

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on
Thursday, 18th April, 2024 at 1.30 pm
(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 1.15 p.m.)

MEMBERSHIP

- D Blackburn - Farnley and Wortley;
J Bowden - Roundhay;
E Bromley - Horsforth;
Amanda Carter - Calverley and Farsley;
D Cohen (Chair) - Alwoodley;
R Downes - Otley and Yeadon;
O Edwards - Guiseley and Rawdon;
C Gruen - Bramley and Stanningley;
J Heselwood - Weetwood;
N Manaka - Burmantofts and Richmond Hill;
L Martin - Roundhay;
K Renshaw - Ardsley and Robin Hood;
J Senior - Morley South;
R. Stephenson - Harewood;

Co-opted Members (Voting)

- Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham - Church Representative (Church of England)
Mr A Khitou - Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Vacancy - Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

- Mr N Tones - School Staff Representative
Ms H Bellamy - School Staff Representative
Ms L Whitaker - Young Lives Leeds
Mrs K Blacker
Ms J Ward

Principal Scrutiny Adviser:
Rob Clayton
Tel: (0113) 37 88790

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Please Note: Please do not attend the meeting in person if you have symptoms of Covid 19 and please follow current public health advice to avoid passing the virus onto other people.

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To remotely observe this meeting, please click on the 'View the Meeting Recording' link which will feature on the meeting's webpage (linked below) ahead of the meeting.

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Rob Clayton
Tel: (0113) 37 88790**

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A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25* of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded).</p> <p>(* In accordance with Procedure Rule 25, notice of an appeal must be received in writing by the Head of Governance Services at least 24 hours before the meeting).</p>	
2			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report. 2. To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information. 3. If so, to formally pass the following resolution:- <p>RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:</p> <p>No exempt items have been identified.</p>	

3

LATE ITEMS

To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.

(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)

4

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To disclose or draw attention to any interests in accordance with Leeds City Council's 'Councillor Code of Conduct'.

5

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.

6

MINUTES - 27 MARCH 2024

7 - 14

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2024.

7

INQUIRY REPORT - PROVISION OF EHCP SUPPORT IN LEEDS

15 - 34

To consider a report from the Head of Democratic Services that presents for agreement an inquiry report following the Board's scrutiny inquiry into the provision of EHCP support in Leeds. This takes account of comment and suggested amendments at the meeting held on 27 March 2024.

8

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

35 - 38

To receive a report from the Head of Democratic Services on the appointment of co-opted members to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) following discussion of potential changes in the 2023/24 municipal year.

9

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY BOARD
END OF YEAR STATEMENT 2023/24**

39 -
50

Members are asked to note the appended 2023/24 end-of-year statement for the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) and, subject to any agreed amendments, approve its publication.

10

WORK PROGRAMME

51 -
58

To consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2023/24 municipal year.

11

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Subject to the Annual Council Meeting, the next public meeting of the Board will take place on 12 June 2024 at 10.30am. There will be a pre-meeting for all board members at 10.00AM.

THIRD PARTY RECORDING

Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts on the front of this agenda.

Use of Recordings by Third Parties – code of practice

- a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.
- b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 6

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

WEDNESDAY, 27TH MARCH, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor D Cohen in the Chair

Councillors E Bromley, Amanda Carter,
O Edwards, M France-Mir, Graham,
C Gruen, J Heselwood, N Manaka,
L Martin, K Renshaw and R. Stephenson

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr A Graham – Church Representative (Church of England)

Co-Opted Members (Non-Voting)

Ms H Bellamy – School Staff Representative

83 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

84 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

85 Late Items

There were no late items of business.

86 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

87 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

The Board received the following apologies:

Cllr Blackburn
Jackie Ward
Cllr Bowden, Cllr France-Mir attended as substitute
Anas Khitou
Tony Britten

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 18th April, 2024

Nick Tones
Cllr Downes
Laura Whitaker
Cllr Venner, Executive Board Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships

88 Minutes - 22 February 2024

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 February 2024, be approved as an accurate record.

89 The Independent Review of Children's Social Care (Macalister Review) - Implementation Update

The Board considered a report from the Director of Children and families providing an update on implementation of the Macalister Review in Leeds, following consideration of these issues in September 2023 which outlined the plans to implement the findings of the Review (known as this hereafter).

In attendance for this item were:

- Cllr Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Economy, Culture, and Education
- Julie Longworth, Director of Children and Families
- Farrah Khan, Deputy Director Children and Families

By way of introduction the Director of Children and Families highlighted the further national developments through the publication of further statutory guidance from Government, which support the recommendations of the Review. Leeds has progressed a number of the recommendations in the Review despite there being delays to implementation at national level, a key driver behind this is a desire to develop and improve services and improve outcomes for children and young people in Leeds.

Following comments and questions from board members the following issues were discussed:

- The Board asked about the pathfinder projects that Leeds hoped to be selected for in terms of any update on the success of those bids. In response the Board heard that Leeds had unfortunately not been selected as a pathfinder authority for the Family Network Pilot or the Families First for Children Pilot Phase 2. Despite this there is still a commitment to develop services in the city and behave as if it were a pathfinder authority particularly given that Leeds has already been shaping and developing its services in recent years in the way set out in the Review, for example in areas such as family help, trusting relationships, kinship care and family group conferencing. The Board were supportive of this approach and that Leeds is leading the way in many of these areas.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 18th April, 2024

- The Board were concerned about developing these services without the funding that might be associated with being a pathfinder authority particularly given the wider financial challenge being faced by the authority. The Board were informed that Leeds is committed to continuous service improvement so many of the developments are happening anyway and the multi-agency, partnership approach was also stressed as a way of maximising resources and developing new approaches such as family help. Working collaboratively with agencies across the city including the third sector was emphasised as a way in which the challenge of reduced funding could be faced and improved services delivered despite that challenge.
- The Board wanted to know more about kinship care and welcomed the work already being done in this area, a key area of interest was comparison with other local authorities. In response the Board heard that Leeds has a greater proportion of children cared for by family or kin compared to other local authorities. This is driven by the commitment to think family and where possible and safe ensure that children and young people are looked after by family. It was also noted that the offer to special guardianship carers has recently been revised to ensure that there is no financial detriment to looking after children and that through these arrangements there is less statutory intervention in the lives of children and young people which can be intrusive. The Board also heard that a key driver for service improvement is listening to feedback from carers and children and young people.
- The Board requested if details from this meeting could be fed back to those behind the recent council deputation on children and young people in care being a protected characteristic. This was agreed to by attending officers.
- Members asked about kinship care when it is not appropriate or safe for the child to meet or interact with parents. The Board heard that it can be difficult to manage the dynamics within families. But the Board heard that the regular reviews of the placement and Section 47 processes mean that social workers are assigned to both the child or young person and the kinship carer. In practice Section 47 means that safeguarding responsibilities apply and include partnership strategy meetings (including police and health) which develop approaches to safeguard the child and appropriate investigations carried out to ensure that the child is safeguarded.
- The Board were keen to ensure that the dynamics of family are managed as part of kinship placements to ensure that all elements of the placement including the impact on the caring family and young people within that. The Board noted that the collaborative, strength based approach and the commitment to listening to kinship carers is an important element of how the service deals with this, the 'think family' approach. The Board also heard that the Council has one of the largest family group conference services in the country to support families along with the therapeutic social work team who provided consultation for both foster and kinship carers.
- Members were keen to know more about how much weight is given to what the child wants. In response the Board heard that the child's voice is

central to the work of the directorate with trusted relationships a key element to facilitate the sharing of views with adults that can shape services. It was noted that in Leeds past inspections and internal audit work carried out by managers had indicated that the voice of the child is heard in Leeds.

- A query was raised about the Working Together review which is referenced in the report and the response that was planned following past consideration of the issue by this Board. Members were informed that the work was completed and that more detail could be provided to members outside of the meeting.

Resolved

The Board:

- a) noted the content of the update report, and the changes to statutory guidance which it outlines.
- b) Agreed to receive a further update report in autumn 2024, in line with further anticipated developments outlined in this report.

90 Impact of asylum changes on children - Follow Up

The Board considered a report from the Director of Children and Families setting out how recent changes to the asylum system have impacted children in Leeds, as a follow up item to a report on the same subject considered in September 2023.

In attendance for this item were:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Economy, Culture, and Education
- Julie Longworth, Director of Children & Families
- Farrah Khan, Deputy Director Children and Families
- Laura Mitchell-Ghafoor, Principal Legal Officer

Following Board members questions and comments the following issues were discussed:

- Members asked about the impact of inaccurate age assessments in terms of children being placed in accommodation designed for adult asylum seekers and whether this placed them at risk of exploitation. By way of response the Board were informed that age assessments have been a problem in Leeds where unaccompanied asylum seeking children had been housed in adult accommodation. Around the Christmas period in 2023 this had been dealt with and more detailed assessments conducted.
- In response to further questions on age assessments and their accuracy it was noted that the funding provided to the Council to support families and individuals in these circumstances was not sufficient to cover the costs. The Board noted that where an age assessment has been found to be

inaccurate the children and young people involved are dealt with through the established children looked after approaches in Leeds. There is ongoing dialogue with Government around sufficiency of funding in these circumstances.

