

Public Document Pack

Supplementary Information for Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Consultative Meeting on Wednesday 7th July 2021.

Pages 3 - 22 – : Agenda Item 5 (work schedule) – Draft Scrutiny Board report on tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families (July 2021).

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Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

scrutiny



Children and Families

Tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on
children and families

July 2021

Draft Report



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Children and Families Scrutiny Board

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Councillor B Flynn	(Adel and Wharfedale Ward)
Councillor A Forsaith	(Farnley and Wortley Ward)
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Councillor R Stephenson	(Harewood Ward)

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Mr E A Britten	Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham	Church Representative (Church of England)
Mrs K Blacker	Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Ms J Ward	Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Ms C Foote	School Staff Representative
Ms H Bellamy	School Staff Representative

Children and 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; putting children first and developing active citizens.

Queries in relation to this report can be directed to the Principal Scrutiny Officer supporting the inquiry:

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Further information about the work of the committee can be found here:

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Foreword

Foreword of the Chair

The disruption caused by the pandemic and successive lockdowns has clearly impacted on the daily lives of children and young people, resulting in lost routines and reduced social contact. However, the single biggest change for the majority of children during the pandemic has been not attending school.

The pandemic has also exposed and amplified existing inequalities facing children, meaning those already facing the worst life chances have felt the greatest burden from the virus. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board has regularly considered the local authority's Covid-19 response and particularly focused its attention on how the council and its partners are working collaboratively to support all children and their families, especially the most vulnerable, during this unprecedented and challenging period.

In doing so, it has been evident that consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders from across the city has been critical to the success of implementing necessary alterations to working practices, the successful transmission and uptake of rapidly changing guidance and ensuring that Children and Families has been able to continue to deliver high quality services in conjunction with its partners.

The magnitude of the impact on children and young people is yet to be fully understood but will be determined by many vulnerability factors that create existing inequalities such as development age, physical health and pre-existing mental health conditions, living in poverty or in the care system.

However, as we approached the end of the 2020/21 municipal year, the Scrutiny Board began to explore what the potential longer term impacts of Covid-19 are likely to be on children and their families and to identify what actions need to be prioritised now in order to begin tackling such impacts. In doing so, we sought the views of experts and from young people themselves.

As the Chair of the Scrutiny Board I want to thank all those elected members, council officers, partners and young people who have shared their professional knowledge, insight and personal experiences to help inform the Board's views and recommendations set out within this report.

Cllr Alan Lamb
Chair, Children and Families Scrutiny Board



Summary

1. Aims of the Inquiry

Best Council Priorities:

- **Supporting families to give children the best start in life;**
- **Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.**

- To consult the views of experts on what they regard to be potential long-term impacts of Covid-19 on young people in Leeds from the perspective of their service area(s).
- To consider the views of children and young people and hear directly from representatives of the Leeds Youth Council.
- To consider what priority actions are needed to help mitigate the long-term impacts.

2. Key Findings

- 2.1 Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board has maintained a key focus on the local authority's Covid-19 response, particularly in terms of how the Council and partners are working collaboratively to support all children and their families, especially the most vulnerable, during this unprecedented and challenging period.
- 2.2 As well as monitoring and helping to inform some of the immediate responses needed during the pandemic, the Scrutiny Board agreed to use its final meeting of the 2020/21 municipal year to also consider what the potential long-term impacts of Covid-19 are likely to be on children and their families and explore what further actions the council can actively take, along with key partners, to begin mitigating these impacts.
- 2.3 As attention becomes focused on longer term impacts of Covid-19, the Scrutiny Board acknowledges the potential widening of the gaps in outcomes and opportunities between vulnerable children and their peers. Covid-19 has also had a disproportionate impact on children and families from BAME backgrounds, due in part to the inequalities which already existed pre-pandemic. The longer-term implications are unknown but are predicted to be significant and as such the planning and implementation of support and resources by the council and its partners will need to take these disproportionate impacts into account.



