

Report of The Children's Trust Board

Report to Children and Families Scrutiny Board

Date: 24/04/14

Subject: Report back to the Scrutiny Board on progress against the recommendations identified in the Scrutiny Committee Report on the Children's Trust Board.



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

The Children's Trust Board has sought to extend its membership in line with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, and is continuing to review the effectiveness and purpose of its sub-groups, boards, partnerships and forums.

The Children's Trust Board has improved Cluster performance, accountability and governance arrangements across the city and is enhancing the monitoring of the performance of clusters.

The Children's Trust Board continues to monitor and report on child poverty in the city through the Child Poverty Strategy and the work of the Child Poverty Outcomes Group.

Recommendations

That Scrutiny Board discuss the response of the Children's Trust Board to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny session in March 2013, and identify areas where further information or reports are required.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To report back to the Scrutiny Board on progress against the recommendations identified in the Scrutiny Committee Report on the Children's Trust Board.

2 Background information

- 2.1 In March 2013 The Scrutiny Board received a report on the history and development of the Children's Trust Board (CTB) and the subsidiary groups, committees, partnerships, boards and forums which support the CTB. Members were also presented with information to assist them in assessing strengths and areas for development for the CTB in respect of the three key questions agreed for the Scrutiny reviews of Strategic Partnership Boards.

- 2.2 What contribution the Partnership Board is making to tackle poverty and inequality, and the progress being made against this?

How successfully the Board's partnership arrangements are working?

To what extent are significant benefits being seen from partnership working? How has partnership working ensured increased pace of change to address the issue in hand?

- 2.3 The final report of the Scrutiny Board made 5 recommendations. Progress against each of these recommendations is summarised in section 3 below.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 ***Recommendation 1 – That the CTB further extends membership of the board to incorporate representation from Adult Social Services and private/voluntary sector Early Years Services.***

- 3.2 Early years engagement is being established through the revised Early Years Board which is part of the Learning Leeds framework for tackling the Council priority of raising educational outcomes. Adult Social Care representation at the CTB has been established.

- 3.3 ***Recommendation 2 – That the CTB undertake to regularly review the effectiveness and purpose of its sub-groups, boards, partnerships and forums to ensure that they are operationally effective, fit for purpose and contribute to producing significant benefits and outcomes for the children and young people of Leeds.***

- 3.4 The Children's Trust Board is currently discussing various changes to the strategies for delivering the Children and Young People's Plan. These include the establishment of a Best Start in Life group to deliver against the strategic commitment to focus on the earliest period in a child's life, from preconception to aged 2 years, in order to maximise the potential of every child. Analysis shows that economic investment into the early years gives the greatest return and impacts on key outcomes such as emotional well being, improved behaviour, school readiness and educational achievement.

- 3.5 Alongside this initiative there is a refreshed approach to integrated commissioning to minimise the affects of poverty, and support positive transitions for children and destinations for young people to adulthood across education, skills and health. A focus on prompt and targeted interventions, to prevent issues and problems becoming acute, chronic and costly to the child, young person, the family and the wider community is provided by the Early Help initiative.
- 3.6 Although research shows that the most impact can be made during a child's early years, early help is not just for very young children as problems may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence. Early help may be provided through an increase in the levels of universal services, or services provided or commissioned in clusters; this includes family support provided by schools and third sector services.
- 3.7 Raising educational outcomes, particularly narrowing the gap for vulnerable groups is central to the work of the revised groups that make up the Learning Leeds partnership.
- 3.8 As soon as work on the key initiatives needed to help to continue to deliver the CYPP in the face of challenges such as population growth, welfare reform and child poverty is finalised the CTB and Children's Services Directorate will complete the review of the various boards and forums.
- 3.9 ***Recommendation 3 – That the CTB undertake to improve Cluster performance, accountability and governance arrangements across the city in order to provide the best possible support for children and young people in the city.***
- 3.10 A report to the CTB on 5 September 2013 set out the framework for refreshing cluster performance, accountability and governance arrangements. In support of this the report proposed the setting up of a Review and Support Sub-group of Schools Forum to take an overview of how funding to clusters is spent along with a revised governance timetable. This group has now been established with agreed terms of reference and has started meeting on a regular basis.
- 3.11 ***Recommendation 4 – That the CTB ensure value for money by monitoring the performance of clusters in order to identify if the investment in this methodology is making a difference and effectively meeting the needs of children and young people in the City.***
- 3.12 The CTB has the strategic responsibility to ensure that the work of clusters makes an effective contribution to delivering on the priorities in the children and young people's plan. The CTB receives regular information about progress on all the CYPP priorities which is supported by regularly produced dash boards which support discussion around the performance of clusters