- Members noted that age assessments of young people who present as unaccompanied asylum seekers is not likely to be straightforward.
- The Board were also informed of the support being offered to young people who may be subject to uncertainty around their asylum status.
- Members asked about processes in relation to families with no recourse to public funds. In response the Board heard about Section 17 provisions which means a panel is used to inform the support provided to families for housing and food and often working with the third sector provide wider support arrangements.
- The Board wanted to know how much the total costs were for providing support to families with no recourse to public funds. The precise details were not available at the meeting but could form the basis of a further update to the Board in 2024/25. A further update on this providing more detail on data, scale and funding was supported by the Board to be considered as part of a watching brief approach to this issue in approximately 6 months' time.
- In response to a question from the Board it was noted that the issue with age assessments relates to children being assessed as being adults and does not reflect adults seeking asylum but trying to access children's provision. The Council's involvement in age assessments is based on a referral by other professionals where there is a view that an individual is a child and not an adult.
- The Board sought assurance on the role of the Council in relation to asylum seekers who have committed a crime against a child whilst in asylum seeking accommodation in the city. The Board heard that where there is a concern that a child is at risk of harm or has suffered harm a strategy discussion will take place between health, police and children's social care, with the police taking a lead on any criminal proceedings and children's social care will fulfil its statutory role of providing effective help and protection for children.

Resolved

The Board:

- a) noted and endorsed the update report provided.
- b) requested a further update to be brought to the board in 6 month time with a focus on age assessments and wider data associated with this issue.

91 Draft Inquiry Report - Provision of EHCP Support

The Board considered a report from the Head of Democratic Services that presented, for discussion, comment and agreement a draft inquiry report

following the Board's scrutiny inquiry into the provision of EHCP support in Leeds.

In attendance for this item were:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Economy, Culture, and Education
- Julie Longworth, Director of Children & Families
- Dan Barton, Deputy Director – Learning
- Phil Evans, Chief Officer Transformation and Partnerships
- Rob Clayton, Principal Scrutiny Adviser

The Chair thanked Executive Board Members and officers for the transparent and open way in which this inquiry has been dealt with.

The Director of Children and Families set out that the directorate has recognised that improvements needed to be made on EHCP and SEND services more generally to deliver positive outcomes and to meet statutory requirements. Co-production was emphasised as a key element, working with children, families and other partners to improve services.

The Executive Board Member noted that challenges in this area and highlighted the national nature of some of the issues and the asks of Government that the Council has in terms of funding. However, it was also noted that there is a Leeds response and welcomed the input of scrutiny into that ongoing process.

Following questions and comments from board members the following discussion took place:

- In relation to Recommendation 6 on tribunals members suggested that this could be clarified in terms of what the Board is seeking to achieve. This was agreed to, and that the scrutiny adviser will pick that up between now and the next meeting.
- In response to a query around timescales for an EHCP and placements in an education setting the board were informed that it is a 20 week process from a request to assess and the issuing of an EHCP and that includes the naming of a placement in an education setting.
- Members noted the shortage of placements as being part of the problem. That is one of the issues but also the level of demand and ability to process demand is also a key issue. In addition, the Board were also informed of possible ways that the capacity of education psychologists could be increased through work with higher education settings albeit there are challenges in developing that approach and it is in the early stages in terms of scoping the work.
- The Board focussed on the 20 week timescale and asked if a specific recommendation could be included to reflect the views of the LPCF and their frustrations with timescales. The Board noted that the service is focussed on the 20 week timescale and that it is a key priority.

- On the digital EHCPs recommendation it was explained that EHCPs are digitally stored but the proposal being considered by the service is around a multi-access digital platform that will enable access by parents, SENCOs and support staff. The Board noted that the key driver behind use of digital approaches would be increasing efficiency of processes and reducing bureaucracy.
- Members noted the recommendation on practice over process and suggested that it should acknowledge existing difficulties being experienced by parents and carers. It was agreed that the focus of the recommendation should be around practice driving process, to avoid process being the focus.
- Members emphasised the importance of the recommendation on a dedicated inbox for elected members as being of assistance to communication between elected members and residents. And more generally members noted that accessibility is important in terms of digital EHCPs to ensure that residents are able to access and understand the system, which was noted.
- The Board discussed support available for those that do not reach the threshold for an EHCP that sits outside of the EHCP processes and to identify gaps in provision and commission services where possible. More generally it was noted that children and young people who do not meet EHCP thresholds tend to under perform in terms of attainment outcomes. Plans to include SEND navigators as part of the Early Help Hub approaches were also noted.
- In relation to the recommendation on funding a suggestion was made that a letter is sent, on a cross party basis, to Government from this Board to support the increase in funding that would assist the delivery of these services. It was agreed that this would be looked into.

Resolved

The Board:

- a) commented on and agreed amendments to the draft inquiry report on the Provision of EHCP Support in Leeds, following consideration of this issue throughout the 2023/24 municipal year.
- b) noted that a final inquiry report will be brought back to the Board at its meeting on 18 April 2024 taking account of discussion held at today's meeting.

92 Work Programme

The Board considered the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

In attendance for this item was:

Rob Clayton, Principal Scrutiny Adviser

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser provided the following updates:

- That the next meeting is not at the usual time and is on a Thursday 18 April at 1.30PM with a pre-meet at 1.15PM
- The planned item on the Youth Justice Plan which was due to come in April has been delayed and will now be considered early in the next municipal year.
- To respond to comments on co-opted members a review report will be brought to the next meeting in April.

Resolved

The Board noted the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year and the updates provided.

93 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is scheduled for Thursday 18 April 2024 at 1.30PM (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 1.15 pm).

Meeting Closed at 11.55AM

Inquiry Report - Provision of EHCP Support in Leeds

Date: 18 April 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Children and Families Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Children and Families Scrutiny Board has identified Education Health and Care needs Plans (EHCPs) as an item for detailed scrutiny in the 2023/24 municipal year.

As such the Board has initiated an inquiry into the provision of EHCP support in the city with the intention of supporting and providing check and challenge on the concurrent improvement work being led by the Children and Families directorate supported by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). This is similarly aimed at delivering effective, sustainable change to improve outcomes for children and families accessing EHCP and SEND support services in Leeds.

The board has considered issues related to the provision of EHCP support throughout the 2023/24 municipal year both in the public board meetings and through working group sessions held in September and November. Appendix 1 to this report provides the inquiry report which brings together conclusions from this work taking account of the evidence heard during the municipal year and the comments and amendments suggested by board members and witnesses at the meeting held on 27 March 2024.

The Board targeted completion of the inquiry in the 2023/24 municipal year and this report seeks to deliver against that timeline. The directorate led improvement is ongoing and will extend beyond the timeframe of the inquiry. Appendix 1 therefore contains a recommendation that ongoing check and challenge from the Board should be a feature of the Board's work programme in the 2024/25 municipal year.

Recommendations

Children and Families Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- a) Agree the inquiry report on the Provision of EHCP Support in Leeds, following consideration of this issue throughout the 2023/24 municipal year and a draft inquiry report at the Board's March meeting.
- b) Agree that in line with Recommendation 11 ongoing check and challenge should be recommended as a work item to the successor Board in 2024/25.

What is this report about?

- 1 The Scrutiny Board procedure rules (Part J, Paragraph 52) require that: 'Before finalising any recommendations to be made the Scrutiny Board shall invite advice from the appropriate Director(s). The Director shall consult with the appropriate Executive Member before providing any such advice. The detail of that advice shall be reported to the Scrutiny Board and considered before the Board's recommendations are finalised.' The Board meeting held on 27 March 2024 provided this opportunity through consideration of a draft inquiry report and comments and amendments are now reflected in the report attached at Appendix 1.
- 2 Appendix 1 contains details on when the Board heard evidence on this issue, the witnesses that have contributed and a summary of the evidence heard. The timeline for this work is as follows:
 - 5 July 2023 Public Board Meeting – Consideration of Inquiry Terms of Reference
 - 6 September 2023 Public Board Meeting – Agreement of Inquiry Terms of Reference
 - 22 September 2023 Working Group – focussed on the planned Improvement work being led by the Children and Families Directorate supported by PwC
 - October 2023 – Working group Summary considered at the Public Board Meeting
 - 23 November 2023 Working Group – Stakeholder Engagement with the Leeds Parent Carer Forum (LPCF)
 - 24 January 2024 Public Board Meeting – Working Group Summary and update on the directorate led improvement work
 - 22 February 2024 Public Board Meeting - overview of the engagement work that the directorate has done and a summary of findings from an ongoing survey of parents, carers, children and young people on EHCP and SEND support in Leeds.
 - 27 March 2024 Public Board Meeting – Consideration of the Draft Inquiry Report
 - 18 April 2024 Public Board Meeting – Consideration of the Final Inquiry Report

What impact will this proposal have?