Summary

- 2.4 This report summarises the key findings of the Scrutiny Board around specific issues that had been raised primarily during its discussion in March, such as the psychological impacts on children and young people; the impact and recovery needs surrounding lost learning, including the need to deliver a quality remote learning offer in the future; and the impact on early years.
- 2.5 In undertaking this piece of work, the Scrutiny Board was able to identify a number of areas where scrutiny has already played a key role and can continue to add value as part of its future work programme. This includes maintaining a key focus on recovery actions linked to education settings; tracking the implementation of the new Future In Mind Strategy; maintaining a focus on delivering the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy; and maintaining its commitment to resume its ongoing inquiry work in tackling school exclusions, elective home education and off-rolling.
- 2.6 However, the Scrutiny Board has also made a number of recommendations for the Director of Children and Families to take a lead in implementing, which are set out within this report.

Purpose of the Board's Recommendations

- Identifying pupils' learning gaps and new starting points and exploring how best to respond to that as part of the curriculum planning and delivery.
- Promoting uptake and maximising the use of Pupil Wellbeing Surveys.
- Helping children to become proficient readers, access the curriculum and read independently.
- Identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable due to their context.
- Encouraging alternative opportunities for those pupils who missed out on key events and celebrations due to the pandemic.
- Engaging scrutiny in the ongoing work aimed at identifying appropriate actions to support the Early Years sector and local children.
- Engaging scrutiny in the ongoing review of early help and prevention resources and programmes.



Summary

3. Recommendations

Recommendations to the Director of Children and Families

Recovering from lost learning	Work with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers to identify pupils' learning gaps and new starting points, and how they can best respond to that in their curriculum planning and delivery.
Maximising the use of Pupil Wellbeing Surveys	Actively promote the uptake of Pupil Wellbeing Surveys in schools and ensure that the directorate is considering the outcomes of the survey and refining its offer to schools to respond to them.
Reading to learn	Work with schools to ensure that pupils receive good quality phonics teaching enabling them to become proficient readers, access the curriculum and read independently.
SEND and vulnerable learners	Work with schools to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable due to their context.
Reunion opportunities	Encourage schools to explore reunion opportunities for those pupils that had missed key events and celebrations due to the pandemic.
Responding to research findings surrounding the impact on Early Years.	Actively engage with Scrutiny as part of the directorate's review of the findings of ongoing national and local research projects on the impact on the early years' market and workforce with the aim of identifying appropriate actions to support the sector and local children.
Review of Early Help and Prevention.	Actively engage with Scrutiny as part of the ongoing review of early help and prevention resources and programmes.



Part One

4. Inquiry Approach

- 4.1 The Children and Families Scrutiny Board agreed to use its final meeting of the 2020/21 municipal year to consider what the potential long-term impacts of Covid-19 are likely to be on children and their families and explore what actions the council can actively take, along with key partners, to begin mitigating these impacts.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Board's meeting took place on 3rd March 2021 and was held remotely due to national Covid-19 restrictions being in place. However, the use of remote technology had enabled the Board to engage with a wide ranging and significant number of contributors in this single session. The meeting was also webcast live to enable public access. Both the meeting papers and the webcast recording are accessible on the council's website ([Link to meeting papers and webcast](#)).

Inquiry Structure

Contributors were asked to consider the following:

- What they regard to be potential long-term impacts of Covid-19 on young people in Leeds from the perspective of their service area(s) or own experience?
- How they would prioritise actions to help mitigate such impacts?

Contributors to the Inquiry

- 4.3 The organisations represented during the Scrutiny Board's meeting on 3rd March 2021 are listed below. A full list of individual contributors can be found at Appendix 1.