Alongside this, as identified above, Schools Forum has recently established a Review and Support sub-group which has a key role in ensuring that funding is spent in an appropriate and timely manner which benefits the children and young people living in each cluster. In support of this, the sub-group's role is to receive

and review cluster business plans including information about surpluses and deficits and to approve the release of schools forum funding to clusters.

- 3.13 ***Recommendation 5- That the CTB reports back to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in 2013/14 on the mechanisms for monitoring and reporting child poverty in the city. This report should also identify how the impact of initiatives put into place to reduce child poverty is measured.***

- 3.14 The original Leeds Child Poverty Strategy 2011-14, developed as a response to the Child Poverty Act 2010, identified 6 priorities. In the light of national guidance from the Child Poverty Unit the six priorities in the original strategy have evolved into the current approach of tackling child poverty via 5 “blocks” or priorities:

Best start in life. The current focus of this block includes: good level of development in the foundation stage; narrowing the gap at foundation stage; Early Start pathways and services; Children’s Centre services, including debt and personal advice; Infant mental health and Infant Mortality; Obesity; Family Nurse Partnerships; pathways for those at risk of becoming looked after and at risk from substance misuse.

Housing. The current focus of this block includes reducing the number of children and families in temporary accommodation; avoiding children becoming looked after where housing is a major factor; putting the interests and safety of children at the heart of housing practice.

Neighbourhoods. The current focus of this block includes substance misuse programmes, including work with high impact alcohol users, training and support around domestic violence; assistance for Foodbank developments; Free School Meal initiatives.

Employment & Adult Skills. The current focus of this block includes: free school meal take up; partnerships with Jobcentres and businesses; work experience programmes.

Financial Inclusion. The current focus of this block includes: free school meal take up; affordable banking; debt and financial advice; welfare benefits advice; fuel poverty.

- 3.15 The Child Poverty Outcomes Group is a sub group of the Children’s Trust Board. The original terms of reference for the group agreed as part of the development of the 2011-14 strategy focus on the following areas: developing a child poverty strategy and action plan; identifying key indicators and monitoring progress against priorities and targets. As it is a statutory strategy Leeds City Council Executive Board approval is also required for the Child Poverty Strategy.
- 3.16 Minimising the affects of child poverty is central to the outcomes, priorities and indicators set out in the Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-15. Tackling poverty is also an outcome and objective in the Best Council Plan.

Citizens@Leeds: Developing a new approach to poverty and deprivation

- 3.17 The Council recently adopted a new approach to tackling poverty and deprivation through the Citizens@Leeds agenda. This dovetails with the child poverty agenda. Four key propositions have been developed as the building blocks for a city-wide response to tackling poverty and deprivation.
- The need to **provide accessible and integrated services**;
 - The need to **help people out of financial hardship**;
 - The need to **help people into work**; and
 - The need to be **responsive to the needs of local communities**.
- 3.18 **Accessible and Integrated Services** - Members agreed to introduce the concept of community hubs across the city that reach our citizens and provide the right mix of council and partner services each community needs in the most efficient manner. This will involve a more integrated approach to service delivery and maximise the use of the assets and service points that exist across the city e.g. joint service centres, one stop centres, housing management offices, libraries, children's centres etc. The new service will look to develop seamless delivery taking account of an individual's or family's wider needs at the first point of contact wherever possible. The community hubs will support the delivery of pop-up (e.g. in supermarkets and GP surgeries) and mobile provision to ensure that we can reach all priority communities across the city. We will also develop more on-line provision to enable those that wish to self-serve to be able to do so. This will free up time of our customer services officers to advise those most in need or those requiring more detailed or intense support. Members agreed that the first three community hubs would be developed in Harehills, Armley and Middleton.
- 3.19 **Tackling Financial Hardship** - Members agreed proposals to tackle financial hardship by redesigning the delivery of financial support schemes to provide an integrated system of benefits advice and personal service. Pathways of support are now being developed to help people achieve affordable renting, affordable fuel, financial inclusion, digital inclusion, live healthy lives and improve employability. Members also agreed further proposals to tackle high cost lenders and support the credit union to deliver its aim of becoming more accessible and competitive with high cost lenders.
- 3.20 **Helping people into work** - By using the Citizens@Leeds approach to provide easy access for citizens to training and employment advice and opportunities across the city; use the community hubs to improve, tailor and deliver training and employment advice services; use the integration of customer service officers and other front-of-house staff to offer advice, guidance and signposting to employment support services and skills programmes; target our employment activity at those most in need and those furthest from the labour market, and; use the council's position as a major employer to target jobs and opportunities to those most in need as well as influencing other employers in the city to do the same.
- 3.21 **Responsive to the needs of local communities** – This fourth proposition has a wider focus than deprivation and poverty but will have a significant impact and helps in the delivery of the first three propositions. It seeks to strengthen local democratic engagement and increase community engagement and involvement in

