

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Inquiry into services for 8-13 year olds in Leeds

Terms of reference

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Leeds Children and Young People's Plan sets out local priorities and actions to deliver universal and targeted services to all children and young people aged 0-19, and older for those with special needs.
- 1.2 Within this framework, the Scrutiny Board has identified the 8-13 age group as a key target group. Early years and youth services are well established services with recognised target age ranges at either end of the 0-19 age spectrum. There is now a need to extend this approach to join up in the middle in a more formalised manner.
- 1.3 During the Board's early work programming discussions with executive members and the Director of Children's Services, the need to develop universal provision for this age group emerged as a key theme. The Scrutiny Board was also aware that the Children's Fund would be integrated into the mainstream children's trust arrangements from April 2008.
- 1.4 This complements the strong conclusion of the Board's inquiry on youth services, carried out last year, which was that there needed to be more investment in universal and targeted services for the 8-13 age group, and that seeking to re-engage young people and their families in structured provision and support at 13-plus was often very difficult.
- 1.5 This is not to suggest that there is no provision for the 8-13 age group currently, but to identify that there is a need for a more formalised approach to ensuring that the full range of services is extended across the whole 0-19 age range, by enhancing current levels of provision for the 8-13 age group. Much of this delivery will be channelled through extended schools.
- 1.6 In order to decide on an appropriate and manageable focus for the inquiry, the board commissioned a small working group from amongst its membership to scope the inquiry. The working group met with the council's Acting Chief Officer for Early Years and Youth Service on 31st July.
- 1.7 The working group discussed the strategy for achieving a more joined up service framework so that there is a smooth transition and continuity of opportunities, involvement and support for young people and their families from 0-19.

- 1.8 Members also learned about the statutory impetus provided by the new requirement within the Childcare Act to provide information for children and families covering the 0-19 age group, combined with the new duty to provide a sufficiency of childcare up to the age of 14 to support working families.
- 1.9 In addition, Members touched on the Leeds Play Strategy which was agreed in March 2007.
- 1.10 The working group were concerned to identify areas where the Scrutiny Board's input could add value to the development of services for 8-13 year olds in Leeds, having regard to the proposed timescale for the inquiry.
- 1.11 The group identified a number of aspects of the 'infrastructure' necessary to successful delivery of universal and targeted services for 8-13 year olds, and suggested that the Scrutiny Board's inquiry could focus on these areas, which are set out in section 2.1 below. Many of these themes (such as the provision of quality, accessible information) have formed key strands of inquiries by the Board on a range of topics in the past.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the provision required to deliver a comprehensive range of universal and targeted services for 8-13 year olds and their families in Leeds. The inquiry will focus on the following areas:

- Meeting the requirement to provide information for children, young people and families
- The use of assets, particularly schools but also other buildings, to deliver services
- Governance models in relation to extended schools
- The role of councillors in supporting and promoting local delivery of services for 8-13 year olds
- The opportunities that are available for young people aged 8-13 to participate in decision-making and influence issues that affect them
- The infrastructure required to deliver the play strategy

3.0 Comments of the relevant director and executive members

3.1 The following comments were received and have been reflected in the terms of reference:

"Thank you for deciding to look into this issue for your review. We look forward to working with Members and supporting this work. The terms of reference provide a helpful starting point. May I suggest that to strengthen the impact the review can make you might like to include in

the scope of the inquiry a specific reference to looking at what opportunities are available for young people aged 8-13 to participate in decision-making and influencing issues that affect them. Increasing young people's participation is a key aspect of how we want to develop children's services and an area where, whilst there is a range of existing good practice that members can look at, we also know that we can do more. Members' ideas around opportunities to do this would be helpful."

4.0 Timetable for the inquiry

- 4.1 The inquiry will take place between October and December 2007, with a view to issuing a final report in spring 2008.
- 4.2 It is envisaged that the inquiry will take place over four sessions. The inquiry will conclude with the publication of a formal report setting out the board's conclusions and recommendations.
- 4.3 It is planned that the inquiry will include a range of visits to service providers to complement the evidence gathered in formal sessions.

5.0 Submission of evidence

- 5.1 The following evidence will be considered by the Board

5.2 Session One – 11th October 2007

To consider background information on the development of services for 8-13 year olds as context for the inquiry

To consider information on the development of extended schools/extended services across Leeds

To receive information on the provision delivered by extended schools during the school summer holidays

To consider the governance issues associated with the development of extended schools/extended services

5.3 Session Two – 11th October 2007

To consider the requirement to provide information for children, young people and their families, and how that requirement is best fulfilled.

5.4 Visits

Exact locations to be confirmed. Will probably include one or more extended schools clusters. May also include parenting support provision. Possible 'information' search focused on half-term activities.

5.5 **Session Three – 6th December 2007**

To consider the perspective of other agencies involved in delivering services for 8-13 year olds, for example

- Voluntary, community and faith sector providers
- Youth Offending Service/‘All Relatives’

To consider opportunities for young people aged 8-13 to participate in decision-making and influence issues that affect them

To consider the infrastructure required to deliver the Play Strategy for Leeds

5.6 **Session Four – 6th December 2007**

To discuss the role of councillors in supporting and promoting local delivery of services for 8-13 year olds

To consider any issues arising from sessions one and two

To consider members’ findings from the visits and to discuss issues arising from the visits with officers

To consider the board’s emerging conclusions and recommendations to inform the production of the final inquiry report

6.0 **Witnesses**

6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Director of Children’s Service Unit staff
- Early Years and Youth Services staff
- Children’s Information Service staff
- Education Leeds staff
- Development Department (in relation to the play strategy)
- Voluntary, community and faith sector organisations involved in provision for 8-13 year olds (to be coordinated through the Leeds Voice Forum)
- Children and Young People’s Involvement Advocates
- Leeds Play Network
- School/governing body representatives
- Leeds Youth Offending Service
- Young people and families (through visits)

7.0 Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Following the completion of the scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 7.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

8.0 Measures of success

- 8.1 It is important to consider how the Board will deem whether its inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 8.2 The Board will look to publish practical recommendations.