Leeds City Council
Children and Families Directorate
Public Health
Leeds Youth Service

Partners

NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group

Councillors (Non-Board Members)

Cllr Johnathan Pryor (Executive Member)
Cllr Fiona Venner (Executive Member)



Part Two

5. Examining The Evidence

Capturing the views of children and young people

- 5.1 When Leeds first set out its vision to be a child friendly city, the Council listened to the ideas of thousands of young people of all different ages in terms of what would make Leeds a better city for them to play, live and grow up in. From this consultation, the '12 Wishes' were formed, which underpin the entire Child Friendly Leeds approach.
- 5.2 One of the original '12 Wishes' expressed by local young people refers to a child friendly Leeds being a place where '*children and young people express their views, feel heard and are actively involved in decisions that affect their lives*'.
- 5.3 During 2018/19, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board undertook an inquiry which aimed to take stock of the overall progress made since the launch of the Child Friendly Leeds initiative and ask the question 'Is Leeds a child friendly city?' As part of its inquiry work, the Scrutiny Board ensured that young people's views were being captured and particularly valued the role played by the council's Voice, Influence and Change (VIC) team in assisting to facilitate such engagement work with young people.
- 5.4 The Scrutiny Board therefore welcomed the assistance of the VIC team again during its meeting on 3rd March 2021 as representatives of the Leeds Youth Council, aged between 13 and 17 years of age, were invited to share with the Board their own views and experiences, as well as those of their peers and classmates linked to the broader work being undertaken by the Leeds Youth Council. Such insights have helped to inform the Scrutiny Board's conclusions and recommendations set out within this report.
- 5.5 The Board also acknowledged that since the beginning of the pandemic and the closure of schools, there has been a growing conversation on 'pupil wellbeing' in Leeds that has led to collaborative work between a number of Children and Families' Services, including the Health and Wellbeing Service and Educational Psychologists, to develop a dedicated set of wellbeing surveys.
- 5.6 The pupil survey findings are posted on the School Wellbeing Website each half term (www.schoolwellbeing.co.uk). However, the headline data arising from the latest

"As a city we have focused over the years on listening to the voice of children and young people and acting on what they tell us.....this is central to everything we do."

Director of Children and Families, Leeds City Council



Part Two

developed Early Years Survey; Parents and Carers Survey; and Pupils Wellbeing Survey was presented to the Scrutiny Board as part of the report from the Director of Children and Families.

- 5.7 In terms of identifying priority actions going forward, the Board fully supported the need to continue to listen to the voice of children and young people about their wellbeing and to ensure that there are effective mechanisms for leadership teams to be kept aware of emerging issues.
- 5.8 It was also noted that while the council's Health and Wellbeing Team has capacity to collate results every 6 weeks, they are not trained data analysts or qualified statisticians and therefore Members supported the need for further dedicated and skilled capacity to be identified in order to effectively and regularly analyse survey responses and report appropriately.
- 5.9 The Board acknowledged that while young people are resilient, it remains too early to tell the real extent of the impact of the pandemic on young people so recognised the importance of the Council and its partners to be guided in their response by what the data is telling them, alongside school knowledge and experience of their pupils.

The value of adopting a 'Think Family Work Family' approach

- 5.10 The Scrutiny Board acknowledged that potential changes to family dynamics, including additional pressures placed on parents and carers, will inevitably impact on the child. Members therefore recognised the value of adopting a 'Think Family Work Family' approach in terms of working with whole families to help reduce any associated negative impacts on children.
- 5.11 Linked to this, particular reference was made to the vital role played by the Early Help Hubs, which are multi-disciplinary teams based across three localities in the city; West, East and South Leeds. These teams consist of early help practitioners, Police and specialist coordinators in substance misuse, domestic violence and mental health.
- 5.12 While the work of Early Help coordinators are commissioned through Adult Services, Members welcomed their commitment towards ensuring that a whole family approach is applied to the families with whom they work, which means ensuring that the needs of the children are also being met.
- 5.13 Members learned that since the beginning of the pandemic, mental health coordinators within the Early Help Hubs have seen a high rise in anxiety across the board, but for those shielding this has brought added pressures particularly in relation to isolation, the pressures of home schooling and worries about contracting the virus.



