

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Services for children with disabilities, special educational needs and additional health needs – Inquiry into Service Redesign

Draft Terms of reference

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In March 2010 the Executive Board considered a review of the organisation of children's services delivery in Leeds, and agreed to create a single Integrated Children's Service within the council by 1 April 2011. This will bring Education Leeds back into the council.

The preparations for this structural change coincide with a period of severe financial challenge within the public sector, creating both the opportunity and the necessity to consider changes in the way services are provided to become more efficient. In some areas of children's services this work is being extended beyond those services directly delivered by the council to include for example health provision.

In discussing priority areas of work for the coming year, the Children's Services Scrutiny Board agreed in June 2010 that it would carry out an inquiry into the proposed redesign of services, taking the provision of services for children with disabilities, special educational needs and additional health needs (and their families) as our focus.

However, whilst the economic climate and the change in council structure are important issues, our main motivation in undertaking this piece of work is to examine how a better integrated service can improve outcomes for children and their families locally.

Children with disabilities, special educational needs and additional health needs are some of our most vulnerable young people, and in many cases have complex needs which cut across these service delivery boundaries.

The Board will also maintain oversight of the progress of the overall programme to create an Integrated Children's Service as part of its performance management and accountability activity, but it will make a more detailed study of this particular project.

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 proposed range of services that will be provided in an integrated model
 - The balance of universal, targeted and specialist service provision for this group of children and their families
 - The potential benefits to children and families from the proposed redesign of services

2.2 The Board hopes that its findings will provide a timely and positive contribution to the management of change.

3.0 Comments of the relevant director and executive member

3.1 This inquiry was proposed following input to the Scrutiny Board on priority issues by the Director of Children's Services.

4.0 Timetable for the inquiry

4.1 The inquiry will take place in October and November 2010, with a view to issuing a final report in early 2011.

4.2 The inquiry will conclude with the publication of a formal report setting out the board's conclusions and recommendations.

5.0 Submission of evidence

5.1 The Board will receive evidence through a combination of formal Board meetings and smaller working group meetings or visits with stakeholders and relevant service providers.

5.2 Scrutiny Board meetings – 21 October and 18 November 2010

The following evidence will be required for the Board meetings:

- Background information about the client group for these services and how they are currently provided
- An outline of the proposed range of services to be provided in an integrated model
- Detail of the implementation plan and timescales for creating the new service
- The expected benefits to children and their families
- The expected service benefits
- The balance of city-wide and local service delivery
- The balance of universal, targeted and specialist service provision
- Information about how services will be provided – eg direct provision, commissioned or through personalised budgets
- The role of universal provision such as children's centres, extended services and connexions
- Transition to adult services (recognising the work carried out last year by the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board).

The November session will also include consideration of the findings from working group meetings and visits.

The board will then consider emerging conclusions and recommendations to inform the production of the final inquiry report

5.3 Working Group meetings and visits

These will be scheduled as far as possible between the two formal Board meeting inquiry sessions.

6.0 Witnesses

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

- Deputy Chief Executive of Education Leeds – project lead officer
- Representatives from relevant education, health and social care services
- Voluntary sector representatives
- Representatives from universal service providers such as children's centres, extended services, connexions
- Transition team

6.2 The following potential visits have been identified:

- South Leeds pilot and other current relevant local examples of integration
- Another local authority providing integrated services of a similar nature

6.3 The Board will also seek to obtain the views of children and young people and their parents and carers as evidence to the inquiry.

7.0 Equality, Diversity and Cohesion and Integration Issues

7.1 Where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by the 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 and Diversity scheme, and on the council's Cohesion and Integration Priorities and Delivery Plan.

7.2 The objectives of this inquiry particularly reflect the following theme from the council's Equality and Diversity scheme:

Service Delivery – Leeds City Council provides fair access to services which meet the needs of our diverse communities and individuals.

8.0 Monitoring Arrangements

8.1 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.

8.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

9.0 Measures of success

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 The Board will look to publish practical recommendations.