- 3 The Council's Vision for Scrutiny contained in Article 6 of the Constitution sets out the nationally agreed four principles of good scrutiny. Within these are a commitment to promote scrutiny as a means to ensure the voice and concerns of the public can be heard and to improve public services by ensuring that reviews of policy and service performance are focused.
- 4 Consideration of this inquiry in 2023/24 has responded to performance data that has suggested a decline in meeting deadlines associated with EHCP processes and also anecdotal evidence from elected members through casework that has indicated that services in this area have not been consistently meeting the expectations of children and families in the city.
- 5 It is hoped that the inquiry into the provision of EHCP support, in conjunction with the directorate's own improvement work will lead to improved services in the city.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 6 The terms of reference of Scrutiny Boards in Leeds promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the priorities of the Best City Ambition. This work item is aimed at having a particular impact against health and well-being and inclusive growth by seeking to review and improve services for children and families who access EHCP support.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 7 At the 7th of June Children and Families Scrutiny Board discussion with the Director and Executive Board members suggested that the Provision of EHCP Support would be a positive area of focus for the Board in 2023/24 and the Board supported the inclusion of the EHCP inquiry in its work programme for the year.
- 8 The draft terms of reference and final terms of reference for this inquiry have also been before the Board for comment and agreement in July and September along with a summary of a previous Working Groups held in September and November and ongoing inquiry sessions at public board meetings linked to this work stream.
- 9 The draft inquiry report was considered by the Board at its meeting on 27 March 2024 providing an opportunity for further comments and amendments from board members, attending officers and Executive Board members.

What are the resource implications?

- 16 There are no specific resource implications associated with this report.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 17 There are no specific risk implications associated with this report.

What are the legal implications?

- 18 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report. Although it should be noted that any new or revised arrangements should be legally sound and reflect the legal framework governing the EHC process.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 19 Not applicable.

How will success be measured?

- 20 The completion of an inquiry report in the 2023/24 municipal year and a commitment to ongoing work in this area as part of the Scrutiny Board's future work programming.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 21 The timetable has been dictated by the Board through regular consideration of the work programme at each public meeting that is held and during the inquiry work itself. The Board, in consultation with the Principal Scrutiny Advisor, will be responsible for production of the inquiry report.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Provision of EHCP Support – Inquiry Report

Background papers

- None

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Children & Families Scrutiny Board

Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Report

Date: 18 April 2024





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Foreword



Foreword from the Chair

As elected members it has become increasingly clear that parents and carers accessing EHCP support services in Leeds were having difficulty in securing the outcomes they wanted for their children. They have faced frustration and anxiety and some have had nowhere to turn at a time when they need support the most.

Through the casework we do as elected members, in support of Leeds residents, there has been a noticeable increase in issues and concerns raised in relation to EHCPs. Furthermore performance data from the services providing support in this vital area indicated that there were significant issues both in terms of demand and overall adequacy of the services being accessed by Leeds residents.

The Scrutiny function is aimed at providing critical friend challenge to decision makers in our city and supporting residents by providing a route through which their voice and concerns can be heard. Data driven analysis of EHCP support suggested that as a Board we should closely examine the provision of EHCP support and undertake an end to end analysis of these services through a dedicated Scrutiny Inquiry.

Supporting the most vulnerable is a key priority for the Council and ensuring that we get support right for vulnerable children and young people is absolutely essential to ensure they can fulfil their potential and achieve success as they complete their education. As a parent of a child with SEND, I have a deep understanding of these issues and the anxieties faced by parents as they go through what can be quite a daunting experience, it is a challenging and difficult time and we should be providing the best support services we can for these families.

As this work has progressed we have been heartened by recognition from decision makers that improvement is needed in SENSAP and EHCP services and it has been pleasing to see the open and transparent way in which our work has been received from Executive Members and senior officers.

We have made 11 recommendations, key areas for improvement include modernising services through digital approaches, ensuring that engagement and communication is improved both in terms of providing updates and on EHCPs themselves, improving casework approaches to allow elected members to better advocate for residents and reducing the use of tribunals to reach EHCP outcomes.

It is vital that the Council meets its statutory commitments moving forward and that in turn services are quicker, more accurate and meet the needs of children and young people across the city.

I would like to thank all contributors to our work from senior leadership and their colleagues in the Children and Families Directorate to the contributions made by key stakeholders such as the Leeds Parent Carer Forum. Progress is being made but we remain committed to ensuring services are improved and remain improved in the future and we will continue to consider these issues and provide check and challenge on the improvement work as it continues in the future.

Councillor Dan Cohen

Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board



Board Membership, EHCP Introduction and Aims of the Inquiry



Cllr David Blackburn



Cllr Jordan Bowden



Cllr Emmie Bromley



Cllr Amanda Carter



Cllr Dan Cohen



Cllr Ryk Downes



Cllr Oliver Edwards



Cllr Caroline Gruen



Cllr Jules Heselwood



Cllr Nkele Manaka



Cllr Lisa Martin



Cllr Karen Renshaw



Cllr Jane Senior



Cllr Ryan Stephenson



Tony Britten (co-opted)



Andrew Graham (co-opted)



Anas Khitou (co-opted)



Nick Tones (co-opted)



Helen Bellamy (co-opted)



Kate Blacker (co-opted)



Jackie Ward (co-opted)



Laura Whitaker (co-opted)

Children & Families Scrutiny Board

Focusing on services affecting the lives of children and families across the city to monitor progress towards becoming a child friendly city and putting children first.

Introduction

The Children and Families Scrutiny Board identified the Provision of EHCP Support in Leeds as a key area of focus in the 2023/24 municipal year. There were two main drivers behind this, anecdotal evidence from elected members through casework volumes relating to EHCP concerns from residents and information provided in both past and present performance reports provided by the directorate on a six monthly basis to the Scrutiny Board.

The performance data on EHCPs highlighted the significant increase in demand for them in Leeds, a trend that has been mirrored nationally, and the resultant pressure placed on the Special Educational Needs Statutory Assessment and Provision (SENSAP) team that deals with EHCPs and statutory assessments. These issues had fed through into performance with significant concerns around statutory timescales and satisfaction of families accessing services.

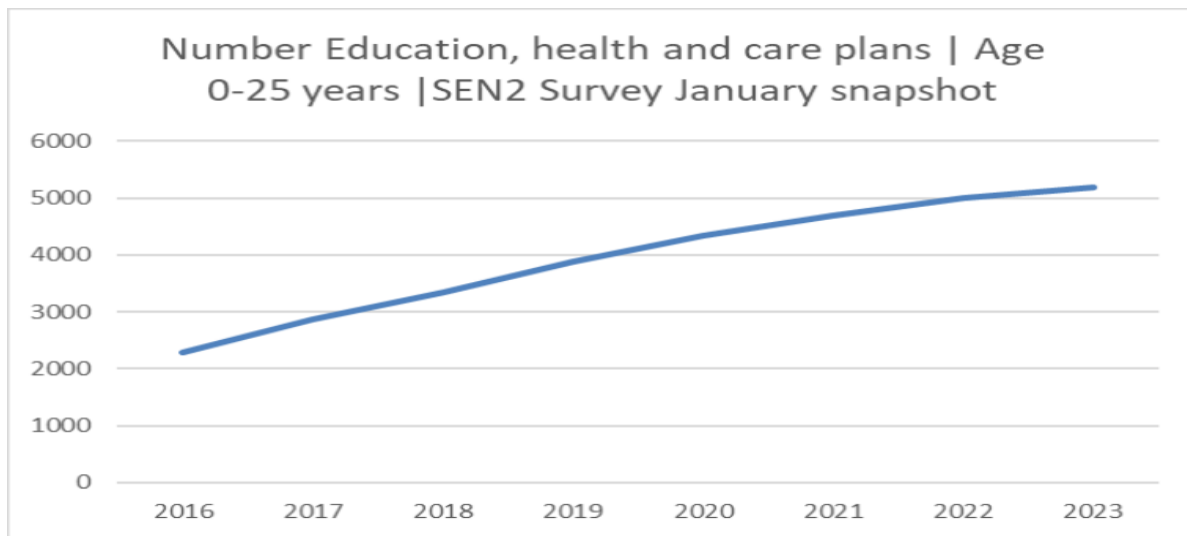
The scale of this challenge is perhaps best highlighted by overall volume, on 23 May 2023 there were 5,313 children and young people aged 0-25 with an EHCP in Leeds. The upward trend in EHCPs started in 2016 and the current figure is over double the figure in January 2016 which stood at 2,287. There has been a 118% increase in demand since 2016, with the upward trend set to continue in the future.



Aims of the Inquiry

Aims of the Inquiry (Continued)

The scale of growth in demand is highlighted by Figure 1 below:



As a result of the growing challenge in this area the Board believed that a detailed examination of EHCP processes could support the improvement work already being undertaken by the directorate through their work with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), provide check and challenge on that improvement journey, ensure that the voices of children and families are integral to the improvement work and are being heard and acted on, provide additional elected member oversight and input into the improvement work and ultimately support ongoing work to improve EHCP services for children and families living in Leeds.

Local Context

Whilst the national context is important it was also recognised that there are local challenges that are unique to Leeds and that these will also be addressed as part of the work being undertaken by the directorate supported by PwC and as a focus of the Board's work.

It was noted that an important element of the issues faced in Leeds are related to staffing and resource. Coupled with the increased demand the SENSAP team experienced a number of significant challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic including changes to Business Administration, the loss of colleagues and loved ones to the virus, increased sickness absence, a substantial loss of a number of experienced managers and unprecedented issues with the recruitment and retention of key staff.