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- 5.14 Issues surrounding digital exclusion and poverty were also highlighted as common themes picked up by the work of the coordinators, which had been further compounded by the pandemic as some individuals have lacked confidence in accessing online services, particularly if English is a second language, and so are choosing to wait until the end of lockdown before they access the appropriate services. This could therefore compound waiting lists and lead to delays in mental health needs being supported early.
- 5.15 Members welcomed the approach of the Early Help Hubs in prioritising the identification of initiatives which can help mitigate such impacts on workloads and waiting lists. It was also acknowledged that good partnership working has come about during the pandemic by the need to support the needs of families and that such work is continually developing. The Board also expressed an interest surrounding the ongoing review work being undertaken around early help and prevention resources and programmes.

Psychological impacts on children and young people

- 5.16 While the direct health impact of COVID-19 on children and young people is relatively low, the Scrutiny Board acknowledged the significant indirect impacts on social and emotional mental health, particularly evidenced by rising referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and bereavement services.
- 5.17 It was reported that a poll conducted for Barnardo's by YouGov and published on 30th June 2020 had reported a rise in issues related to mental health and wellbeing for at least one in three of the participating 4,000 children and young people. Over two-thirds said that not seeing their friends was one of the hardest things about lockdown. Emerging evidence (Anna Freud National Centre for Children & Families Report - December 2020) also indicated that young people with eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have reported a worsening of symptoms.
- 5.18 The Board noted that the National Youth Agency (NYA) also published a report "Out of Sight: Vulnerable young people: COVID-19 Response"¹ that detailed how young people's existing needs increased or were caused by the restrictions placed on them due to Covid-19. As a result, calls to help lines had significantly increased, with services reporting that mental health of young people has deteriorated due to school closures and not being able to access mental health support. The report also suggested that over a million young people were at risk from one or more of the "toxic trio" - addiction, mental health and domestic abuse.

¹ [Out of Sight? Vulnerable Young People: Covid-19 Response. National Youth Agency. April 2020.](#)



Part Two

- 5.19 Board Members were informed that the experience in Leeds had also mirrored these concerns, with youth workers hearing from young people that social distancing, which had led to their growing sense of isolation, had compounded and increased the issues they were facing.
- 5.20 The Board had welcomed the efforts of the Leeds Youth Service in working to find alternative ways to engage with young people and bring them together during the pandemic period and while young people had valued these opportunities, the preferred approach is still to have face-to-face contact.
- 5.21 The Leeds Youth Service had also been delivering a number of programmes through a range of youth work activities, including street-based youth work, with an increased presence of youth work teams in the communities of greatest need. Outdoor educational activity days were also being targeted at the most vulnerable children and young people to reduce the risk of placement and family breakdown during this challenging time. It was noted that the feedback from young people and staff has been really positive in terms of learning new skills, improving confidence and communication and teamwork. As such, the Board was pleased to learn that as the service continues to move into the recovery phase, it aims to expand this offer to other groups of vulnerable young people.
- 5.22 In November 2020, the Scrutiny Board had focused its attention on the work being undertaken to refresh the Leeds Future In Mind Strategy. In doing so, the Board supported the key priority outcomes proposed for the new strategy and praised the ongoing partnership approach, particularly with the third sector and other key services such as the Youth Service. Linked to this, the Board also gave a commitment to continue monitoring the implementation of the new Strategy, especially as the main focus will continue to be around support measures to address the psychological impacts of Covid-19 on children and young people.
- 5.23 The Board noted that issues around mental health and wellbeing has intersected all engagement work undertaken by the UK Youth Parliament throughout the pandemic period and has been the focus of its campaign work in recognition that it has had a hugely detrimental effect on many young people.
- 5.24 During its meeting in March 2021, the Scrutiny Board also heard directly from the Leeds Youth Council representatives who highlighted that the mental health of young people during periods of school closure and readjustment as schools reopen was identified as a key issue, as stress associated with adapting to new ways of working and reduced social contact with peers have amplified some of the problems young people were already facing. To address this, the Youth Council representatives felt that peer group sessions with pupils of a similar age and facilitated by teachers would be of great benefit as it would allow young people to discuss their experiences and concerns in a safe space.