local decision making. The changes will see the development of Community Committees to replace the existing Area Committee arrangements. Built into these developments is the need for all services to think more locally; for more decision-making and budgets to be locally provided; and for the work and decisions of local members through the Community Committees to have improved recognition so that local people are more aware of actions, decisions and funding provided for local communities.

Citizens@Leeds, Children's Services and the Child Poverty Strategy

- 3.22 The Citizens@Leeds agenda is wide ranging and will impact on children and young people and their families and communities in all kinds of ways. However, it also includes a number of specific proposals that explicitly and directly relate to children and young people, for example,

Advice for those at risk of becoming NEET

- 3.23 In developing the community hub concept we will build on existing good work with local secondary schools to identify what additional support could be provided through the hub approach to provide employment and skills advice and support for young people at risk of becoming NEET.

Financial and personal support for care leavers

- 3.24 There are on average around 10-12 new care leavers each month and it is proposed to deliver a package of financial and personal support that helps care leavers move from care to independence. The intention is to provide support around managing a tenancy, financial inclusion, benefits advice and support, jobs and skills advice, education opportunities and healthy living options. Funding for an additional Welfare Rights worker has already been approved to work exclusively with Care Leavers to provide a central point for the identification of the package of support required by the care leaver.

Employment and Skills Advice for Care Leavers

- 3.25 As stated above, care packages will be delivered to support care leavers move from care to independence, which will include advice and support around employment and skills. The success of this work will rely heavily on meeting the aspirations of the care leaver and creating a relationship where the care leaver is motivated to engage and contribute.

Integrated face to face provision of a range of Council Services

- 3.26 The provision of integrated and accessible Community Hubs will be critical to the new service of providing a 'whole system' approach to tackling poverty and deprivation across the city. This will involve a more integrated approach to service delivery and maximise the use of the assets and service points that exist across the city such as children's centres and one stop centres. The community hubs will support the delivery of pop-up and mobile provision to ensure that we can reach all priority communities across the city, including children and young people. The

Citizens@Leeds approach will therefore provide a clear focus on a single customer experience, irrespective of the service accessed, the member of staff dealing with the issue, or the location(s) being used to access the service.

Integrating the financial support, advice and personal support to deliver the 6 anti poverty strands

- 3.27 A key objective of Citizens@Leeds will be to facilitate delivery of local solutions that integrate benefits, advice and personal support to provide pathways out of financial hardship. We need to change the way we provide financial support, advice and personal support so that we provide support solutions that reflect the issues affecting our citizens now and for the foreseeable future. The overall aim of this approach will be to integrate financial support, advice and personal support to deliver pathways to the six anti-poverty strands – affordable renting; affordable fuel; financial inclusion; digital inclusion; healthy lives; and improved employability. This approach will be delivered locally via Citizens@Leeds community resource hubs in partnership with public sector services, advice agencies and third sector organisations.