Issues around communication have also been consistently reported by families and these concerns were echoed in the direct engagement undertaken by the Board with the Leeds Parent Carer Forum (LPCF).

Inquiry Aims

The Board's work on EHCPs coincides with similar work being undertaken by the Children and Families Directorate, supported by PwC, both of these areas of work have identified issues with EHCP provision and both aim to support improved performance to support children and families accessing EHCP and SEND support in Leeds.

Recommendations

1

Statutory Timescales — The Board has heard evidence from stakeholders and council officers in relation to delays experienced by children and families in securing an EHCP. Data received by the Board through performance reports shows that meeting statutory commitments on issuing an EHCP within 20 weeks of the decision to assess is a declining metric. The Board acknowledges increased demand and reduced funding as major factors and also notes the improved volume of EHCPs being processed — 954 EHC assessments were completed in 2023, compared to 374 during 2022, but a completion rate of 9.55% should be the starting point for improvements and recommends that this should continue to be a key determining factor in the success of the service improvement work both now and in the future.

2

Funding — The Board acknowledges the financial challenge facing local authorities both generally in terms of annual funding allocations for the General Fund from Government and specifically in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), where the funding cap on the DSG prevents the authority accessing the funding that it should be getting. Both of these funding streams impact the provision of EHCP support in the city. The Higher Needs Block of the DSG is used to meet the cost of provision and like other local authorities Leeds does not receive its full allocation due to the national funding formula. The Board notes a balanced DSG budget has been set in Leeds for 2024/25, this includes a £3.4m savings target and £3.5m use of DSG reserves. The Board also notes evidence received from council officers that in 2025/26 the DSG in Leeds is projected to overspend by £31m, and in 26/27 the forecast overspend is expected to increase to £51m. This is based on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy from September 2023, which will be updated during 2024/25. The Board therefore supports further action to lobby Government for additional funding for the general fund to support the cost of assessment, review and transport arising from EHCPs and the national funding formula for the DSG. Additional funding from either, or both, of these would support service improvements being delivered by the directorate.

3

Digital EHCPs — Through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, the Government has noted that digital EHCPs could reduce bureaucracy and improve experiences for parents, carers and professionals. This view was mirrored when the Board received evidence from the Leeds Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) who noted that a dual access (accessible by both professionals and families) digital portal would improve communication and speed up the EHCP application process. Given this the Board believes that work should be prioritised to developing a digital portal that will enable families to complete forms and submissions on line, speeding up processes and enabling better information sharing and understanding of timescales linked to individual cases.

4

Improved Casework Processes — Elected members have noted an increase in EHCP casework in recent months, linked to delays in families being able to access support. The Board believes that a simple way of addressing casework would be the establishment of a dedicated EHCP/SEND inbox to enable elected members to quickly highlight cases of concern and assist in speedily accessing support and finding resolutions for residents. It is noted that development of digital approaches for EHCP support (Recommendation 3) may in time reduce casework volumes but certainly as an interim measure this approach would enhance the support available to residents by streamlining how elected members can raise cases and effectively deal with them.

5

Information Governance — Evidence submitted through a case study by the LPCF highlighted some concerns around Information Governance and the need to review processes to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately when dealing with EHCPs. The Board therefore recommends that a review of Information Governance processes takes place with a view to providing added assurance for practitioners and children and families around data protection and sharing information appropriately and with consent with schools and partners.

6

Tribunals — The evidence from the LPCF highlighted the Council's perceived approach to tribunals as a major cause of frustration in EHCP processes in Leeds, and are a major cause for delays in accessing placements particularly given that tribunal cases are often won by families. As services improve tribunals would likely reduce and that is noted by the Board. However, the Board believes that better quality mediation based on the principles set out in recommendation 8 (below) would lead to reduced tribunals and should be an important part of the improvement journey. In addition, any resource spent in these areas would be better directed at service improvements as opposed to tribunal costs that can leave children and young people without access to an education setting, contributing to the authority not meeting statutory timescales as noted at Recommendation 1.

7

Placements — The Board has heard evidence regarding sufficiency, suitability and quality of placements available for SEND children and young people in the city. Some of this is due to challenges faced in meeting increasingly demanding needs which is a wider systemic issue but suitability of placements was highlighted by the LPCF as an area where different approaches or additional training may improve the service and also potentially reduce tribunals, and speed up access to placements. The Board therefore recommends that a review of training for caseworker staff is carried out to address consistency in approach and to increase the caseworker knowledge base of schools. This will ensure that there is a greater understanding of which schools are suitable to meet which needs. In respect of quality of placements the Board believes that more work should be done, subject to available resource as noted at Recommendation 2, on Monitoring and Quality Assurance linked to placements and the need to ensure that needs are being met by schools during a placement.

8

Practice driving process — Throughout the inquiry the Board has welcomed the commitment to practice over process and acknowledges the significant demand led pressures that have created an over reliance on process. As part of ongoing scrutiny monitoring of the planned new arrangements, and responding to issues raised by stakeholders on the existing approach, the Board supports and therefore recommends that the key principles for new service arrangements remain central to future activity in the service. These being:

- Codesign of a future way of working with families.
- Designing processes that focus on the Child and value-adding staff effort.
- Creating an approach to the Code of Practice which aligns with the Leeds Way.
- Ensuring leadership which is stable and consistent.
- Delivery of a Culture which promotes equity and is obsessed with the voice of the child.

9

Communication Plan — As the Board has learned more about the issues facing children and families in the city and the demand led pressures on the SENSAP Team it has become clear that messaging on EHCPs and what they are for could be improved. Families and some practitioners see an EHCP as the only mechanism to get funding and support for children and young people. This means that services administering and delivering EHCP support are facing higher demand and this has a knock on impact on waiting times and the frustrations of families as they seek vital support for their children. The Board recommends that decision makers consider designing and delivering a clear communication plan on this to families and practitioners to address any misconceptions and enable more children to access support quicker.

10

Communication and Engagement — The Board notes the initial progress made in providing more regular communication between senior management and families to improve relationships and provide assurance that services are being reviewed and improved. The Board welcomes this approach and recommends that this regular communication with groups such as the LPCF should form a permanent element of the new approach taken to communication and engagement. This would support Recommendation 8 (above) and ensure that co-design, consistent leadership and the voices of children and carers remain at the heart of the re-designed services. The Board also notes that communication at a lower level could be improved by reviewing practice associated with staff absence to ensure that out of office messages and alternative contacts are consistently used.

11

Ongoing Check and Challenge —The Children and families Scrutiny Board has been working on this issue concurrently with similarly aligned work led by the Children and Families Directorate. The Board recognises the improvement work being done and that this will take time to bed in and see results on the ground over the coming 12 months. The Board therefore recommends that its role in checking and challenging the work on EHCPs should continue beyond this inquiry report and be a feature of the Board's work programme in the 2024/25 municipal year.

List of Witness

During the Inquiry the Board has heard evidence from the following:

- Executive Member for Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education
- Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships
- Director of Children and Families
- Deputy Director Learning
- Chief Officer Learning Capacity and Development
- Chief Officer, Service Transformation and Partnerships
- Programme and Partnerships Manager
- Statutory Assessment and Provision Lead Officer
- Service users (Leeds Parent Carer Forum and wider information provided through the ongoing survey of EHCP and SEND provision in Leeds)
- Children and young people (through the survey referenced above)



Inquiry Approach

Inquiry Structure

The Inquiry into the provision of EHCP support in Leeds has used a mixture of formal items at public board meetings and specifically designed working groups to consider detailed evidence on the services in question, the impacts on children and families and possible options to improve services. The following sessions have taken place in 2023/24:

Terms of Reference

5 July 2023 — [Draft Terms of Reference](#), consideration of an initial draft terms of reference early in the municipal year to enable the inquiry to commence as quickly as possible.

6 September 2023 — [Final Agreement of Terms of Reference](#) taking account of feedback from the directorate and Executive Board Members. This included initial overview of directorate led improvement work through a [project plan on a page](#).

Working Group—Directorate and PwC Improvement Work

22 September 2023 — Consideration of the planned work being developed by the directorate in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). This included attendance from PwC and consideration of a briefing note on EHC Assessment in Leeds covering background, staffing, performance and a summary of service user feedback. In addition the Board considered the Government's [the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan](#) as part of the agenda papers.

October Public Scrutiny Board Meeting — Working Group Summary

4 October 2023 — In order to report back to the full Board meeting from the 22 September Working group the evidence heard was summarised in a [working group summary document](#) which also focused on the key aims of the work being undertaken by the Children and Families Directorate and PwC.



Inquiry Approach

Working Group — Stakeholder Engagement Leeds Parent Carer Forum

23 November 2023 — A key element of the Board’s work in this area has been the desire to hear directly about lived experiences from stakeholders who access services within the EHCP ‘system’. As a result the Board met with parents and carers from the Leeds Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) who, through a working group, provided feedback on their experiences, offered suggestions as to what could work better and highlighted where services work effectively.