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"I understand there is a normal level of exam stress that I would get to about this point, but I do believe that it would be significantly lower without Covid."

Leeds Youth Council Representative

5.25 It was acknowledged that students have also been increasingly concerned about the lack of certainty and clarity over how they will be assessed this academic year. Regardless of how assessment is implemented, students are reporting feeling anxious about how fair the process will be.

5.26 In January 2020, the Scrutiny Board had considered the national guidance surrounding statutory pupil assessments, having already relayed its own concerns in writing to the Secretary of State for Education and Ofqual. In maintaining these concerns, the Board had identified 4 key considerations to achieve fairness in the assessment approach and these were shared with the Children and Families Directorate to help inform a response to the DfE/Ofqual public consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded.

5.27 It was highlighted that young people had also felt that they had missed out on key experiences and milestones in their adolescence due to school closures, such as school leaver celebrations and work experience, as well as more regular social activities such as after school clubs.

5.28 Young people have also reported feeling a lack of closure on the last academic year – for example not having the chance to say a proper goodbye to school friends and staff before they transitioned to college.

"Having to leave high school without that closure, without that real goodbye is definitely something I've struggled with and I know a lot of my friends have as well...it is just difficult to move on to a new chapter of your life when you haven't really said goodbye and got closure on the last chapter."

Leeds Youth Council Representative

5.29 In recognition of the lack of usual rituals and support during periods of transition and the difficulties this has caused young people moving on to other educational settings, the Scrutiny Board supported the suggestion put forward by the Youth Council representatives for schools to work with previous pupils to look at opportunities to rearrange those lost events and celebrations.



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Delivering a quality remote learning offer in the future

5.30 All schools are legally required to have a remote education offer, with details shared on their website. However, remote education is not the same as on-line education. It is a broad term encompassing any learning that happens outside of the classroom, with the teacher not present in the same location as the pupils. Working through worksheets, reading practical textbooks and undertaking physical activity are all examples of remote education, as well as the live streaming of lessons or accessing pre-recorded on-line lessons. Although it is possible to receive a remote education without a digital device or internet access, the Scrutiny Board felt that the pandemic emergency had very much highlighted the added benefits and clear need for both.

5.31 While it was reported that there had been mixed experiences in terms of the remote learning provisions for schools and colleges in Leeds during the pandemic, the Scrutiny Board was also informed of a number of positive long-term aspects of home learning that have been identified by both pupils and teachers generally, such as the availability of online material to support revision and also in supporting and encouraging school refusers back into full time learning on-site.

"One of the positives from the pandemic is how remote learning has allowed for lessons to be recorded so that you can go back to them later. If that was to be continued then a lot of students would welcome that because it has been very helpful."

Leeds Youth Council Representative

5.32 The Scrutiny Board therefore emphasised the importance of ensuring that a quality remote learning offer is achieved across the city to continue maximising these positive benefits, but also in terms of being fully prepared should similar emergency incidents occur in the future.

5.33 Linked to this, Members were informed of the various government schemes to supply laptops and internet access to those pupils who do have them. However, it was noted that there are still many children in Leeds who do not have regular access to a digital device which is not a mobile phone. To help fill this gap, information was shared about the local schemes and initiatives also working hard to fill the gap by asking for donations and repurposing old equipment to give to families in need. The latest data reported from a survey of schools in Leeds found that 2045 pupils in 80 primary schools do not have a device and 757 do not have access to the internet; Of 16 secondary schools responding to the survey, 1690 pupils do not have a digital device and 262 have no internet access.