Levels of child poverty in Leeds, the impact of initiatives & the refresh of the Child Poverty strategy

- 3.28 The latest available figures (HM Revenue and Customs, 2011) show that in Leeds approximately 22% (34,535) of all children experience child poverty (defined as households earning less than 60% of median income). Three wards have over 40% of children living in poverty - **Hyde Park and Woodhouse (45%); Burmantofts and Richmond Hill (43)% and Gipton & Harehills (40%)**. It should be noted that these figures do not reflect the impact of austerity budgets, particularly the current programme of welfare reforms. Research published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (January 2014) shows the number of households living on incomes below the level needed to afford an adequate standard of living has increased by a fifth (900,000) in three years. Income adequacy is measured by the Minimum Income Standard, which is what the public think we all need for a minimum socially acceptable standard of living in the UK. Families with children are the most likely to be living below an adequate standard, especially lone parents.
- 3.29 However, child poverty is not just about the numbers below particular levels of income. Educational outcomes are a case in point. Overall outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with national levels of development, but there is a significant gap between the levels of development observed in our lowest achieving pupils and the average for Leeds. On the good level of development (GLD) indicator at the end of the Foundation Stage, performance in Leeds is above or in line with all core cities and above or in line with eight out of our ten statistical neighbour authorities. In Leeds schools 51% of children reached a good level of development. 52% of children nationally reached this level and 48% of children did so in statistical neighbour authorities and core cities. However, the gap between the lowest 20% of the cohort and the whole cohort remains significantly wide at 44.6%, compared to 36.6% nationally and 39.0% for statistical neighbours.
- 3.30 To give another example: the performance of pupils eligible for Free School Meals

(FSM) against the benchmark of 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and mathematics is 35% compared to 67% for non FSM. This gap of 32% compares to a national gap of 25% nationally.

- 3.31 Two refreshed initiatives for the next year of the plan are the Best Start in Life and Narrowing the Gap programmes. These aim to address some of the key obstacles to making further progress on the child poverty agenda by maximising the potential of every child. Particularly through shifting some investment and resources to a focus on children from pre conception to their 2nd birthday.
- 3.32 Analysis shows that investment here gives the greatest return, impacting on key outcomes such as emotional well being, improved behaviour, school readiness, and educational achievement. This will run in parallel to renewed initiatives to narrow education gaps that materialise later in a child's life, and often combine with relative poor outcomes upto the age of 2 to lay the foundations for multiple poor outcomes. This will involve a range of universal and targeted services tackling issues such as domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health, and working with clusters of partners at local level to deliver early help.
- 3.33 The Child Poverty Outcomes Group and the Children's Trust Board are currently working on how best to take the child poverty strategy forward in the light of major, complex challenges such as welfare reform, changes to Council budgets, population growth, the role of lead members for Children's services and Area Committees, links to the Citizens@Leeds agenda, proposals to refresh the approach to narrowing the gap in key health and educational outcomes, work on youth hubs, the city wide programme for More Jobs- Better Jobs

4 Corporate Considerations

Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 No issues arising directly from this report.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2 The Council's revised approach to Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration impact assessments includes consideration of measures to tackle poverty. All major decisions are accompanied by impact assessments.

Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3 The Children's Trust Board oversees the delivery and development of the Children and Young People's Plan. One of the sub groups of the Children's Trust Board is the Child Poverty Outcomes Group. The original terms of reference for the group agreed as part of the development of the 2011-14 strategy focus on the following areas: developing a child poverty strategy and action plan; identifying key indicators and monitoring progress against priorities and targets. As it is a statutory strategy Leeds City Council Executive Board approval is also required for the Child Poverty Strategy.
- 4.4 The current CYPP covers the period 2011-15. An annual refresh of the CYPP is agreed by the Children's Trust Board. In the Spring of 2015 a new plan will be

developed and the final agreed proposed plan will need to be approved by full Council.

- 4.5 The CYPP is central to the delivery of the Best Council Plan. The latest refresh of the Best Council Plan from a children's services perspective includes outcomes and priorities for child friendly city, narrowing the educational outcomes gaps, improving the supply of school places, best start in life, tackling poverty and the 3 obsessions.

Resources and value for money

- 4.4 No issues arising directly from this report

Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5 None.

Risk Management

- 4.6 No issues arising directly from this report

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Children's Trust Board has sought to extend its membership in line with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, and is continuing to review the effectiveness and purpose of its sub-groups, boards, partnerships and forums.
- 5.2 The Children's Trust Board has improved Cluster performance, accountability and governance arrangements across the city and is enhancing the monitoring of the performance of clusters.
- 5.3 The Children's Trust Board continues to monitor and report on child poverty in the city through the Child Poverty Strategy and the work of the Child Poverty Outcomes Group.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Scrutiny Board discuss the response of the Children's Trust Board to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny session in March 2013, and identify areas where further information or reports are required.