January Public Scrutiny Board Meeting

24 January 2024 — The Board considered a report which provided details of both the [November Working Group with LPCF](#) and the latest position on the directorate led improvement work through consideration of an item approved at Executive Board in December 2023. Given the clear links between the work of the Board and the work of the Directorate this item brought those two work streams together for Board member consideration.

February Public Scrutiny Board Meeting

22 February 2024 — As already noted the Board identified stakeholder engagement as a key area. To provide added depth to the LPCF feedback, the Board considered [a further item](#) which provided an overview of the engagement work that the directorate has done and a summary of findings from an ongoing survey of parents, carers, children and young people on EHCP and SEND support in Leeds. This survey therefore captured the voices of children and young people which had not been specifically considered in the inquiry work.

March and April Public Scrutiny Board Meetings

27 March & 18 April 2024 — These public sessions were used to consider and comment on the draft inquiry report and to agree the final report taking on board comments from the Director of Children and Families and Executive Board Member for Economy, Culture and Education.



Evidence Base

Summary of Evidence The following evidence has been heard by the Board which has led to the 11 Recommendations detailed on pages 6 to 8 of this report.

Recommendation 1 — Statutory Timescales

Evidence received from the LPCF highlighted the delays and difficulties in accessing EHCP support and the frustration felt when processes took too long. This has been supported by acknowledgement from senior officers that there is a need to speed up processes and improve outcomes for children and families in the city. A clear indication of this acknowledgement is through the commissioning of independent support and joint working with PwC on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) – Review Process.

Recommendation 2 — Funding

To contextualise the challenges faced by SENSAP services in Leeds, the Board has heard and supported concerns raised by Executive Board Members on funding and the fact that Leeds is one of many local authorities that has its DSG funding capped by the funding formula used by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Leeds therefore does not currently receive the full allocation of DSG it is due under the formula, as there is a gains limit factor on some of the funding increases and this has contributed to creating pressures on the DSG budget. If the gains limit factor had not been in place, Leeds would have been allocated an additional £34.06m of funding between 2018/19 and 2023/24 across the schools' block (£9.5m) and high needs block (£24.56m), funding that would clearly have assisted in meeting the challenges faced in the provision of these services. This was discussed at the Board meeting held on 24 January 2024 and the minutes of that meeting reflect the concerns that were discussed: *'Moving on to finance the Board highlighted the funding cap that Leeds is subject to through the DSG. In response the board heard that this is a national funding formula which caps the amount of funding an authority can receive linked to population.'* The Board therefore support ongoing efforts to ensure additional funding through a review of the funding formula used at national level and any associated lobbying.

Recommendation 3 — Digital EHCPs

The Board has received evidence on lived experiences accessing EHCP services in the city. This was provided through a dedicated working group held on 23 November 2023 which featured attendance from the Leeds Parent Carer Forum (LPCF). The forum is run by a group of parents, working in partnership with the local authority, to represent the parent/carer voice of families of children and young people aged 0-25 years, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the whole of the Leeds area. Their key aim is to create better outcomes for families through participation and co-production.

During the working group a number of observations were made, this recommendation relates to feedback from the LPCF around the use of hard copy forms, the level of bureaucracy required to complete EHCPs and the need for better communication between practitioners and families. It was suggested that the best way of delivering both better communication and simpler, more modern administrative process was a digital app that could be used to track progress of an EHCP, enable quick and easy communication between families and casework officers and enable digital submission of documentation and forms. During consideration of the draft inquiry report it was also noted that whilst digital approaches are welcome accessibility is also an issue and other means of completing the documentation should remain open.



Evidence Base

Summary of Evidence (continued)

Recommendation 4 — Improved Casework Processes

Board members expressed a strong desire to be able to influence EHCP casework in a more direct manner and to be able to provide as much assistance as possible to families awaiting support or experiencing issues in accessing support. In terms of evidence specifically relating to this the working group summary from 22 September provides some background: *'SENSAP Inbox — Members questioned whether, like other services such as highways, there was potential for specific email inboxes to be established to deal with specific Cllr / MP SEND or EHCP related queries. This could ensure that all queries of this nature are collated and dealt with as quickly as possible.'* The views of the LPCF on casework also highlighted concerns with case handling by officers that could be impacted by elected member involvement to check and challenge casework processes and outcomes. Having a dedicated inbox approach would help to streamline elected member involvement and challenge.

Recommendation 5 — Information Governance

The evidence heard from the LPCF covered a range of issues and the session was also used to hear examples of individual case studies provided by LPCF Steering Group members. These were detailed in the Working group Summary considered by the Board on 24 January 2024 and one of them, Case Study 2, highlighted concerns around Information Governance and data handling.

The following is a quote from the working group summary: *'However, a key concern was around information governance, the Board heard that the EHCP was finalised and sent without the knowledge of the family and raised questions around IG and admin processes associated with EHCPs and how they are compiled. Ultimately this led to schools not accepting the child due to the drafting and quality of the EHCP, some of the detail was unchecked and therefore inaccurate and led to stigma being created largely due to the plan not being accurate. This raised concerns around IG and data security and the need for IG assurances to be in place to prevent this happening in the future.'* Conducting a review of IG processes as recommended would provide this assurance and identify any weak spots in the existing approach.

Recommendation 6 — Tribunals

A key area of concern from the LPCF again contained in evidence submitted to the Working Group held on 22 November 2023 was around the length and volume of tribunal cases which often left children awaiting outcomes for months and in some case without being in education settings. Case Study 1 from the Working group summary highlights these concerns and more widely there were concerns around use of resources linked to tribunals in terms of cost, use of officer time and use of specialist staff time such as Education Psychologists. The Board acknowledges that with improved services there will be reduced tribunals and reduced waiting times for suitable placements but based on the evidence received there is a clear need to prioritise avoiding their use and to prioritise other forms of mediation to resolve disputes. This is particularly the case given that in the overwhelming majority of cases EHCP tribunals are won by the family. To support this further the Working Group summary from the 22 November 2023 contains clear evidence submitted by the LPCF on tribunals, the following provides a quote from this for added context: *'Waiting for Education Psychologist appointments. It is perceived that Ed Psych's time can be wasted on tribunal processes because of mainstream settings being recommended on EHCPs, due to lack of specialist provision. However, these settings cannot meet needs leading to more tribunals.'*



Evidence Base

Summary of Evidence (continued)

Recommendation 7 — Placements

The Board has heard that a key driver for dispute between families and the authority is around suitability of placements. This was clearly set out by the LPCF during the Working group held on 23 November with a number of concerns raised around placements, including delays linked to tribunals, and follow up to provide placement quality assurance. Some of the issues raised are linked to Government funding in terms of meeting complexity of needs through facilities in schools and having both sufficient support staff and staff with enough expertise to deal with the need. As noted at Recommendation 2 and driven by the funding cap on the DSG those issues sit outside of the direct influence of the local authority. However, ensuring training and a greater knowledge base amongst caseworkers is something that could be reviewed and potentially improved. The LPCF submitted the following comment, amongst others, in relation to placements: *'Caseworkers need a better understanding of schools in the area so they can consult with the most appropriate settings, not just those that have spaces. This can lead to time being wasted for schools and families.'* Which provides the context for this recommendation.

Recommendation 8 — Practice Driving Process

Throughout the inquiry work it has been clear that senior officers and decision makers have recognised the challenges faced in providing EHCP support and have acknowledged that services can be improved even when set against the backdrop of funding reductions and increasing demand. This was clearly set out during the first working group undertaken by the Board on 22 September 2023 where there was a clear commitment to a practice over process approach with co-design and listening to the feedback from stakeholders at its heart. The Board has clearly communicated its support for this approach and welcomed the open and transparent way in which decision makers have received the scrutiny inquiry. The working group summary of the 22 September meeting adds further context to this recommendation through the following extract: *"It was recognised that some of the structures and processes are too rigid and do not always take account of exceptional cases which has led to people being unhappy with support which in turn has led to increases in complaints and escalation of complaints to Ombudsman level. A key focus of ongoing work being carried out by the Council is to emphasise flexibility of practice to meet needs and not an over reliance on process — 'practice over process.'"*

Recommendation 9 — Communication Plan

At the public Board meeting held on 22 February 2024 the minutes reflect discussion and acknowledgement that EHCPs are not in and of themselves the only thing that can be done to access support. In response to this the Board felt that improved signposting and communication with stakeholders would provide both better understanding of EHCPs and their uses and potentially assist in reducing demand for EHCPs as recognition grew in terms of other support services that are available and that other mechanisms exist to get support for children and young people with additional needs. It was also acknowledged that enhanced training to colleagues in schools and education settings could also be considered as part of the answer to the issue of greater understanding of EHCPs and their purpose.