Part Two

The impact and recovery needs surrounding lost learning

- 5.34 The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned the Education Policy Institute (EPI) and Renaissance Learning to undertake research to examine the extent of learning loss experienced by primary and secondary school pupils in England during the 2020 autumn term as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. The DfE had published the first report from this ongoing research project on 24th February 2021². The timeliness of this report meant that some of the key interim findings from this research were able to be shared with the Scrutiny Board during its meeting on 3rd March 2021.
- 5.35 In particular, it was reported to the Scrutiny Board that this research - which had been based on more than 400,000 assessments from the current academic year - found that by the first half of the 2020 autumn term, pupils had experienced a learning loss of up to two months in reading (in primary and secondary schools), and up to three months in maths (in primary schools). There also appeared to be some regional disparities in the level of learning loss in reading, with pupils in the North East and in Yorkshire and the Humber seeing the greatest losses.
- 5.36 This research also found that, at secondary school level, learning losses in schools that have a high proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were around 50% higher than those schools with very few pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (2.2 months in schools with high rates of free school meal eligibility and 1.5 months in schools with low rates of free school meal eligibility).
- 5.37 The Scrutiny Board was informed that before the pandemic crisis, disadvantaged children were already 18 months behind their wealthier peers in their learning by the time they finished their GCSEs. It was therefore acknowledged that while the full impact of school closures on children's outcomes is not yet fully known, such closures are likely to have worsened the disadvantage gap.
- 5.38 To address this moving forward, the Scrutiny Board learned that the approach in Leeds is to consider quality rather than quantity. At secondary level, training will be focusing on supporting teachers to identify specific gaps in learning, to reteach content and to address misconceptions. The Learning Improvement service will also work with teachers to develop subject expertise and to reshape the curriculum so that there is a focus on the key concepts pupils need to understand in order to progress. At primary, there is an unremitting focus on early reading as this is the gateway to further learning and will aid catch up and independent work.

² [Understanding progress in the 2020/21 academic year. Interim findings. January 2021. Renaissance Learning, Education Policy Institute.](#)



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- 5.39 In addition to this, Members were pleased to learn that the Library Service is also working with the Children and Families Directorate to promote the Summer Reading Challenge and that there is also a planned research project in place with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to address the vocabulary gap at transition from primary to secondary schooling.
- 5.40 The Board also considered the broader efforts aimed at assisting pupils to catch up on lost learning that were linked to the government's own catch up programme. In relation to the 2020-21 school year, it was noted that the government's catch up fund was made up of two parts. The first part was £80 for each pupil from Reception to Year 11 inclusive in mainstream school and £240 for pupils in specialist settings. Schools were tasked to use their funding on evidence-based interventions based on their pupils' needs and also optional summer schools over the summer for secondary-aged pupils most in need of support. The Board was informed that a number of schools in Leeds had used this money to buy additional digital devices for pupils.
- 5.41 The second part of the fund relates to the National Tutoring Programme, which provides additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help. This part has two pillars of support. The first pillar is a system whereby participating schools will be able to access subsidised tutoring from an approved list of tuition partners. To aid the success of this approach, Board Members recognised the importance of ensuring that good practice is embedded in terms of teaching staff working closely with the tutors from the tutoring programme in considering the specific needs of their pupils. The second pillar is where trained graduates will be employed by schools in the most disadvantaged areas as academic mentors to provide intensive catch-up support to pupils, allowing teachers in these schools to focus on their classrooms.
- 5.42 With regard to the option of summer schools, the Board emphasised the importance of ensuring that any plans to arrange extracurricular activities should be based more on outdoor and fun activities as opposed to just holding additional lessons as this would help encourage take-up and also help to promote emotional wellbeing and self-esteem. While the Youth Council representatives agreed in terms of the approach, they also felt that more pupils would be interested if such events were planned after school once or twice a week rather than through the summer.
- 5.43 As part of the next step in the government's plans to boost education recovery, the Department for Education had announced on 2nd June 2021 that a further £1.4 billion was

"Everything has felt like school at the moment and so giving up summer to focus on, not school but more school-based activities, wouldn't be that successful. After school would be a lot more helpful and more people would attend I think."

