporate responsibilities for children's rights, participation and continuous improvement

Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	Supports partnership learning where children and young people's experiences relate to health, hospital care and transitions.

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this report is to present Stronger Together January 2025 to March 2026 as an example of rights-based participation and co-production, and to provide assurance on how children and young people's views are informing individual decisions, practice and service development.

1.2. The report also highlights learning for the Health and Social Care Partnership about participation that is voluntary, supported, accessible and connected to visible influence.

2. Background

2.1. The Children's Rights Service provides rights information, advocacy and participation opportunities to care-experienced children and young people; including those living with foster or residential carers and those receiving continuing care or aftercare support.

2.2. Stronger Together brings together service activity, children's rights information, young people's experiences, achievements and priorities for change. It is written in an accessible style and is intended to help children, young people, staff and decision-makers understand both individual experience and wider themes.

2.3. The reporting period covers January 2025 to March 2026. During this period, the service recorded 212 young people supported, 1,338 reasons for support, 254 meetings attended for or alongside young people, and 264 operational or strategic meetings with other teams to promote or safeguard rights and share young people's experiences.

2.4. Participation in Stronger Together was designed to offer different ways to contribute. Fifteen young people helped plan and design the report. Nine wanted to write an article and were supported individually by members of the team. All were offered the opportunity to attend a group session on 22 July 2026.

2.5. Young people contributed lived-experience articles, reflections, ideas about content and design, and feedback on how the report should communicate rights in real life. As a service we wanted to ensure that young people moved from being the subject of the report to being contributors and co-authors.

2.6. Participation opportunities were also available to young people to influence the rename and rebrand of the service. Children and young people contributed 32 ideas and nearly 100 young people voted on a service name that better reflects the age range supported. 21 young people also contributed ideas to design a new logo with the help from Deni Smith, Arts in the City.

2.7. These approaches recognised that meaningful participation should be voluntary and flexible. Young people could contribute individually or in a group, write at their own pace and decide what they wished to share. This is particularly important where young people may find large groups, formal meetings or repeated re-telling of personal experience difficult.

2.8. Participation is also a core part of direct advocacy. Children's Rights Officers attended 254 meetings for, or alongside, young people, including 103 My Meetings, 71 Children's Hearings, 19 Child Protection Meetings, 18 Pathways Reviews, 12 Care Planning Meetings, seven education meetings and 24 other meetings.

2.9. Support was provided before, during and after meetings. Young people identified that participation works better when they know in advance when and where a meeting will take place, who will attend, what will be discussed, what decisions can be made and who will make them. They also valued support to prepare, take part in a way that suited them, understand decisions and know how to challenge or appeal.

2.10. The report also identifies barriers. Cancelled or rearranged meetings can create anxiety and uncertainty after a young person has prepared to participate. Young people continued to report occasions when decisions were made without sufficient discussion with them, when advocacy was not consistently offered or when they did not feel listened to.

2.11 The inclusion of feedback to young people: "What changed because children and young people spoke up?" was an important addition to allow young people to directly see how their voice and experience influenced decisions at all levels. Stronger Together demonstrates that participation is a route to influence rather than an end in itself. Young people's experiences were shared, with appropriate permission and safeguards, through strategic and operational forums.

Area of influence	Evidence of contribution or change
Protection and safeguarding	Young people's direct experiences and expectations informed the rewrite of Young Persons Support and Protection guidance, with rights, participation and voice placed at the centre of the work.

Area of influence	**Evidence of contribution or change**
Education	Young people's experiences informed action planning and training through the Promise Education Steering Group, including the importance of relationships, continuity, support and involvement in decisions.
Leaving care and accommodation	Concerns about housing, independence, transitions and support into adulthood were raised through the Continuing Care and Aftercare Group and the 16+ Review.
Health and residential care	Young people's experiences were brought into health partnership work, hospital rights discussions and work reviewing food and nutrition in residential children's houses.
National policy and advocacy	Experience from children and young people contributed to national discussion through the Scottish Children's Rights Officers Network, including discussion about advocacy for people with care experience.
Workforce awareness	Young people's experiences and articles were used to support rights and advocacy learning with staff across social work, education, health and other services.

2.12. These examples demonstrate a developing feedback loop: children and young people share experiences; recurring themes are identified; those themes are raised with relevant decision-makers; and the learning is used to challenge or improve policy, practice, training and service design.

2.13. Children and young people describe feeling proud, happy and valued through their involvement. The process also created opportunities to recognise achievements, use lived experience to help others and make complex rights issues more understandable to professionals.

2.14 The strongest participation practice described in the report has the following features:

- choice about whether, when and how to take part;
- relationships and practical support that enable participation;
- accessible, child-friendly information before decisions are made;
- advocacy that supports, rather than replaces, the young person's own voice;
- clear routes from individual experience to service and strategic influence; and
- feedback about what changed, what did not change and why.

2.15. The report also identifies unfinished work. Barriers remain in transitions, accommodation, continuity of relationships, meeting arrangements, access to advocacy and ensuring that views are consistently taken seriously. Reporting these challenges alongside achievements is important to avoid presenting participation as complete when improvement is still required.

2.16. The Children's Rights Service will continue to strengthen children and young people's voice and influence, reduce barriers to advocacy and participation, and use learning, evidence and feedback to improve practice.

2.17. Future reporting will continue to ensure the participation pathway is measurable. This should include:

Measure	**Suggested evidence**
Reach	Number and range of children and young people offered and taking up participation opportunities.
Choice and accessibility	Methods offered, reasonable adjustments and reasons young people choose not to participate where known.
Experience	Young people's feedback on whether participation felt safe, supported and worthwhile.
Influence	Policies, guidance, training, service decisions or practice changes informed by young people's views.
Feedback loop	Proportion of participation activity where young people receive an explanation of what happened next.
Equity	Review of whether particular ages, care settings or communication needs are under-represented.

2.18. Young people said:

"I'm really pleased with the articles and feel proud to have written two!"

"Yeah, I've enjoyed it, I am happy with how it has all turned out. It was a good day!"

"Thank you again for today - I really loved it. You helped me settle in so much, so thank you!"

"I love the report! I am so happy."

2.19. The Public Engagement Committee provides an opportunity to recognise the contribution of children and young people and to reinforce the expectation that participation across the Partnership should be evidenced through both experience and influence.

3. Recommendations

3.1. The IJB Public Engagement Committee is asked to:

a) Note the participation and co-production described in Stronger Together;
b) Note the influence of children and young people's views on individual decisions, practice, guidance and service development; and
c) Support continued reporting on participation, feedback and demonstrable change.