Evidence Base

Summary of Evidence (continued)

Recommendation 10— Communication and Engagement

The Board has heard evidence in relation to communication and engagement both in terms of families receiving regular updates, (addressed as part of Recommendation 3) and also in terms of implementing a more consistent culture that encourages feedback from stakeholders and listens to those voices to inform more effective service delivery. At its meeting on 22 February 2024 the Board heard that initial discussions had taken place and more were planned in terms of senior management engaging with stakeholders as part of the commitment to co-production and this was welcomed by the Board. This approach will also support Recommendation 8 on Practice driving Process and will ensure that the spirit of co-production is a central focus of the service review process. The minutes of the Board meeting held on 24 January perhaps best encapsulates the commitment made and the support this recommendation has for a renewed approach to communication and engagement: *'The Director of Children and Families welcomed the feedback received from the LPCF through the working group and working group summary document. The directorate is committed to hearing from children and families and recognised that parents and carers are experts in the lives of their families.'*

Recommendation 11 — Ongoing Check and Challenge

The Board has not been conducting work in isolation on the provision of EHCP support. The Children and Families Directorate, supported by PwC, has recognised and begun to address service issues through a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) – Review Process. This work is ongoing and has featured on two occasions as part of the inquiry work. In the first instance a scrutiny board working group was established to understand the scope of the issues being faced by the SENSAP Team and also to understand the aims of the improvement work and review process being undertaken by the directorate, this took place on 22 September 2023. In addition, an update report was considered by the Board at its January meeting setting out the latest position in the review process. During consideration of this update report it emerged that the timescales for completion of the work go beyond the timescale for the board's inquiry and as such there will be a need to continue to monitor and check and challenge the progress being made and the improvement journey that is being undertaken. This will be led through work programming approaches in subsequent municipal years, most notably 2024/25 but potentially beyond.

Next Steps

As noted in Recommendation 11 above there is a need for the successor Board in municipal year 2024/25 to maintain a focus on EHCP and SEND services and to check and challenge the ongoing Service Review as it progresses into 2024/25. This will be picked up through work programming approaches early in the next municipal year.

More information about Leeds City Council's Scrutiny Service, along with the activity and membership of individual Scrutiny Boards, can be found on the Council's committee webpages.

You can also follow @ScrutinyLeeds on twitter.



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Co-Opted Members

Date: 18 April 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- The Council's Constitution includes provision for the appointment of co-opted members to individual Scrutiny Boards.
- For those Scrutiny Boards where co-opted members have previously been appointed, such arrangements have usually been reviewed on an annual basis at the beginning of a new municipal year. However, during the course of the 2023/24 municipal year the Board has indicated that appointing a co-opted member from a SEND background could add to the knowledge and expertise of the Board. In addition, the Board has discussed including the voice of children and young people as a feature of the Board in the future, either through attendance or co-option or through the reporting process.
- This report provides guidance to the Scrutiny Board about the appointment of co-opted members and asks the Board to consider and advise on options for a possible revised approach to co-option for 2024/25 that seeks to reflect Board comment and discussion in the current municipal year.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) Consider the options set out in this report relating to the appointment of a co-opted member with SEND specialism and either agree that one of the non-voting co-opted board members for the 2024/25 municipal year should be from a body or organisation that represents SEND or seek a voting SEND Governor Representative that could also meet the desire for greater SEND knowledge on the Board.
- b) Agree that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser will initiate a process of appointing to that position and provide an update to the Board at its June meeting through the annually considered co-opted members report.
- c) Agree that the voices of children and young people should feature as part of the reporting process in the 2024/25 municipal year and that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser will build this into the Board's work programming approach in 2024/25 as well as considering attendance at Board meetings from appropriate witnesses to support this approach.

What is this report about?

- 1 During the 2023/24 municipal year the Board has noted the possibility of appointing a co-opted member who has a SEND background/specialist knowledge to one of the co-opted member positions on the board as well as general comments around seeking the views of children and young people either as part of the report items considered by the Board or through attendance at meetings. The value that this might bring to the Board has been highlighted by both the Inquiry into the Provision of EHCP Support in Leeds and consideration of an update report from the Voice Influence and Change Team.
- 2 In most cases the appointment of co-opted members is optional and is determined by the relevant Scrutiny Board. However, the Children and Families Board has some additional legislative requirements around co-opted members relating to education representatives as set out in the Local Government Act 2000 The Parent Governor Regulations (Representatives) England 2001. For a term of office which does not go beyond the next Annual Meeting of the Council there is one Church of England diocese representative and one Roman Catholic diocese representative, and for a four year term of office a primary parent governor representative and secondary parent governor representative (currently a vacancy) all of whom have voting rights on matters relating to education.
- 3 It should be noted that there is provision within the regulations (above) for a third, voting, parent governor representative to be appointed to the Board (the minimum requirement is 2) and in the past this has been filled by a SEND governor representative for a short period of time. Subsequent efforts to fill the vacancy were not successful. Whilst history suggests this has been problematic to fill, this is an option that remains open to the Board.
- 4 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution outline the options available to Scrutiny Boards in relation to appointing non-voting co-opted members.
- 5 In general terms, Scrutiny Boards can appoint:
 - a) Up to five non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that does not go beyond the next Annual Meeting of Council; and/or,
 - b) Up to two non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that relates to the duration of a particular and specific scrutiny inquiry.
- 6 For the Children and Families Board this is in addition to the legislative requirements set out above. Previous arrangements have allocated the five non-voting annual appointments to two school staff representatives and 1 third sector representative which is filled by Young Lives Leeds, with the two other positions filled by long standing co-opted members.
- 7 As part of the process of drafting this report the views of the two long standing co-opted members have been sought on their intentions for the 2024/25 municipal year. As a result of this Jackie Ward who has been on the Board for 14 years has indicated that this will be her final year as a co-opted member both in a non-voting capacity and voting capacity as a parent governor co-opted member. Our other co-opted member, Kate Blacker, has indicated a desire to continue to be on the board in 2024/25.
- 8 The Boards views are therefore sought on either assigning a non-voting co-opted member position to an individual with a SEND background and who represents an organisation active in the SEND provision or advocacy (Option 1) or consider seeking a SEND Governor Representative who would have voting rights through the regulations noted above (Option 2).
- 9 A further point to note is around effective operation of the committee. Children and Families is the largest Scrutiny Board in terms of membership and whilst co-opted members undoubtedly

add knowledge, depth and expertise to discussion there is a limit to how large the Board could become before its size may become problematic in terms of room capacity and ability for all members to be able to contribute to Board meetings.

- 10 In order to meet the points raised around more consistently hearing the voices of children and young people as part of the Board's work it is proposed that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser facilitates this through consultation with the Voice Influence and Change Team and the Board's Work Programme for the forthcoming municipal year. This would follow up on the Voice and Influence Team Update item considered at the February Board meeting at which the board: *'Agreed that the Children and Families Scrutiny Board, through the Principal Scrutiny Adviser, should explore ways in which work with the Voice Influence and Change team can be enhanced to enable board members to stay updated on key issues and priorities of children and young people and have more opportunities to hear from and respond to the voices of children and young people.'*
- 11 In addition, as the work programme for 2024/25 becomes clearer it may be that through liaison with colleagues attendance from witnesses who can provide more depth and detail to the priorities and views of children and young people could be invited to attend board meetings or working group sessions.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 12 It is widely recognised that in some circumstances, co-opted members can significantly add value to the work of Scrutiny Boards and, where appropriate, facilitate co-operation between Scrutiny Boards.
- 13 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules make it clear that co-option would normally only be appropriate where the co-opted member has specialist skill or knowledge, which would be of assistance to the Scrutiny Board and where the appointment is required by regulation.
- 14 By agreeing to the appointment of co-opted member with a SEND specialism, through either Option 1 or Option 2, it is anticipated that the Board's knowledge and expertise will be enhanced and that views from a SEND perspective would add significant value to the Board's work.
- 15 By more consistently hearing from children and young people on their priorities the Board will be in a position to better respond to this and to provide feedback from its work to children and young people. Again, it is anticipated that this will add value to the Board's work in future municipal years.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 16 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the priorities set out in the Best City Ambition. A decision to co-opt members would be taken with the intention of adding value to the work of the Scrutiny Boards.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 17 The guidance surrounding co-opted members has previously been discussed by Scrutiny Chairs and it was agreed that individual Scrutiny Boards would consider the appointment of co-optees onto their respective boards.
- 18 Consultation has taken place with existing co-opted members affected by this report.
- 19 The views of the Director and two Executive Board Members have been sought in writing as part of this process.

What are the resource implications?

- 20 Where applicable, any incidental expenses paid to co-optees will be met within existing resources.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 21 When considering the appointment of a standing co-opted member for a term of office, members should be mindful of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the course of the year in view of the Scrutiny Boards' wide-ranging terms of reference.

What are the legal implications?

- 22 Where additional members are co-opted onto a Scrutiny Board, such members must comply with the provisions set out in the Member's Code of Conduct as detailed within the Council's Constitution.

Appendices

- None

Background papers

- None

2023/24 Scrutiny Board Summary

Date: 18 April 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children & Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Article 6 of Leeds City Council's Constitution states that the Head of Democratic Services, as designated Scrutiny Officer, will provide an annual report to Council setting out how the authority has carried out its overview and scrutiny functions during the preceding twelve-month period. As such this year's Annual Report will collate highlights of the work of all five Scrutiny Boards over 2023/24.

To complement the Annual Report, each Scrutiny Board also produces an end of year statement. This provides details of the full work programme for each Scrutiny Board for the last municipal year, with links to the associated agenda packs, minutes and webcast recordings. The document also includes a statement from the relevant Scrutiny Chair reflecting on the key priorities for the Scrutiny Board over the last year.