Leeds Youth Council Representative



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also being invested, including £1 billion to support up to 6 million, 15-hour tutoring courses for disadvantaged school children, as well as an expansion of the 16-19 tuition fund, targeting key subjects such as Maths and English. £400 million will help give early years practitioners and 500,000 school teachers across the country training and support, and schools and colleges will be funded to give some year 13 students the option to repeat their final year. While this brings the total investment to over £3 billion, the Scrutiny Board also acknowledged the view expressed by the then Education Recovery Commissioner that more will still be needed to meet the scale of the challenge.

- 5.44 Moving forward, the government had also set out its intention to undertake a review of time spent in school and college and the impact this could have on helping children and young people to catch up. The findings of this review are to be set out later in the year to inform the spending review and will therefore remain on the radar of the Scrutiny Board.
- 5.45 The Board also acknowledged that over the course of the pandemic, there has been a significant rise in the number of Electively Home Educated (EHE) children and young people and that some of those families who had opted for EHE may not return to mainstream schooling. Members were assured that the EHE team continues to implement usual practice and protocols despite this increased volume including safeguarding calls / garden visits to parents, check-ins with social care and review of suitability of education plans as well as annual check-ins focused on year 11 and post-16 pathways. It was also noted that the Scrutiny Board would be able to consider this matter in greater detail as part of its separate ongoing inquiry into Exclusions, EHE and Off-rolling.

The impact on early years

- 5.46 The Scrutiny Board was informed that some of the psychological impacts for very young children are currently unknown in terms of brain development and socialisation in the context of Covid-19. These children have been social distancing for much or all of their lives and have therefore had limited opportunities to socialise with peers, family members or the wider community.
- 5.47 The Board therefore acknowledged that the developmental impact of social isolation and parental stress on infants and toddlers is an area that will require attention moving forward, highlighting the importance of providing additional support to Early Years providers.
- 5.48 Linked to this, it was noted that a number of national research projects are underway to assess the impact of the pandemic specifically on the early years' market and workforce. A team from the universities of Leeds and Bristol have also been awarded funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Leeds City Council aims to engage with these and review any findings to identify appropriate actions to support the sector and our children.



Appendix 1

Appendix 1: Contributors

The following individuals contributed to the Scrutiny Board's meeting on 3rd March 2021

Attendee	Organisation
Councillor Jonathan Pryor	Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
Councillor Fiona Venner	Executive Member for Children, Families and Adult Social Care
Saleem Tariq	LCC, Director of Children and Families
Julie Longworth	LCC, Deputy Director of Children and Families
Tim Pouncey	LCC, Chief Officer Strategy and Resources
Val Waite	LCC, Head of Service (Learning Inclusion)
Dave Clark	LCC, Head of Service (Learning Improvement)
Karen Jessup	LCC, Principal Educational Psychologist
Steven Ruse	LCC, Sustainable Schools Consultant
Erica Hiorns	LCC, Senior Secondary Improvement Advisor
Dr Jane Mischenko	NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group, Strategic Lead Commissioner for Children and Maternity.
Janice Burberry	LCC, Head of Public Health
Kathryn Ingold	LCC, Chief Officer / Consultant in Public Health
Lyndsey Mortimer	LCC, Service Delivery Manager, Families First
Victoria Fuggles	LCC, Youth Offer Lead
Richard Cracknell	LCC, Area Voice and Influence, Coordinator
Charlotte; Alannah; Attia; Ciara and Amelie	Representatives of the Leeds Youth Council

Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Tackling the long term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families

July 2021

Report author: Angela Brogden

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