

# 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'.

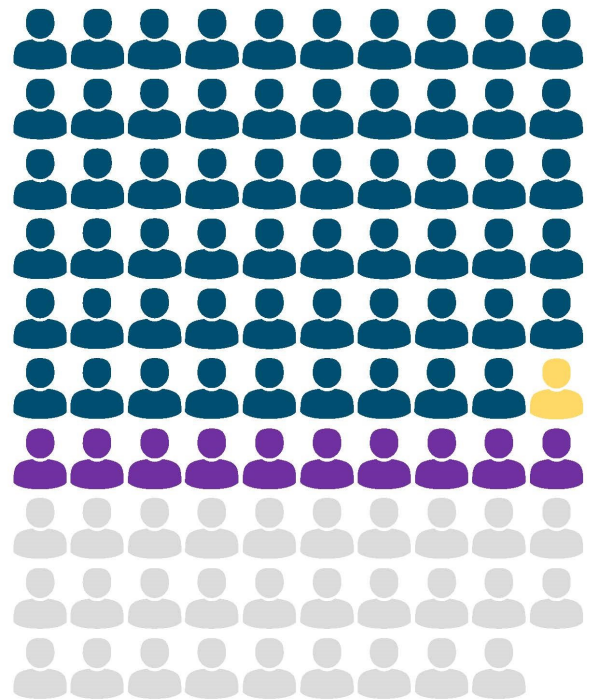
## Transparency & Accountability

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

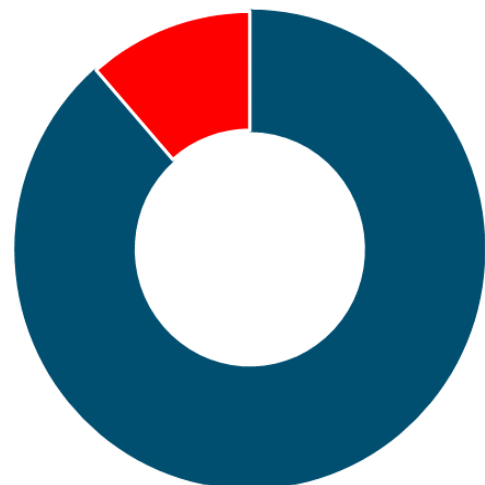
Membership of all Scrutiny Boards broadly reflects the political balance of the Council and cannot include members of the Council's Executive.

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
<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 10 am</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 10 am</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 10 am</u></a>
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)
<b>Additional Sessions</b>		
		<b>Working Group:</b> Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Working Group – 22 September 10.00AM

October	November	January
<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 10 am</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 10 am</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 10 am</u></a>
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)
<b>Additional Sessions</b>		
	<b>Working Group:</b> Provision of EHCP Support Inquiry Working Group – 23 November 10.00AM	<b>Working Group:</b> 2023/24 Initial Budget Proposals 19th December 2023



# Children and Families Scrutiny Board Work Schedule 2023/24

February	March	April
<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 at 2 pm</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 27th March 2024 at 10 am</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Meeting Agenda for 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 1.30 pm</u></a>
<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.**