The 2023/24 summary for the Scrutiny Board (Children & Families) is appended to this report. Once it has been approved by members it will be published on the Council's website.

Recommendations

- a) Members are asked to note the appended 2023/24 end of year statement for the Scrutiny Board (Children & Families) and, subject to any agreed amendments, approve its publication.

What is this report about?

- 1 The appended report summarises the 2023/24 work programme for the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families), providing links to the associated agenda packs, minutes and webcasts. It also includes a statement from the Scrutiny Chair, which highlights the issues that have been priorities for the Scrutiny Board over the last municipal year.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 2 It is intended that the detail in the appended summary will complement the Annual Report to Council, which will bring together highlights from all five Scrutiny Boards during 2023/24.
- 3 The appended statement illustrates how the Scrutiny Board (Children & Families) has operated within its Terms of Reference and in the context of the [Vision for Scrutiny](#) to add value to the organisation.
- 4 Items reflected in the work programme illustrate how the Scrutiny Board has assisted with the development of the Budget and Policy Framework, monitored progress against key performance indicators, analysed proposed Council policy, and provided 'critical friend' challenge to decision makers. The work programme further reflects engagement with Executive Members, senior Leeds City Council officers and representatives from partner organisations.
- 5 Where the Scrutiny Board has made recommendations to the Executive Board, Council and/or other committees these can be accessed via the links included in the schedule. In line with the requirements of the Budget and Policy Framework, this has included a contribution to the composite Scrutiny Statement on the Budget, as provided to Executive Board in February 2024.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 6 All Scrutiny Boards aim to ensure that they add value through engagement in programmes of activity that reflect the three pillars of the Best City Ambition. Within this context the appended report sets out the items of business conducted by the Board in 2023/24.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 7 During 2023/24 the Board has aimed to add value through a member led process of examination and review, involving engagement with a range of stakeholders. The nature of such engagement has varied depending upon the issue under consideration – full details are available via the links in the appended statement.

What are the resource implications?

- 8 There are no resource implications associated with this report.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 9 The appended report provides a summary of work already undertaken and therefore presents no risks that require management.

What are the legal implications?

10 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

11 It has previously been agreed with Scrutiny Chairs that an end of year statement will be produced for individual Scrutiny Boards to complement the publication of the Annual Report to Council.

How will success be measured?

12 The appended report summarises the activity of the Scrutiny Board during 2023/24.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

13 All five Scrutiny Boards will be asked to approve their respective end of year statements at the final public meetings of the 2023/24 municipal year.

14 Once the five statements have been approved, they will be published on the [Leeds City Council website](#).

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - End of Year Statement – Scrutiny Board (Children & Families)

Background papers

- None

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Children & Families Scrutiny Board

Year End Summary: 2023/24



Scrutiny at Leeds City Council



Purpose

Scrutiny is nationally recognised as an integral part of the improvement landscape for local government and forms part of governance arrangements for councils and some other local statutory bodies.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference that are applied to all Scrutiny Boards are set out in Leeds City Council's Constitution. The variations in the Scrutiny Boards' remits, together with any special responsibilities, are captured within Article 6 of the Constitution.

Article 6 also sets out the Council's agreed 'Vision for Scrutiny'.

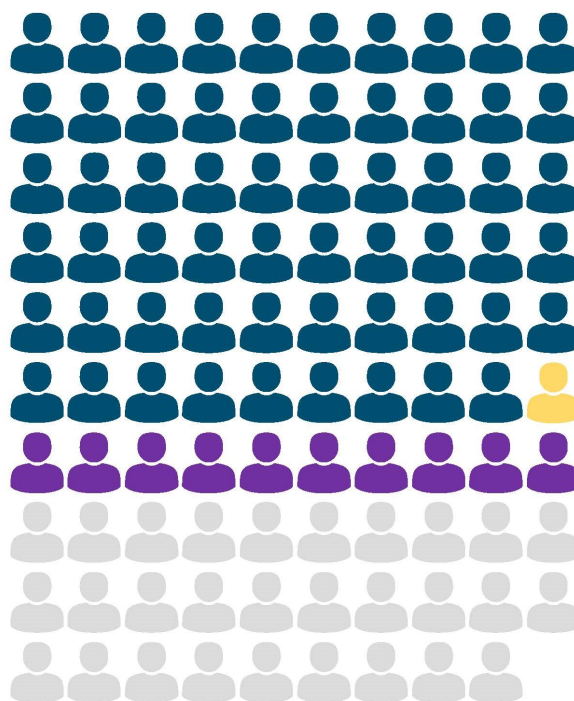
Transparency & Accountability

Scrutiny Boards usually meet in public, holding key decision makers to account, as well as providing 'critical friend' challenge and support for public service improvement and policy development.

Membership

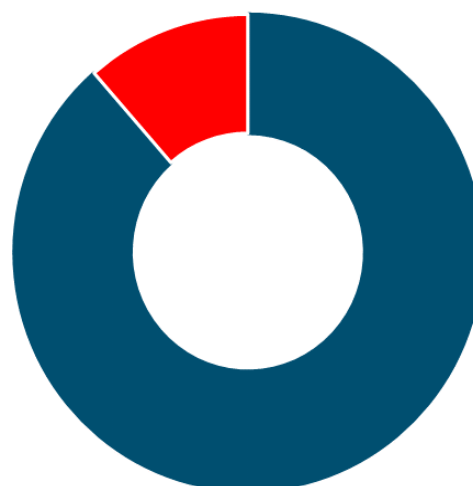
Membership of all Scrutiny Boards broadly reflects the political balance of the Council and cannot include members of the Council's Executive.

There is provision for Scrutiny Boards to appoint additional Co-opted Members.



Councillors who are members of a Scrutiny Board

Scrutiny Board Membership



■ LCC Councillor ■ Co-Opted

Children and Families Scrutiny Board 2023/24



Cllr David Blackburn



Cllr Jordan Bowden



Cllr Emmie Bromley



Cllr Amanda Carter



Cllr Dan Cohen (Chair)



Cllr Ryk Downes



Cllr Oliver Edwards



Cllr Caroline Gruen



Cllr Jules Heselwood



Cllr Nkele Manaka



Cllr Lisa Martin



Cllr Karen Renshaw



Cllr Jane Senior



Cllr Ryan Stephenson



Tony Britten (co-opted)



Andrew Graham (co-opted)



Anas Khitou (co-opted)



Nick Tones (co-opted)



Helen Bellamy (co-opted)



Kate Blacker (co-opted)



Jackie Ward (co-opted)



Laura Whitaker (co-opted)

Children & Families Scrutiny Board

Focusing on services affecting the lives of children and families across the city to monitor progress towards becoming a child friendly city and putting children first.

Completed Work Schedule for the 2023/24 Municipal Year

Each Scrutiny Board schedules eight formal meetings throughout the course of a municipal year. The Local Government Act 1972 requires formal meetings to be held in person to enable members of the public to be admitted as observers wherever the meeting is being held. To further promote access and engagement, formal meetings are also webcast.

In addition, the Scrutiny Board may choose to carry out additional work using alternative methods including site visits, working groups and remote consultative meetings (consultative sessions do not constitute formal meetings but do enable public access via a webcast).

The completed work schedule of the Scrutiny Board for the 2023/24 municipal year has been provided as part of this summary. This presents an overview of all meetings held throughout the year and the work items considered at each meeting. The work schedule also includes links to the agenda papers, minutes and webcast recordings of the Scrutiny Board's publicly accessible meetings.



Children and Families Scrutiny Board Statement from the Chair



In my first year as chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board we have covered a range of key issues and it has been a real privilege to look in detail at the work the Council does in support of children and young people in the city to provide support to this work and where appropriate check and challenge decisions and policy on these extremely important services.

I have been a member of this board in previous years and I have been well aware of the improvement journey the Council has undertaken which has led to improved services and outcomes for children and young people in Leeds. It is important that as a Board we continue to provide challenge to ensure that services continue to improve in the future.

We have had a very busy year. At the heart of our work has been an inquiry into the provision of EHCP support in Leeds, driven by performance data and the evidence we have as elected members through our own casework it had become clear that children and families accessing these services were not always getting the outcomes that they and we, as elected representatives of Leeds residents, would want. The inquiry has sought to challenge performance and add to the directorate led work being done to review EHCP and SEND services which are accessed by some of our most vulnerable children and young people. We will conclude this work at the end of the municipal year but we believe the Board should continue to provide check and challenge to ensure performance does improve.

We have also looked in detail at youth vaping and the impact it is having on our children and young people. This is a growing and worrying trend and it has been pleasing to see both the local actions being taken and the Government legislating to try to prevent its growth. Whilst work is underway to tackle this issue it is vital that this does have an impact on the ground and begins to reverse the exponential growth of youth vaping in recent years.

We have followed up on past work done by this Board on the city's child safe guarding arrangements which was a major focus in 2022/23 and safeguarding has also been a feature of our work on the MacAlister Review where we have focussed on the work being done to implement the recommendations. Leeds is clearly ahead of the game in terms of implementing the work of the review.

School attendance and performance has been a major theme with the 3As Strategy, SACRE Annual Report, a specific School Attendance Report and the Annual Standards report all given significant time and consideration in 2023/24. The Board was particularly concerned about increases in school absence rates and the role the pandemic has had in both increased and more complex needs and the need to develop approaches to meet the challenges posed by that.

I would like to thank Board Members for their ongoing commitment to make Leeds the best city in the UK for children and young people to grow up in. I would also like to thank the Executive Members, officers and partners for their contributions to the Board's work in 2023/24 and lastly the Principal Scrutiny Adviser, it has been a busy year and we have managed to accommodate all the various work items that board members have requested.

Councillor Dan Cohen
Children & Families Scrutiny Board Chair



Children and Families Scrutiny Board Work Schedule 2023/24

June	July	September
<u>Meeting Agenda for 7th June 2023 at 10 am</u>	<u>Meeting Agenda for 5th July 2023 at 10 am</u>	<u>Meeting Agenda for 6th September 2023 at 10 am</u>
Co-opted Members (DB) Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference (DB) Potential Sources of Work (DB) Performance Update (PM) Youth Justice Plan Update (PSR)	Impact of Vaping on Children & Young People (PSR) Inquiry Terms of Reference – Provision of EHCP Support (PM/PDS) Annual Standards Report (PDS) SACRE Annual Report (PM)	The independent review of children's social care (Macalister Review) – Implementation Update (PM) Impact of asylum changes on children (PSR) Provision of EHCP support – Terms of Reference (PM/PDS)
Additional Sessions		
		Working Group: Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Working Group – 22 September 10.00AM

October	November	January
<u>Meeting Agenda for 4th October 2023 at 10 am</u>	<u>Meeting Agenda for 29th November 2023 at 10 am</u>	<u>Meeting Agenda for 24th January 2024 at 10 am</u>
Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Update (PSR) School Attendance Update (PM) Impact of Vaping on Children and Young People (PSR) Provision of EHCP Support Working Group feedback (PM/PDS)	Impact of Vaping on Children and Young People (PSR) Children and Families Transformation Agenda (PDS) Refresh of the Leeds 3As Strategy (PDS)	Performance report (PM) 2024/25 Initial Budget Proposals Financial Health Monitoring (PDS/PSR) Provision of EHCP Support Working Group feedback & Inquiry Session (PM/PDS)
Additional Sessions		
	Working Group: Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Working Group – 23 November 10.00AM	Working Group: 2023/24 Initial Budget Proposals 19th December 2023



Children and Families Scrutiny Board Work Schedule 2023/24

February	March	April
<u>Meeting Agenda for 22nd February 2024 at 2 pm</u>	<u>Meeting Agenda for 27th March 2024 at 10 am</u>	<u>Meeting Agenda for 18th April 2024 at 1.30 pm</u>
<p>Leeds Child Poverty Strategy Update (PSR)</p> <p>Voice and Influence Team – hearing the voices of Young People (PSR)</p> <p>Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Session (PM/PDS)</p>	<p>The independent review of children’s social care (Macalister Review) – Implementation Update (PM)</p> <p>Impact of asylum changes on children – Follow Up (PSR)</p> <p>Draft Inquiry Report – Provision of EHCP Support (PM/PDS)</p>	<p>Inquiry Report – Provision of EHCP Support (PM/PDS)</p> <p>Children and Families Scrutiny Board End of Year Summary Statement (DB)</p> <p>Co-opted Membership – Review (DB)</p>
Additional Sessions		

More information about Leeds City Council's Scrutiny Service, along with the activity and membership of individual Scrutiny Boards, can be found on the Council's committee webpages.

You can also follow @ScrutinyLeeds on twitter.



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Work Programme

Date: 18 April 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year. In doing so, the work programme should not be considered as fixed and rigid, it should be recognised as a document that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.
- The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules also state that, where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards will include ‘to review how and to what effect consideration has been given to the impact of a service or policy on all equality areas, as set out in the Council’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme.’
- Reflecting on the information in this report, members are requested to consider and discuss the Board’s work programme for this municipal year, consider items to be recommended to the successor Board in 2024/25 and note the draft meeting dates for next year.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board’s work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- b) note the draft meeting dates for 2024/25
- c) agree the items to be recommended to the successor board in the 2024/25 municipal year

What is this report about?

1. A draft work programme for the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the document are known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, as well as other areas of work identified by the Board over the course of the municipal year.
2. The Executive Board meeting in April takes place the day before this meeting of the Scrutiny Board meaning the minutes are not available for consideration in the usual manner. These will be presented to the next meeting to pick up any issues that members may feel requires consideration by the Board.
3. Members will note some adjustments to the work programme since the last meeting in March. A report on the draft Youth Justice Plan was planned to come to this board meeting as part of the council's budget and policy framework procedures. However, due to timing issues in relation the publication of guidance from the Youth Justice Board and the requirement for additional consultation with stakeholders this will be considered at the Board's June meeting.
4. In consultation with the Chair the following dates are proposed for the next municipal year for Board member information, these are:
 - Wednesday 12 June at 10.30AM
 - Wednesday 3 July at 10.30AM
 - No Meeting in August
 - Wednesday 4th September at 10.30AM
 - Wednesday 9th October at 10.30AM
 - Thursday 14 November at 10.30AM
 - No Meeting in December
 - Wednesday 29 January 2025 at 10.30AM
 - Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 10.30AM
 - Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 10.30AM
5. Where possible Wednesdays are the chosen day of the week as has been common practice with two exceptions and members will note a slightly later start time of 10.30AM.
6. The Board has had a busy year and following Board discussion on the various items that the Board has considered in 2023/24 these work items are identified as issues the successor board may wish to consider subject to work programming priorities, these are as follows:
 - Youth Justice Plan (June meeting due to budget and policy framework requirements)
 - Youth Vaping Update
 - Impact of Asylum Changes on Children and Young People in Leeds
 - EHCP and SEND Services Review
 - Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Update
 - The independent review of children's social care (Macalister Review) – Implementation Update

What impact will this proposal have?

7. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

8. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

9. To enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to maintain dialogue with the Directors and Executive Board Members holding the relevant portfolios. The Vision for Scrutiny also states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny Officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.

What are the resource implications?

10. Experience has shown that the Scrutiny process is more effective and adds greater value if the Board seeks to minimise the number of substantial inquiries running at one time and focus its resources on one key issue at a time.
11. The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council also recognises that like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met.
12. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:
- Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
 - Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
 - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

13. There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

What are the legal implications?

14. This report has no specific legal implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft work programme of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Background papers

- None

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Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

June	July	August
Meeting Agenda for 7th June 2023 at 10 am	Meeting Agenda for 5th July 2023 at 10 am	No Scrutiny Board meeting
Co-opted Members (DB) Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference (DB) Potential Sources of Work (DB) Performance Update (PM) Youth Justice Plan Update (PSR)	Impact of Vaping on Children & Young People (PSR) Inquiry Terms of Reference – Provision of EHCP Support (PM/PDS) Annual Standards Report (PDS) SACRE Annual Report (PM)	
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

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Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

September	October	November
Meeting Agenda for 6th September 2023 at 10 am	Meeting Agenda for 4th October 2023 at 10 am	Meeting Agenda for 29th November 2023 at 10 am
<p>The independent review of children's social care (Macalister Review) – Implementation Update (PM)</p> <p>Impact of asylum changes on children (PSR)</p> <p>Provision of EHCP support – Terms of Reference (PM/PDS)</p>	<p>Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Update (PSR)</p> <p>School Attendance Update (PM)</p> <p>Impact of Vaping on Children and Young People (PSR)</p> <p>Provision of EHCP Support Working Group feedback (PM/PDS)</p>	<p>Impact of Vaping on Children and Young People (PSR)</p> <p>Children and Families Transformation Agenda (PDS)</p> <p>Refresh of the Leeds 3As Strategy (PDS)</p>
Working Group Meetings		
Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Working Group – 22 September 10.00-11.30AM		23/11/23 - Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Working Group – 23 November 10.00AM

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

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December	January	February
No Scrutiny Board meeting.	Meeting Agenda for 24th January 2024 at 10 am	Meeting Agenda for 22nd February 2024 at 2 PM
	Performance report (PM) 2024/25 Initial Budget Proposals Financial Health Monitoring (PDS/PSR) Provision of EHCP Support Working Group feedback & Inquiry Session (PM/PDS)	Leeds Child Poverty Strategy Update (PSR) Voice and Influence Team – hearing the voices of Young People (PSR) Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Session (PM/PDS)
Working Group Meetings		
2024/25 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS) – 19 December 2023 at 13.30 (remote working group)		
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

March	April	May
Meeting Agenda for 27th March 2024 at 10 am	Meeting Agenda for 18th April 2024 at 1.30 pm	No Scrutiny Board meeting
<p>The independent review of children's social care (Macalister Review) – Implementation Update (PM)</p> <p>Impact of asylum changes on children – Follow Up (PSR)</p> <p>Draft Inquiry Report – Provision of EHCP Support (PM/PDS)</p>	<p>Inquiry Report – Provision of EHCP Support (PM/PDS)</p> <p>Children and Families Scrutiny Board End of Year Summary Statement (DB)</p> <p>Co-opted Membership – Review (DB)</p>	
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring