



## Appendix One

### Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

#### 1. Main issues

This report provides an update on the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy and progress of the workstreams that sit underneath the strategy. It also details our responses to the post pandemic and cost of living crisis, in terms of ongoing work, impact and next steps.

##### 1.1 Child Poverty Statistics<sup>1</sup>

The 2021/22 national and local statistics were published in March 2023. These are the latest statistics available.

It is recommended that these statistics are viewed as point in time estimates. These statistics should not be used to indicate trend analysis or for year-on-year comparisons due to smaller sample sizes and differing data collection methods carried out for surveys in 2020/21 and 2021/22 compared with previous years<sup>2</sup>.

In addition, the data referenced pre-dates the bulk of the cost-of-living crisis, meaning that although some costs had started to increase during the financial year 2021/22, the full effects of the crisis on income are not represented. Similarly, it should also be noted that the measures of poverty described take into account essential housing costs of; rent, mortgage interest, council tax, water bills etc, but do not include fuel bills.

A full detailed analysis of official Child Poverty data is contained on Appendix 2.

The 2021/22 data should be viewed as an estimate for the number of children living in poverty in Leeds and the UK. Key statistics:

- 4.2 million dependent children under 20 were living in relative poverty after housing costs (AHC). This equates to 29% of children in the UK.
- A higher number and percentage of all dependent children under 20 in poverty in the UK are from households where at least one adult is in work (3m out of 4.2m children equating to 70.6% AHC)
- In Leeds, 32,933 children under 16 were living in relative poverty before housing costs (BHC), equal to 22%
- Looking at the most recently available data, it can be said that even by the lowest estimate, 1 in 5 children under 16 in Leeds are living in poverty.
- 22% of Leeds' population is living in relative poverty after housing costs are deducted from income. This equates to approximately 178,630 people<sup>3</sup>.

Further to the official data, Child Poverty Action Group<sup>4</sup> published in June 2023 their annual report for the End Child Poverty Coalition by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University. This research uses the official poverty data from the DWP and HMRC alongside further administrative data and household surveys to estimate local area housing impacts. They are then able to produce local child poverty estimates after housing costs to highlight the disposable income that families have available to meet their living costs. Data from this report has shown, in Leeds during 2021/22, 55,780 children aged under 20 were living in relative poverty after housing costs are deducted from income. This is equivalent to 31.3% of children in Leeds and provides a comparable figure to the national child poverty rate of 29% of children in the UK being in relative poverty after housing costs.

<sup>1</sup> [Children in low income families - Local area statistics](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Technical report: assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the HBAI statistics for FYE2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> DWP, [Households below average income \(HBAI\)](#)

Please note: data collection for HBAI in recent years has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the figures produced are subject to additional uncertainty and are not comparable with previous years.

<sup>4</sup> [Child Poverty Statistics - End Child Poverty](#)

Analysis by Child Poverty Action Group<sup>5</sup> in March 2023 found

- 47% of children in Asian and British Asian families are in poverty, 53% of children in Black/ African/ Caribbean and Black British families, and 25% of children in White families.
- 44% of children in lone parents' families were in poverty.
- 42% of children in families with 3 or more children were in poverty, up from 36% a decade earlier.
- 36% of children living in families where someone has a disability were in poverty.

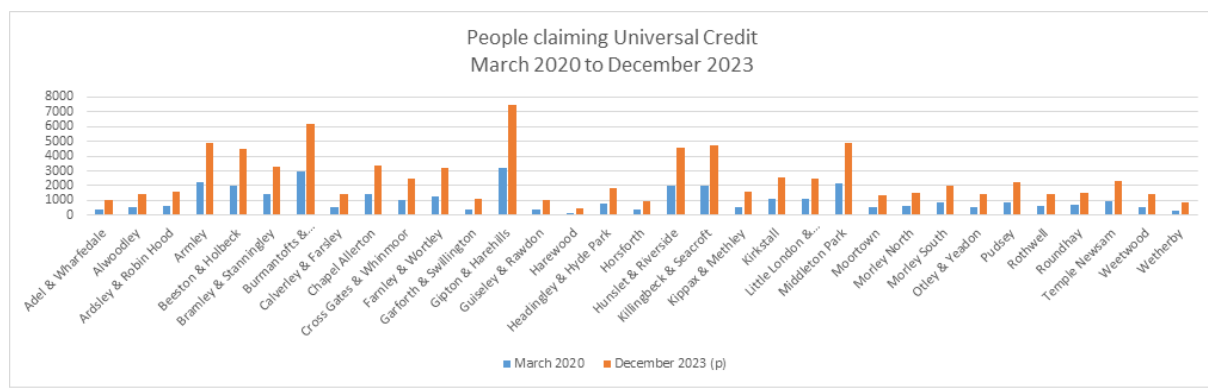
Child Poverty Action Group published research in March 2023<sup>6</sup> which estimates that child poverty in the UK costs £39.5 billion a year in lost tax and earnings, unemployment benefit and additional public service spending. This is up from £25 billion in 2008.

### Universal Credit

In March 2020, 35,450 were claiming Universal Credit in Leeds, this increased to a high of 74,515 people in March 2021. The latest provisional data shows that in December 2023, that figure has increased to 83,283 claimants, that remains more than double the pre-pandemic level.

All wards in Leeds have seen an increase in people claiming UC (Not in Employment), with the highest impact on our poorest wards. The most affected wards are Gipton and Harehills, where claimants have increased from 10.6% of WAP, 2,209 claimants in March 2020 to 22.3% of WAP, 4,641 in November 2023, and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward where claimants have increased from 11.0% of the working age population, 2,072 claimants in March 2020 to 20.3% of the working age population, 3,819 claimants in November 2023.

Below details the information by ward across for UC all claimants.



## 1.2 The impact of poverty on children and families

Poverty has a profound effect on families and children living in them. Children who experience poverty are more likely to face a wide range of difficulties, both now and in the future. There are strong links between experiencing poverty as a child and having worse mental and physical health, a shorter life, lower grades in education, poor financial health and lower paid, insecure work.

Poverty is most often defined by income. But for most children, poverty is about more than just money. It is about growing up in a home without enough heat or nutritious food. Poverty means no new clothes, no telephone and no money for a birthday celebration. These deprivations have consequences that can last a lifetime. Research shows that children in poor families are less likely to complete a good education.<sup>7</sup>

The cost-of-living crisis is having a severe impact on families with children. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the war in Ukraine, Brexit and austerity and inflation has all increased pressures on low-income households and the most vulnerable in society, as well as pushing many additional households to experience financial uncertainty and hardship for the first time.

<sup>5</sup> [Official child poverty statistics: 350,000 more children in poverty and numbers will rise | CPAG](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Cost of child poverty 2023.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Child Poverty in the Midst of Wealth | UNICEF Office of Global Insight & Policy](#)

A report published in September 2023 based on an Education Anti-Poverty survey of 1,023 professionals working in schools in England, organised by the Child Poverty Action Group<sup>8</sup> revealed:

- 79 % of school staff have to divert time from their allocated roles to combat child poverty, for example dealing with dinner money debt, sourcing food bank vouchers, hardship grants and home equipment like washing machines in families.
- Over half of teachers report an increase in the number of pupils struggling to concentrate on learning due to hunger and fatigue, compared to two years ago.
- 68% say more pupils don't have money for enough food at lunchtime.
- 74% say there's evidence that children growing up in poverty have fallen further behind their peers with their learning.
- 70 % of headteachers say more parents are asking for help with essentials like food and clothing.

In December 2023 Action for Children, working with the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), analysed UK government data on children growing up in material deprivation<sup>9</sup>. Key findings were

- In 2021/22, there were 2.6 million children in the UK growing up in material deprivation – meaning their families can't afford the items and activities considered essential to a happy and healthy childhood. That's almost one in five children (18%).
- 1.5 million children in material deprivation are also in families with an income below the official poverty line (10% of all children) – meaning they are even more likely to be growing up in severe hardship.
- Over half of the children growing up materially deprived are under 10 (58%). That's 1.5 million young children growing up deprived of the essential items and activities they need to get the best start in life – including 900,000 who are also living below the poverty line.
- Even before the worst of the cost-of-living crisis and energy price shock, there were 4.2m children in families that can't save at least £10 a month, 1.2m children in families that can't keep up with bills, and 800,000 children in families that can't keep the house warm.

New data was released in December 2023 which revealed the North /South divide of children hit by the 2-child limit on benefits.<sup>10</sup>

- Yorkshire and Humber among regions with the highest percentage of households hit by the two-child limit.
- 13% of children in Yorkshire and Humber impacted.
- 12 of the 20 UK local authority areas with the highest percentage of affected families are in the North of England.

A report in September 2023 by Barnardo's found an estimated 894,000 children (11%) are without a proper bed, impacting on their wellbeing and education<sup>11</sup>. A report published in April 2023<sup>12</sup> about overcrowding in homes by revealed that households from ethnic minorities backgrounds were 3 times more likely to be affected by overcrowding than white households.

In October 2023 October Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported<sup>13</sup> that approximately 3.8 million people experienced destitution in 2022, including around one million children.

- The number of children facing destitution since 2019 has almost doubled and is nearly triple the number in 2017.
- Lone parents with children were around twice as likely to experience destitution compared with their share in the UK population (11% versus 5%).

Research published in June 2022<sup>14</sup> suggests 10,356 more children living in English local authority areas became looked after than would have been the case had poverty levels remained at 2015 levels. The research

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<sup>8</sup> ['There is only so much we can do' - school staff in England | CPAG](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Going without: Almost one in five children growing up deprived of the basics | Action For Children](#)

<sup>10</sup> [New data reveals North/South divide of children hit by two-child limit on benefits - End Child Poverty](#)

<sup>11</sup> [No crib for a bed: the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on bed poverty | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [National Housing Federation - Overcrowding in England](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Destitution in the UK 2023 | Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(jrf.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Child Poverty & children entering care](#), The Lancet, June 2022

team's modelling showed that within English local authorities, between 2015 and 2020, a 1% increase in child poverty was associated with an additional five children entering care per 100,000 population.

To its extreme, poverty impacts on the mortality rate amongst children and infants. The National Child Mortality Database for November 2023<sup>15</sup> shows that deaths were highest for children of black or black British ethnicity and those living in the poorest areas. The National Child Mortality Database includes data from reviews of all children who die at any time after birth and before their 18th birthday. The database started in 2019.

- the death rates in the poorest areas were more than twice as high as in the richest.
- for infants under one year of age, the death rate for the poorest went up from 5.4 per 1,000 infant population in 2022 to 5.9 in 2023.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health president, Dr Camilla Kingdon, said: "*Figures such as these in a nation as rich as ours are unforgivable. Reducing child poverty must finally become a national priority... This has to be a wake-up call for us all and I urge our political leaders to action.*"

### 1.3 The Leeds Approach

We know that the feeling of being in poverty, the feeling of being excluded and the feeling of being ashamed can impact a child for the rest of their life. We don't want this in Leeds. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people. This is our moral imperative.

Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds was launched in 2019. The strategy was refreshed in 2023 with consultation with over 20 groups of Children and Young people in Leeds. As a result, the names and aims of each of the 7 workstreams have been refreshed to reflect new emerging and existing priorities as well as addressing the feedback and voices expressed. This includes addressing the stigma of poverty, improving access to food and other basic needs and increasing our communication around available services. This strategy will be launched in early 2024 and future governance meetings and will report on this.

#### Our Ambitions

- We will be innovative, together, to break down the barriers that poverty creates.
- We will be brave, together, to revolutionise the way that Leeds works with children, young people and families who live in poverty.
- We will fight, together, to ensure that every child and young person who experiences poverty can thrive.
- We will work together to tackle inequality across services and organisations, to find meaningful solutions for those experiencing poverty.

### 2.0 Main issues

This section provides an update on each impact workstream, the projects that sit within the impact workstreams and details responses to COVID-19, impact and next steps.

### 3.0 Financial Health & Inclusion

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every family to be equipped with the support, guidance and opportunities needed to live financially secure and stable lives.***

This workstream is led by Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare Communities and Environments.

The main projects are: Financial health and inclusion support directly to families; Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion; and Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support.

#### ***3.1 Priority 1: Increasing engagement in financial health and inclusion support directly to families.***

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<sup>15</sup> [Child death data release 2023 | National Child Mortality Database \(ncmd.info\)](https://www.ncmd.info/)

## **Update on recent activities.**

The key areas of activity for priority 1 are the Healthy Holidays programme, Household Support Fund, and Free School Meal uptake.

### **Healthy Holidays**

Healthy Holidays is a Department for Education funded scheme that delivers provision for children eligible for Free School Meals over the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays. The core of the programme is engaging children and young people with enriching, fun activities and a healthy hot meal, however the benefits of the programme are far reaching and long lasting. The multiplicity and varied nature of the programme within Leeds is a key strength.

The Leeds 2023 programme, for which we have received £3.5 million, has continued as in previous years, with provision being funded and delivered through schools, third sector organisations (managed by Leeds Community Foundation) and council provision through Community Hubs and Breeze.

Successful Easter, summer and Christmas programmes have now been delivered, and the team are currently evaluating the 2023 programme and planning the 2024 programme.

Additional support for the programme is provided by a range of Council and external providers enhancing the local offer and including Food support from Catering Leeds, FareShare, Rethink food, Hamara and Give a Gift; Active Leeds swimming catch up programme; Parks & Countryside's trips and visits to our Activity Centres as well as nutritional education support through Zest-Foodwise.

### **Household Support Fund**

The Department for Work and Pension's Household Support Fund is a short-term national funding stream, delivered by local authorities in England to support those most in need with the costs of food fuel and essential items. Now on its fourth round the fund for the first time has been extended for 12 months (previous rounds were 6 months). Leeds City Council received £7.1m to allocate between 1st October 2022 to the end of March 2023, and £14.2m from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

In Leeds the agreed approach is a mix of direct provision, application-based support and through support offered through third sector organisations and council services already working to help households most impacted by the Cost-of-Living crisis.

### **Free School Meals**

See data below.

## **Outcomes and outputs:**

### **Healthy Holidays**

The Healthy Holidays Programme in Leeds has a significant, beneficial impact upon the children and young people participating. Providers, especially schools, report ongoing and improved engagement from children and young people who have accessed the Healthy Holidays Programme; better transitions between primary and secondary education settings and reassurance in seeing children throughout Easter, summer and Christmas holidays from a safeguarding perspective.

For Easter 2023, the programme reached 5330 children and young people and served over 29,542 portions of food. The programme continued its success over summer by reaching 11,868 children and young people, exceeding our target of 10,000 children and young people. This summer 46 lead schools (65 schools in total), 48 third sector organisations and 16 council provisions took part in Healthy Holidays, reaching 8768 primary, and 3100 secondary school- aged children, with 76,500 portions of food served. Providers took up the offer of catch-up swimming through Active Leeds – 650 children attended 5 days of lessons at one of thirteen sites in the city. Christmas delivery programme is currently being evaluated.

*“Student 1- has an EHCP for extreme behaviour he really wanted to take part in summer school, so a staff member was with him at all times. Student A struggles to be in a classroom setting but he really engaged*

*will all the activities available. He was also very good at climbing and wants to sign up to a climbing club which school will financially support as a motivational tool going forward. Without summer school we would have never known he has a passion for climbing.”*

*“Healthy Holidays makes a significant difference in parents’ lives. For example, one parent was a new international resident in the local area therefore, Healthy Holidays was socially beneficial because it gave them access to families in the local area who can now act as a social support system. Parent F disclosed that she is currently undergoing cancer treatment therefore, Healthy Holidays has given their children purpose and something fun to look forward to, after having an emotional year”.*

*“I am so thankful for the support they have been able to provide for me. When I was informed about the help they can provide it was such a relief. Thank you does not cut it” Parent.*

## **Household Support Fund**

Between October 2022 and March 2023, Leeds received £7.1million of government funding to support vulnerable people with the costs of energy, food and essential items. The funding was used as follows:

- Support to Housing Benefit recipients not eligible for the £650 DWP Cost of Living payment- January/ February (approximately 600 households)
- £70 payments to working age people in receipt of Council Tax Support- Letters sent out w/c 5TH December (42,484 households)
- Additional funding to the Local Welfare Support Scheme and additional payments for people claiming Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Funding to Childrens services and Housing Leeds to support foster carers.
- Third sector support through Voluntary Action Leeds, Forum Central, Leeds Food Aid Network and advice organisations.

Leeds received £14.2 million for use between 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The funding is being distributed as per our Delivery Plan for 2023/24:

- Approximately £5.4m in direct cash awards to households in receipt of Council Tax Support who are on the lowest incomes in the city (this includes 16,999 household with children and an estimated 33,200 children). In addition, payments will be made to households solely claiming Housing Benefit who have missed out on DWP Cost of Living payments. These will be £900, paid at an equivalent rate to the DWP Cost of Living payments, and delivered in Winter 2023/24, anticipated to be paid by the end of January 24.
- Increasing funding for the Local Welfare Support Scheme, our application-based scheme supporting people in crisis, and additional payments to people applying for Discretionary Housing Payments demonstrating exceptional hardship. Almost £2m has been allocated to these areas of support.
- Winter support initiatives amounting to £234k- funding Public Health winter warmth priority projects and the welcome spaces network.
- Housing costs in exceptional circumstances for Housing Leeds tenants and distributed through Housing Leeds. Support for homeless households and those threatened with homelessness administered by Leeds Housing Options. £700k in total has been allocated for these initiatives.
- £500k has been allocated to Children and Families’. Proposals supporting a range of projects including 0-5’s in low-income households, care leavers, Roma families, section 17 and foster carers have been agreed.
- Third sector - £3.4m has been allocated as follows:
  - Voluntary Action Leeds to support the Leeds Community Anchor Network.
  - The Leeds Food Aid Network to support a wide range of food aid providers including the City’s Cultural Food Hubs and charities such as Zarach and Leeds Baby Bank.
  - Forum Central to support health and social care charities and grassroot organisations provide direct assistance to households in need.
  - Advice agencies to provide practical help to clients actively engaging with advice.
- The remaining funding will cover the administration of the scheme and any unspent funds will be used as flexible pot to support issues and projects which emerge throughout the year.

For quarters 1 and 2, April to the end of September 23, over £2.6m was spent supporting 53,144 households, over 52% of which included children. This spend was delivered through the Local Welfare Support Scheme, additional payments to people applying for Discretionary Housing Payments and through direct targeted support delivered by third sector partners. During Q3, 16,925 vouchers with a value of £100 were issued to households with children and in receipt of Council Tax Support. The redemption rate for this cohort of recipients stood at over 94% as of 31/12/23.

In July, all third sector organisations received their funding and they have started to roll out their programmes to coincide with the upcoming colder autumn and winter period and the time of greatest need. All of the projects funded offer practical support to households with essential costs, including food, fuel or both.

### **Free School Meals**

The number of children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM) has increased substantially over recent years. In January 2020 (pre-pandemic) 25,473 children were eligible. By January 2022 to 32,886 and latest statistics in January 2023 show an increase to 34,174 children. This increase is partly due to the introduction of transitional protection, introduced in April 2021 and currently set to be in place until the end of the roll out of Universal Credit in March 2025.

These statistics shows that 26.0% of pupils in Leeds were eligible and claiming a free school meal, up by 1.4% of pupils on the previous year. Nationally 22.3% of all pupils were eligible and claiming a free school meal, the national rate also increased by 1.4%.

Data from the January 2023 census showed take-up was at an average of 78.2% across all settings, which is a 1.4% increase from the previous year. Therefore 7,450 pupils entitled to an FSM didn't take their meal. UIFSM take-up is recorded at all three census dates, and whilst we saw an increase in take-up last year at 90.1%, 5,947 Reception and Key Stage 1 children missed out on their school meal at the May census.

To support schools to increase take up the Health and Wellbeing Service alongside Catering Leeds delivered a free school meals campaign in January 2023, this campaign will be relaunched in 2024.

Schools can also access a quick for increasing your take up on quick guide at the link below.

[A quick guide to increase your take up of school meals | School Wellbeing](#)

The Health and Wellbeing Service in partnership with the Council Tax and Benefits Service, will also provide training on in January and March 2024, to support schools with maximising the number of children who take up free school meal they are entitled too.

[Free school meals and tackling poverty in schools | Leeds for Learning](#)

### **Next steps:**

#### **Healthy Holidays**

Current priorities are evaluating Christmas programmes and supporting organisations to apply for 2024 funding. The team are also working with colleagues in the Councils IDS to improve the booking system for council provisions.

#### **Household Support Fund**

The focus remains the arrangement of payments for households in receipt of Council Tax Support, supporting the network of Welcome Spaces and other winter projects and working with Housing Leeds and Housing Options and on their priority areas. Childrens Services' delivery has been agreed and they are offering support to vulnerable families across their services.

#### **Free School Meals**

The Health and Wellbeing Service, in partnership with Leeds University are currently developing a survey to explore breakfast provision in Leeds schools. The survey will aim to map current provision, identify gaps and encourage more schools to provide a nutritious breakfast as part of their offer. Providing breakfast in schools can help to remove hunger as a barrier to learning.



The project will also aim to identify schools who may be eligible for free or subsidised breakfast offers and ensure they are maximising available funding. Phase one of the project will begin in early 2024.

### ***3.2 Priority 2: Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion.***

#### **Update on recent activities.**

In terms of engagement in wider support and guidance, current focus is on the Uniform Re-use scheme and gambling-related harm work.

#### **Leeds School Uniform Exchange (LSUE)**

Leeds City Council (Financial Inclusion Team) and Leeds Community Foundation have funded Zero Waste Leeds (ZWL) to bring a co-ordinated uniform reuse scheme to the city. The aim of the scheme is to reduce the number of uniforms sent to waste, reduce the stigma of wearing second hand clothing and tackling poverty through encouraging more families to reuse and donate rather than to feel pressured to buy new uniform every term.

Uniform exchange promotional events supported by ZWL now take place across the city, during half term and seasonal periods. Various regular weekly exchanges now also take place, alongside community groups and support services such as food pantries.

In addition to the uniform activities, ZWL coordinate the Winter Coat Campaign and established the 'Together for Sport' project, for the donation and distribution of sport kit and equipment.

#### **Gambling Related Harm**

Gambling-related harm continues to be a key priority for Leeds City Council through a strong partnership approach, led by Public Health and Financial Inclusion and working with wider Council services, treatment services and external partners.

The Leeds Gambling Harms Group is a citywide partnership bringing together services to collectively address gambling-related harm in the city. The group have identified 'protecting children and young people from gambling-related harm' as a key priority for the group. This has been built into the forward work programme and a specific working group was set up to identify projects to address this priority, building on work already undertaken. This working group meets bi-monthly.

Work is underway to review websites and gambling support information for children, young people, parents and guardians in Leeds, including MindMate, Leeds Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Making Every Contact Count (MECC) websites. Updated information will incorporate any emerging gambling trends amongst young people.

The annual "My Health, My School Survey" included questions on gambling for the fourth year running. Revised gambling questions were proposed for the 2022-2023 survey, taking into account feedback from clinical experts and young people and clinical experts. They have also taken into account emerging trends amongst young people, such as cryptocurrency, e-sports and skin-betting.

A survey carried out with staff in Secondary and Further Education settings found that there is a need for further training and support with gambling harm resources. In response to this, a training and resource package was developed in partnership with the charity Gambling with Lives and was piloted in Leeds in February 2023. 100% of attendees rated the session as excellent. Following the success of this training package, Leeds Public Health are commissioning a further session to support staff from primary schools, secondary schools and colleges, with a focus on those with a pastoral support role. This forms part of a wider regional pilot to develop a training offer around children and young people's gambling, without industry funding or influence.

Leeds City Council continues to roll out Harmful Gambling Guidance for all staff. This guidance aims to support staff experiencing gambling related harms, whether it is caused by their own gambling or that of a



loved one. Plans are being developed to roll this out across Anchor Employers in the city. A 'One Minute Guide' on Gambling and young people has now been approved for distribution to the Children's Directorate workforce. Online information on gambling harm has also been added to the MindMate website.

### **Leeds Money Information Centre (Leeds MIC) Resources**

A suite of online and printed resources is maintained, distributed and refreshed by the Financial Inclusion Team to assist families and frontline workers in accessing quality assured, free, confidential and impartial help and advice on a range of money related matters such as debt, energy, food and utilities. Resources are available online and in printed format. The printed resources are available in advice and health service locations and community hubs across Leeds.

### **Outcomes and outputs:**

#### **LSUE**

##### ***Leeds School Uniform Exchange Quarterly Update (Feb 2023)***

- Number of schools covered by a uniform exchange: 259 (85%)
- Number of Community Schemes: 13
- Number of weekly pop-up shops: 10

##### **Easter Holiday School Uniform pop-up shops:**

- Total amount of uniform given out: 1,374 items
- Total number of families helped: 219.
- Total Cost Saving: £23,358.00 (According to DfE Cost of School Uniform Report, the average cost of uniform is £17)

##### **Summer Pop Up Events:**

- Number of events/pop up shops: 98 (from the end of June to the first week in September 2023)
- Items given out: 16,714.
- Number of families helped: 2,787.
- Carbon Emissions saved: 60,170kgs CO<sub>2</sub>e saved - Equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub>e that would be produced from driving around the world 12.5 times.
- Cost Saving: £284,138 saved by families.

##### **Latest available data as of September 2023:**

- Number of schools covered by a uniform exchange: 223
- (74 school led, 43 parents led, 23 school lost property schemes, 50 schools covered by Community exchanges and 33 Facebook exchanges).
- Number of Community Schemes: 19; Number of weekly pop-up shops: 13.
- New additions to the LSUE website: 8 schools/schemes since May 2023

##### **Digital:**

- LSUE Facebook page: 3,226 members.
- Number of views to LSUE Facebook page: 26,745 (223% increase since May 2023)
- LSUE Website: 1,074 views - 73% increase from May 2023

**Donation points:** There are 24 uniform donation points across Leeds. In addition, Merrion House, Step Change, and Places for People are collecting additional uniform via staff specifically for the summer Breeze and pop-up shop events.

### **Gambling Related Harm**

The My Health, My School Survey analysis showed that 1988 secondary school pupils completed the gambling questions within the survey. Of those, 24% reported they had gambled, 0.6% reported gambling as a cause of concern or worry (an increase of 0.2%) and 49% reported they need better information on learning material in school on gambling.

## **Leeds MIC Resources**

The Leeds MIC website [www.leedsmic.org.uk](http://www.leedsmic.org.uk), includes links to local and national advice services and also includes a link to the Leeds MIC Map showing where to access advice services across Leeds.

Over the last 9 months to end of September 2023, approximately 29,000 printed resources have been distributed to partners and frontline services across the city. These resources include:

- Debt and Money Advice flyer – includes useful numbers for key services in Leeds. Translated versions are also available.
- Energy Advice flyer – Useful numbers for key services in Leeds offering advice on energy bills and utilities. Translated versions are also available.
- Concertina card – a credit card sized item that opens to double sided A4, for staff to use when signposting.

## **Next steps**

### **Leeds School Uniform Exchange**

The project was funded for another year in March 2023, with quarterly meetings with Zero Waste Leeds, LCC Financial Inclusion Team and representation from Children & Families in place. The project is will now concentrate on increasing the scheme's overall coverage of schools in Leeds, with particular focus on schools in areas of high deprivation.

The project continues to focus on increasing the overall coverage of schools in Leeds, particularly concentrating on schools in areas of high deprivation.

Quarterly update meetings including Zero Waste Leeds, LCC Financial Inclusion Team and representation from Children & Families are in place to support this development.

Plans are also being finalised to deliver a Winter Coat Scheme for 2023/24, building on the success and learning of the winter 2022/23 project. The project will be coordinated by Zero Waste Leeds, and delivered primarily through Community Hubs and Libraries, with further opportunities via 'Welcome Spaces' and other third sector groups currently being explored.

### **Gambling Related harm**

The findings of the gambling survey will be analysed and will inform the children and young people's gambling work stream, alongside the results from the My Health, My School Survey.

Financial Inclusion and Public Health will continue to work with the LCC Health & Wellbeing Service/Healthy Schools Team to improve the gambling questions within the My Health My School survey to ensure the latest trends amongst young people are incorporated where possible. Analysis will be undertaken on the gambling questions from the 2022-2023 My Health, My School data, once released.

Once fully implemented in Leeds City Council, the Financial Inclusion Team and Public Health will be working with other anchor organisations in the city to implement their own Harmful Gambling Guidance to support employees.

Financial Inclusion and Public Health will continue to deliver work on children and young people's gambling within the Leeds gambling harms action plan that will be in development imminently as part of the refreshed approach to the Leeds Gambling Harms Group.

## **Leeds MIC Resources**

A refresh of the MIC booklet, Help with Managing your Money has been concluded and The Leeds Money Information Centre booklet has been updated is being distributed across frontline council, housing and third sector services across the city. This booklet contains useful numbers and addresses for key services in Leeds offering free, impartial, confidential advice around money matters.

### **3.3 Priority 3: Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support.**

#### **Update on recent activities.**

##### **Google drive**

A Google drive has been established to share key resources, and messages across services and organisations. Physical resources are available to download or request for printing, including flyers (including translations), concertinas and business cards.

##### **Training Awareness Sessions**

A suite of themed awareness videos is being developed to be shared with frontline staff and volunteers on key subjects including advice and support, energy, mental health.

A range of awareness raising sessions have been undertaken over the past 3 months focussed on financial health and inclusion. These have included sessions on tackling poverty and financial inclusion, cost of living, fuel poverty support and training, signposting to warm spaces. Each session has been facilitated by the financial inclusion team in collaboration with the relevant partners organisations and experts. Sessions have been promoted across the council and attended by a range of services including services working directly with families with children.

##### **Cost of Living Response**

Building on a long established and effective approach to tackling poverty and addressing financial inclusion in the city, in September 2022 Leeds City Council set up a citywide approach to mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Strategic and operational partnership groups were established, and focussed on ensuring that there is awareness and understanding of the support available, developing practical support which enhances existing services, and ensuring the short-term funding available is coordinated and maximised. Between September 2022 and May 2023, the approach focussed on ensuring communication, information advice and guidance, practical support and funding opportunities were as well coordinated as possible in Leeds. This work continues, in addition theme-based discussions are also taking place so that there is a deeper understanding and collective response around issues such as Housing, Child Poverty, Crime and Community Safety, Migration, Third sector support, Health and Social Care.

#### **Outcomes and outputs:**

##### **Google Drive**

Over 85,000 resources have been distributed to organisations including council services, NHS and health settings, DWP, third sector and universities over the past two months.

##### **Training Awareness Sessions**

Financial Inclusion Team have delivered training and awareness sessions to a wide range of council (including elected members) and health services since October 2022 including

- Inner North East Community Committee Workshop - Cost of Living (approx. 60 attendees)
- Training Session on Money Information Centre & signposting to advice services for DWP staff – 80 attendees
- Public Health Want to know more about 'Tackling Poverty & Financial Inclusion' Session – 40 attendees.
- Fuel Poverty & Support Training for PCN – 25 attendees
- Tackling Poverty & Financial Inclusion Session for Childrens Services – 80 attendees
- Childrens Services Directors Development session- 40 attendees
- Equalities Assembly – Cost of Living (approx. 150 attendees)
- All Ward Member Seminar – Cost of Living (100 attendees)

- Inner West Children and Young People's Sub-Group – answering questions from children relating to the 12 wishes (15 attendees)

### **Cost of living Response**

Full details of the activities undertaken, and the impact made were reported at Executive Board in November 2023<sup>16</sup> and Scrutiny in December 2023<sup>17</sup>.

### **Next steps**

#### **Google Drive**

To continue updating resources.

#### **Training and Awareness sessions**

Continue establishing a clear and concise narrative using poverty statistics, data and local evidence, maintaining resources such as the Leeds Poverty Fact Book and Leeds MIC Website and Printed Resources.

Members of the financial inclusion team are liaising with partners and cross council services to ensure training and awareness sessions with respect to specific areas of concern/emerging issues within the context of the cost of living are available to frontline services including Children & Families. Sessions in development include the risk and response to illegal money lending.

The Financial Inclusion team and representatives from Children and Families are also working together to increase awareness and partnership working with respect to food aid provisions in the city.

## **4.0 Best Start for Health & Wellbeing**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every Leeds baby from conception to age two to have the best start in life, especially those who are the most vulnerable.***

This workstream is led by Kathryn Ingold, the Chief Officer - Public Health.

### **4.1 Priority 1: Baby Buddy App**

#### **Update on recent activities.**

Baby Buddy is a parenting app that is free to use. It provides evidence-based support and information throughout pregnancy and the first year, which is accessible at any time.

The 22/23 annual report data show that 42.5% of expectant and new parents in Leeds are using the app, with the most recent data showing this remains slightly increased at 43%. Practitioners continue to promote the app at all contacts and prominent displays are visible in areas where families visit e.g., Children's Centres, GP surgeries and relevant areas within Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust.

New content to support pregnant people and new mothers in the workplace and LGBTQ+ parents is currently being developed with the support of practitioners and families in Leeds as well as other parts of the country. Once complete practitioners will have all the available information to share the messages and signpost to new and expectant parents to the content.

There is a limitation to ongoing access to the Baby buddy data and it was therefore decided that this is no longer a viable area to report on going forward. A proposal to report to the Board on Breastfeeding initiation and continuation (6-8 weeks) and associated work that supports this has been agreed.

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<sup>16</sup> [Cost of Living Update Cover Report 101123.pdf \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Reducing Poverty Improving Financial Inclusion DEC 2023 FINAL.pdf \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

There is a wealth of evidence that human milk and breastfeeding contribute to healthier mothers and babies, reduces health inequalities, and improves public health. Breastfeeding is budget friendly and provides food security for the infant in the first six months of life and thereafter alongside other foods.

The Leeds Breastfeeding Plan is the overarching strategic document driven by the Breastfeeding Plan Partnership to achieve the overall indicator of increased breastfeeding continuation rates (6-8 weeks). Breastfeeding continuation data will be shared in future reports along with relevant activity aimed to positively impact and service user feedback.

### **Outcomes and outputs:**

Data showed that there was a total of 2,198 Baby Buddy registrations across thirty-three wards of Leeds within the reporting period of March 31 2023 to October 31 2023. The highlights of the report are as follows:

1. 86% of the users are mothers and 11.6% are fathers.
2. 71.4% White, 13.8% Asian, 7.5% Black, and 3.5% Mixed ethnicities of the Leeds users in the Baby Buddy app.
3. 17.9% of Leeds users' household income has been reported under 25K annually, with over 34% of them being from Black, Asian, and Mixed ethnic groups. Almost 20% of these users are new parents with babies below the age of 6 months.
4. Baby Buddy app log-in frequency has stayed consistently high (around 200K downloads each month nationally) from April 2023 to October 2023

### **Next steps**

- Continue the promotion and momentum to increase downloads of the Baby Buddy App as one of the Breastfeeding Plan priorities.
- To look at the Breastfeeding Plan priority actions through a poverty lens to understand current links and use them to focus and facilitate opportunities.
- To develop an action plan/log to support this work for ease of reporting and to provide regular updates.
- To use the breastfeeding dashboard data to drive work in areas where inequalities continue to widen.

## ***4.2 Priority 2: Preparation for Birth and Beyond***

### **Update on recent activities.**

The virtual PBB courses continue to run with good attendance from pregnant people and their support partner. The sessions are delivered in partnership by 0-19 service and children's centres with 4 courses being delivered per month on a rolling programme and are now bookable via Eventbrite. Face to face courses are running alongside the virtual courses and are now running 4 per month. In the 8-month period from April-Nov 2023 56 courses have been delivered (virtual and face to face combined), with 395 pregnant people attending at least one session, many with partners/support person. Face to face groups continue to be popular and are organised with Children's Centres and teams on a 12-month rolling programme.

Improvements have been made on inputting and collecting data, and in Quarter 2 123 fathers/partners attended at least one session which means that around 3 quarters of mothers attending do so with a partner which widens the reach of the key messages contained within PBB.

The first Baby Bubble (Baby Bubble Leeds is a closed Facebook support group for mums to be that begins at sixteen weeks pregnant and is there for you up to six months after your baby is born) bespoke PBB group was facilitated in September via MS teams.

## **Outcomes and outputs:**

Parent feedback (Oct 2023)

### **One thing you enjoyed about the session.**

- The discussions especially about how to put baby to bed.
- Learning about safe sleeping
- Bed safety
- Car seat safety
- Group chat
- Talking about how our relationship will change.
- Discussing strategies to support our relationship.
- Being able to ask questions & learn about safety.

### **One thing you have learnt that you didn't know before**

- Place baby at bottom of cot/crib
- Remove mitts when feeding.
- 20 minutes is the safest to leave a baby in a car seat within the first 6 weeks of their lives.
- Needing new car seat if taken on holiday
- Arms outside of the blanket
- 6 weeks no longer than 20 mins in a car seat
- Sleep bags may not be used from birth dependant on weight.
- Safe ways for baby to sleep.
- No pods, no extras in bed, ideally no co-sleep

### **From today's session, is there anything new you would you plan to do with baby?**

- Try nonsense conversations.
- 15 minutes when partner comes home (before taking over with baby)
- Serve & return.
- Practice with car seat
- Learning about mental health for both parents
- Serve & return. Just random conversations
- Leeds sling library to find the right one for me.
- How to sling them properly as a dad
- Playing and developing baby's brain

Observations from a recent external Baby Friendly initiative audit on Children's Centres highlighted how highly expectant mothers rated the PBB sessions and noted that they could tell the high-quality information that was shared at the sessions due to the audit question responses.

The practitioner PBB forum continues to run quarterly to ensure that practitioners are skilled and confident in facilitating the sessions. The most recent forum was in September running face to face to support training and development around baby brain development, partnership working across the services and to share new initiatives. Feedback from delivery of sessions remains extremely positive with practitioners reporting that it is rewarding and enjoyable.

## **Next steps**

Continue the rolling programme of courses including 4 virtual courses 4 face to face courses per month. Promote and use the Baby Buddy app to in PBB sessions with expectant parents. To continue to develop the resource pack for parents using the PBB forum as a training platform to inform staff.

The infant mental health service is providing on-going training to enable more practitioners to be able to facilitate the courses.

Priority changes agreed at the last Child Poverty Board meeting will lead to future reporting on activities to support improvements in children achieving the expected level in communication skills at 2 to 2 ½ years. 2022/23 data show 89.6% of 2 and 2 ½ year olds achieving the expected level in communication, which is an improvement on 2021/22 data but still below the pre-pandemic rate of 94%. There are large inequalities in child development between those living in the most and least deprived areas of Leeds with a difference of 6% between the most deprived decile (83.2%) and least deprived decile (89.4%).

### **4.3 Priority 3: Economic wellbeing 0-19 service**

#### **Update on recent activities.**

The 0-19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service has an economic wellbeing pathway linked to their internal intranet, making it accessible to all practitioners. The pathway describes how the 0-19 PHINS and Early Start practitioners will support families to achieve economic wellbeing. This includes support to families to:

1. Maximise income.
2. Manage debt.
3. Access support services
4. Reduce fuel bills.
5. Develop financial literacy.
6. Access education and work

The pathway includes links to a vast range of support that practitioners can signpost to including food banks and Healthy Holiday clubs. The service also ensures families are receiving all benefit entitlement including access to dental care and prescriptions during pregnancy. In addition, they ensure families are aware of the 2-year-old child place entitlement for those on specific benefits.

In Q2 commissioners requested an audit of three, 0-19 pathways as part of the quality assurance process. This included economic wellbeing, safe sleeping and domestic violence and abuse. See below for information.

Sarah Cooke, Clinical Change Lead for the 0-19 service attended the Child Poverty Board meeting in Oct 2023 to deliver a presentation on how the service support families around economic wellbeing.

#### **Outcomes and outputs:**

The 0-19 PHINS practitioners continue to support families with social and economic needs through their mandated contacts with children and families. Needs are identified and reviewed with practitioner's enquiring about food availability, debt, benefit entitlement and employment. They signpost/refer families to benefit support, healthy start vouchers, child benefit and local support networks including food banks, Healthy Holiday clubs, One Stop centres, Children's Centres, or libraries.

Since the start of April 2022 to end of March 2023 the service recorded 9803 economic wellbeing contacts. Between April 23 – Sept 23, the service has recorded 5735 offers of signposting, support and advice around issues related to economic wellbeing.

The results of the recent audit of the economic well-being pathway found:

- Conversations about economic wellbeing were raised at all contacts.
- These included conversations about benefit entitlement/ESOL/Universal credit/Healthy Start Vitamins/Child benefit/Childrens centre support and activities/Local facilities they can access/Housing Support/Loans for baby equipment/Traveller Community advice service.



- Referrals were being made to Children Centres, Childrens social work services and Housing advocacy.

## **Next steps**

The audit found staff were well equipped with information to support families, however noted the impact of the child benefit policy (only paying child benefit for 2 children) is causing hardship for parents with more than 2 children.

An additional audit of the three pathways' will be completed in 6 months, to end the audit cycle.

The service will continue to update the pathway with information on relevant support services.

## **5.0 Housing & Provision**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to support every family and young person living in social housing in Leeds to achieve a sustainable tenancy.***

This workstream is led by Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer Housing, Resources and Housing.

### ***Priority 1 - Joint Working Between Housing and Children's Social Work Teams to Support Families in Council Tenancies***

#### **Update on recent activities.**

Partnership working continues with Children's Health and Disability (CHAD) with continued attendance at their Operations Group where we discuss inappropriate referrals and learning outcomes. Draft guidance produced and being considered by relevant teams to help staff identify the correct route for enquiries relating to adaptations to reduce inappropriate referrals and unnecessary waiting times.

Housing staff attended West Yorkshire Trauma Informed Foundation Training promoting understanding of the barriers to engagement and awareness of how to appropriately respond to a person that has suffered trauma, improving confidence, communication, and insight about the approaches for engaging with and supporting families to achieve better outcomes.

Housing Officers and Housing Managers met with representatives from the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) who are leading on the Marmot City health programme for Leeds with the aims of, increasing everyone's opportunity to have all the right building blocks of good health and developing approaches for everyone but at a different scale or intensity depending on the needs of different communities. Housing has been identified as one of the priorities of the programme. Staff shared their experiences of inequality issues are from a housing perspective, and their thoughts on the areas that the partnership could have most impact.

A dedicated Damp & Mould team was set up in the wake of the coroner's report on the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale which saw a ten-fold increase in damp and mould enquiries from tenants and visiting professionals. The team log, triage and take appropriate action on these enquiries, prioritising the most urgent cases and using remote technology to identify / diagnose cases more efficiently. Officers have been sharing updates with colleagues in children's services, family support networks and schools to ensure all are aware and concerns are being acted upon.

An E-Learning package has been developed and has been rolled out to Housing staff and it is due to be shared with Children's staff to help them offer advice identify issues when visiting homes. To help tenants keep their homes warm this winter our gas contractor, PH Jones, as part of their Social Value commitments, have partnered with British Gas Energy Trust. As a result, they are able to offer the Housing up to £200,000 of free energy vouchers, which we will use to support our most vulnerable tenants to spend on their gas and or electricity. This scheme is only available to existing council tenants.

## **Outcomes and outputs:**

Case study example - Family A - had stopped making rent payments for their home, they were refusing to engage with the local housing team despite 24 months' worth of visits, letters, and ongoing enforcement on their tenancy. Approach had been made to Children's Social work team over risks to the family's tenancy due to rising arrears and non-engagement. CSW visited but were unable to get the parents to engage with Housing or make the necessary payments, there were no concerns at the visit about the children's welfare. Support and enforcement options were exhausted, and case referred to court due to large arrears c.£6k. District judge granted a suspend possession and order the parents to pay their rent plus an additional amount to gradually reduce their arrears, they did not attend court and failed to pay as ordered by the court.

The courts subsequently issued a warrant for the family's eviction, Housing and CSW carried out a joint visit to deliver the eviction notice, advised the parents they could still stop the eviction if they attended court ask for a suspension and agree to engage make payments on their rent. Parents attended court with support from Housing Paralegal team and Judge agreed to a suspension of the eviction on condition the parents engaged with and accepted support from Housing to check their income, maximise their benefits and commence rent payments. Parents met with Benefits Officer submitted a claim for UC and have agreed for rent element to be paid direct to LCC with an additional amount to pay off the arrears each month.

## **Next steps**

To build on conversations with Children's Social Work and the Court Bailiff team to ensure we are doing everything possible to support families facing eviction and ensure we continue to try and prevent tenancies failing, up to and including at the point of eviction.

To build on early conversations with Employment & Skills colleagues to improve understanding and build closer working in a bid to better understand and support our tenants needs in accessing training and employment also the wider offer from Employment & Skills around digital inclusion, budgeting, and financial wellbeing.

## ***Priority 2 -Refreshing the Rehousing Pathway for Care Leavers***

### **Update on recent activities.**

Leeds Housing Options (LHO) continue to work with partners in children's social care around future joint protocol for assessment of 16/17 year old homeless young people.

Training has been delivered for senior and operational managers within both services to raise awareness of the Southwark Judgement<sup>18</sup> and best practice for handling homeless cases within this age group. The training was delivered by a national expert and has also delivered "train the trainer" sessions so this knowledge and expertise remains available and deliverable in future.

We are currently working on SHAP (Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme) bid which is targeted towards 18–25-year-olds that are not served by existing commissioned providers (usually based on more significant support needs). If successful, this bid will deliver additional accommodation for vulnerable young people that have struggled to access conventional supported projects such as Our Way Leeds.

Additional cross directorate staff -Children's services are looking to fund two "staying close" workers. These staff will be based within LHO with a remit of helping to rehouse care leavers, specifically those that are accommodated (often at great expense) outside of Leeds. We are currently working with Children's services on developing the roles which will be going out to advert and present a real opportunity to help vulnerable care leavers return to their areas of support but also a cost saving based on the expense of the existing accommodation.

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<sup>18</sup> [Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614423/16-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation.pdf)

Work carried out by the Local Government Authority -funded project to improve the rehousing pathway for young people helped to inform this work through considering available data, relevant policy and strategy documents, semi-structured interviews with internal and external stakeholders, including some young people, dip sampling of 20 recent cases of homeless 16- and 17-year-olds, visits to some services and the author's own knowledge of youth housing options and homelessness.

Consideration has been given to the national context in terms of child poverty, the impact of Covid -19 on young people and on housing and homelessness, cost of living crisis, the housing crisis. Also, the local picture regarding young people, population, deprivation, and the local housing market

### **Outcomes and outputs:**

Dip sampling showed that most teenagers who go on to become homeless at the age of 16 or 17 are already known to Children's Services due to other risks and needs. There are an impressive range of universal and more targeted services for children, young people and families in communities, but there are gaps for some 16- and 17-year-olds, often those most at risk of homelessness, especially if they are no longer at school or college. They do not have 'touch points' to services and are at risk of being out of sight when they are at highest risk of homelessness.

Young people learn about housing and their options locally from their families and peers, but this can be supplemented by the provision of local information provided by the local authority or another agency. Realistic information and advice can cover in some detail the realities of living independently and the extent to which some housing options are limited for young people in a local area.

What young people said:

- "They didn't teach us about life – about this - they taught us about passing qualifications. There was no 'what's next?' "
- "They told us about what's in a cell in your body, but not how to actually live".
- "No one gives you a heads up - so you are obviously going to fail and then everyone gets mad at you."
- "I wish we'd learned about money and how to budget."

What young people said about living in non-commissioned 'exempt' supported accommodation in Leeds:

- "My house is so lonely."
- "... advice is 'don't work'. The rent is not affordable if you're working."
- "You're not allowed visitors or family in."
- "My social anxiety is horrible."
- "I find it too overwhelming now - I don't want to sound ungrateful but it's too much, all the bills and it's a massive house."

When asked what they needed at the point of housing crisis young people responded:

- "We need something stable, that's there, that's not going to change, that you know you can rely on."
- "There needs to be more places where you can actually talk to someone."
- "There should be more centres for young people - it's better than being on the street."

### **Next steps**

To progress with the joint assessment protocol and the Young Persons Multi Agency Panel which relaunched in May 2023. The panel is attended by Our Way Leeds – who provide housing support and accommodation to people aged 16-25 living in the city - Children's Services, Corporate Parenting, Youth Justice Team, Housing Options and Housing Management.

Meetings cover placements for young people accessing supported accommodation and support for move on when ready to live independently with a new focus on supporting those who are living independently but whose tenancies are at risk of failing.

### ***Priority 3 - Supporting Families in Council Tenancies to Maximise their Income.***

#### **Update on recent activities.**

During April 2023 and November 2023, the HOI team worked with **3212** Households in total and been able to secure **£2,205,038** in additional income for them with an average additional income per family of **£687**. Of the **3212** total households supported, **817** of those were households with children.

This generated for them **£456.659** of additional income which works out as an average of **£559** of additional income per family supported.

We have been able to secure income for households with children from 19 sources. The 5 top income streams which have generated the most for households with children are:

1. Universal Credit
2. Housing Benefit
3. Disability Benefits
4. Pension Age Benefits
5. Council Tax Support

The team feel that the current Cost-of-Living crisis is still affecting tenants city wide and forms the basis for many conversations they are currently having. They have noticed an increase in referrals for tenants of pension age and have targeted this group to increase the numbers applying for Pension Credits. The team have also worked closely with LBS (Leeds Benefits Service) targeting tenants reported on the Housing Benefit HB stop list.

Tenants are still struggling to make ends meet as neither benefit levels nor wages have increased accordingly. Many of our tenants continue to pay for their fuel via top up meters and are finding it increasingly difficult to find the money to top up as the current situation continues.

Food and Fuel poverty issues are raised by most tenants they engage with regardless of the main reason for referral. This comes at a time they have been able to refer tenants to the LCC/British Gas Emergency Fuel Voucher Scheme which initial run 2022/23 and is currently in place for 2023/24.

The team have been working closely with LBS regarding Pension Credits (PC) & Housing Benefit (HB).

Housing Benefit – LBS provided a list of tenants who they had been unable to contact with regards their HB claim and these had been suspended. Each team member attempted to contact the listed tenants from within their area supporting them to provide necessary information to ensure their claims remained live.

Pension Credits – The team worked closely with LBS who had provided a list of pension age tenants that were not currently in receipt of Pension Credits. Each team member attempted to contact tenants within their areas to perform benefit checks and advise on eligibility/assist with applications where necessary.

A poster campaign was launched within all Retirement Life properties across the city advising tenants that they could be eligible for Pension Credits and encouraging them to contact their local area housing offices for referral to their Housing Officer (Income) (HOI) team member.

#### **Outcomes and outputs:**

## Case Study

Mr W was referred to HOI following a priority annual tenancy Check-In (ATCI). Upon gaining access to the property to complete the ATCI it was declared that the named tenant had passed away some time ago and their partner, Mr W, had remained in the property.

Mr W was undergoing treatment for a rare aggressive form of cancer and had no support. HOI liaised with HO manager and arranged for Mr W to be granted tenancy succession.

HOI then liaised with DWP as housing costs were not submitted at start of UC (Universal Credit) claim as Mr W was not named on tenancy. Due to Mr W's current health concern DWP agreed to backdate Housing Costs to date of partners death which, with a backdated payment of £1264.48, cleared his rent arrears in full.

HOI also assisted Mr W with applications for PIP (Personal Independence Payment) and the completion of his UC50 which resulted in an award of PIP at High-Rate Mobility and High-Rate Daily Living with a backdated award of £2936.75.

## Next steps

### British Gas Energy Trust – Emergency Fuel Voucher scheme:

We are currently distributing £200,000 worth of Emergency Fuel Vouchers to tenant's city wide. We have until March 24 to award the vouchers, however, should we utilise the award before that date we may be eligible for a further award.

### Emergency Housing Support Fund:

In the New Year we will once again be able to allocate an amount of money to each local area housing office to spent directly on reducing rent arrears in their areas. The total allocation this year will be £350,000 and this will be distributed across the city based on each areas housing stock and their arrears profile at the time. Each office will be able to decide how they wish to distribute their allocation which must be used to directly offset rent arrears.

## 6.0 Employment & Transitions

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every young person and family to have the relevant skills and experience to access and secure well paid employment.*** This workstream is led by Dawn Hall, Head of Service Employment and Skills

### Update On Activities

- **Morley Town Deal Jobs Fair** took place on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Morley Town Hall. The event provided information to the local community in Morley about current and future jobs vacancies, support with job applications and interview skills. 20 employers attended. The event was well received from the 278 visitors, including the Morley Town Deal board and Councillors.
- **The BIG Social Care Jobs Fair** was delivered on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at the Bridge Community Church, Burmantofts. The event was co-ordinated in partnership with We Care Academy and provided information and opportunities for people interested in accessing roles within the care sector. 304 visitors attended. 27 employers provided opportunities offering interviews, collected CVs and distributed applications form. Employers included Children's Residential, private care homes and Adult Social Care. E&S Advisors also provided support, 10 job offers were made on the day.
- **Leeds Creative Skills Festival** returned to the Leeds first direct arena on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 with exhibitors showcasing opportunities in the creative and cultural sector. The event offered the 3,081 visitors a chance to speak 63 exhibitors including training providers, colleges and universities who offer creative courses; talk to employers; and attend interesting speaker sessions to learn about creative careers, skills and pathways; interactive activities. 9 Leeds schools block booked students and were sent the targeted LCSF23 presentation prior to the event.

### Outcomes and Outputs

From April to December 2023, 9,799 people have accessed our services:

- 6,266 (64%) of those accessing the Service live in neighbourhoods that fall within the 20% most deprived SOA's on the Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 6,147 (63%) customers identified as ethnically diverse and 507 (5%) declared a physical disability and 569 (6%) experience poor mental health
- 1,990 (20%) customers were young people age 16-24

Supported 2,457 people into work (including 324 Apprenticeships), an increase of 10% on the same period last year (2,239)

- 1,361 (55%) of those supported into work live in neighbourhoods that fall within the 20% most deprived SOA's on the Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 1,145 (47%) customers identified as ethnically diverse and 67 (3%) declared a physical disability, 89 (4%) experience poor mental health
- 679 (28%) customers were young people age 16-24
- Employment and Skills social value obligations in contracts and developer agreements supported the delivery of 201 jobs and 21 Apprenticeships for local residents during April to December 2023.

Supported 2,975 people to improve their skills

- 1,803 (61%) of these learners lived in neighbourhoods that fall within the 20% most deprived SOA's on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- 1,977 (66%) learners identified as ethnically diverse and 248 (8%) learners declared a physical disability and 278 (9%) experience poor mental health.
- 346 (12%) customers were young people age 16-24

Engaged with 385 employers new to the service to secure jobs, Apprenticeships and education outcomes, an increase of 34% on the same period last year (287). Improved processes has contributed to the higher number of Employers Engaged recorded from Events. The addition of a targeted programme of work to engage businesses on their journey to Net Zero has increased the number of businesses engaged with the service.

- Of the 181 employers engaged this quarter:
  - SMEs 127
  - large organisations (250+ employees) 54
- Support was provided across all sectors of industry including:
  - Information Serv's, ICT, Digital & Comms
  - Professional, scientific and technical activities
  - Manufacturing
  - Health & Care
- Ongoing support is being provided to a number of employers, delivering social value obligations on 27 developments and contracts to support local residents to access jobs, Apprenticeships and learning in Q3.

### Next Steps

- Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair will take place on 5th February 2024. Visitors can find out more about Apprenticeships and meet with providers and employers. Over 100 organisations have booked stands to exhibit at the event and approximately 6,000 visitors are expected on the day
- Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair Community Events community based information sessions will be delivered early in the new year within the priority wards to support the engagement of residents with the Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair 5th February 2024. The sessions will give those attending the opportunity to speak to E&S staff about Apprenticeships and what to expect from the recruitment fair
- Social Care Recruitment Events, in partnership with We Care Academy, will take place at Vale Circles (LS11 5JF) 19th January 2024 and East Recovery Hub (LS14 6JL) 24th January 2024. The events will support the recruitment to Support Worker and Case Officer roles across the city. Advisors will be attending to support delivery
- Migrant Access Project 8 week facilitated training programme for migrants new to Leeds, starting January 2024. The advisors will attend the event taking place on 9th February 2024 at Compton Community Hub with guest speakers sharing information about their services

- Multiply an introduction to numeracy skills course “Count Me In” will be delivered from St Luke’s Cares in January supporting the local community to build confidence in everyday maths including reading timetables, weights, measurement and money literacy. An introductory session will be delivered at New Wortley Community Centre in January enabling consultation with the local community regarding the content of a course to be delivered from February
- **Careers in Catering** recruitment information and interview sessions planned for 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at City Centre Community Hub to support promotion of kitchen assistant posts in schools across the city
- **Farnell Recruitment Events** information and interview sessions are being planned to be delivered in local Community Centres and venues around Temple Green area to build strong connections to enhance their ability to recruit and retain local talent and support sustainable development in the area
- **Connecting Communities to Health and Care Careers** fortnightly Information and/Assessment Sessions will be delivered at sites across the Priority Wards and City Centre Hub. The sessions will continue to support recruitment to roles within the Health and Care sector, including Adult Social Care, Children’s Residential Practitioner and Administrative roles. Additional Community Learning provision will also be in place
- **Smart Works Jobs Fair** at Leeds Beckett University Students’ Union planned for 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024. This event will provide information on vacancies, Apprenticeships and supported internships to all attendees.
- **Leeds Local Offer** event planned for 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 at the Pudsey Civic Hall. The event will provide a marketplace where families of children with special educational needs and disabilities in the city can find out about services available to them.

## ***6.2 Priority 2 - Connecting parents / carers to Family Learning provision to enhance children’s learning through activities, techniques and games delivered in schools***

### **Update on Recent Activities**

- **Employment Hub Mental Health** received 12 referrals from Primary Care Mental Health, 5 people signed up for support. 4 people achieved positive outcomes
- **Community Learning**
  - Developing You, 7 people started the course which commenced in November 2023.
  - Learning Disabilities Developing You 19 people started the course which ran for 12 weeks, ending in December.
- **Have a Go Fortnight** as part of the national Lifelong Learning campaign, local partners delivered taster and have a go skills sessions from 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The focus was on digital and other priority sector skills as part of the fortnight of activities, aiming to encourage adults to undertake further learning to help progress their career. 4 skills taster sessions took place with 26 people attending the in-person and on-line sessions
- **Carbon Literacy (CL) Action Day**, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, saw 14 colleagues from Employment and Skills (E&S) gain CL accreditation. The training has been the catalyst for a range of individual/service pledges to include, the creation of a committed network of CL champions. The network will enable the opportunity for E&S CL champions to shape a conversation to take forward CL within the service whilst extending the learning across the Council to increase the reach / impact of change

### **Outcomes and Outputs**

In this quarter, 96 courses have been delivered across 47 venues. Courses included ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages), Digital Skills, Life Skills, Employability and Family Learning.

480 unique learners have enrolled with 82.3% self-declaring they are from an ethnically diverse background, 19.6% self-declaring they have a learning difficulty or disability and 50.1% self-declaring they have no prior qualifications.

### **Next Steps**

- **Community Learning**
  - Developing You 15 people have registered for the next course, starting in January 2024 at City Centre Community Hub. A further course is planned for February 2024



- Developing You 50+ working in partnership with DWP Health Model Office to offer a course specifically for unemployed people aged 50+. The first course will commence in January 2024, with a further course planned in February 2024
- ESOL 5 additional ESOL courses, supporting the local community with English as a second language, will be delivered in the priority wards increasing confidence in reading and social conversations. Courses will be delivered at Greenmount Primary School, Gipton Community Centre, Hamara Centre, Shakespeare Primary School and Castleton Children Centre

For further information on courses available both online and face to face at community venues, please visit: <https://leedsadultlearning.co.uk>

### **6.3 Priority 3 - Ensuring career information, advice and guidance supports young people to move into Education, Employment or Training (EET) from school**

#### **Update on Recent Activities**

- **Apprenticeship Awareness** 27 sessions delivered at 17 schools to a total of 1,725 young people, 334 parents and 69 teachers. Oulton Academy, Bishop Young Academy, Horsforth School, Corpus Christi, Leeds College of Building, Morley Academy, Ruth Gorse Academy, The Pennington Centre, Boston Spa, Mount St Mary's, Farnley Academy, Stephen Longfellow, Coop Academy Priesthorpe, Dixons Unity Academy, Abbey Grange C of E Academy, Wetherby High.
- **Employer Engagement (school brokerage)** 32 businesses provided activities to approximately 1,680 young people at 6 events. The events included a careers fair, 4 mock interview sessions and an employability session.
- **CEIAG - Newsletters** published monthly and circulated to 500 careers practitioners and post 16 leaders, including Employment Hub, Pathways team and internal colleagues who work with young people. The newsletter now has a sector spotlight focus each month which includes information, events, resources and related Apprenticeships relating to October: Digital Industries, November: Creative Industries and December: Financial and Professional Services.
- **CEIAG network meeting** first of the 2023/2024 academic year. Agenda items included careers in Economics from Discover Economics including careers in the Bank of England, Positive Destination reporting and tracking and support for care leavers.
- **The Next Gen Careers Fair** took place at Elland Road on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Organised by the Luminare Education Group, they brought together schools from the whole of West Yorkshire to meet with exhibitors who could talk to them about their post 16 options. We engaged with 250 young people in years 10 and 11, 88 parents and 10 teachers.

#### **Outcomes and Outputs**

34 activities to a total of 3,655 young people, 422 parents and carers and 79 teachers.

#### **Next Steps**

- **School engagement** activities including Apprenticeships awareness sessions and careers fairs planned for delivery during January – February 2024 to a total of 10 schools:
  - Woodkirk High School, Abbey Grange CofE Academy, Allerton High School, The Stephen Longfellow Academy, Notre Dame College, Leeds College of Building, Brigshaw High School, Horsforth, Elliott Hudson College.
- **CEIAG network termly meeting** to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Lawnswood School. We are co producers of the network along with the Learning Improvement team.
- **Connecting Schools to Hospitality programme** launch event to take place 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at the Leeds Met Hotel. 6 schools and 6 hotels will be attending to receive an introduction to the programme which will be delivered from February to June.
- **Development of the Start in Leeds platform** to incorporate the Green Economy – January 2024.

### **7.0 Empowering Families & Safeguarding**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to change the structure around social care to better support children, young people and families living in poverty.***

This workstream is led by Farrah Khan, Deputy Director Social Care, Children and Families Service.

## **7.1 Priority 1 – Connecting services to better support families.**

### **Update on recent activities.**

EPEC (Empowering Parents Empowering Communities) continues to develop, and 2023 has seen additional recruitment and training of volunteers in 'Being a Parent' and 'Living with a teenager' programmes.

In 2023 the Communities directorate relaunched the Migrant Access Project (MAP). The project works to ensure new and emerging communities in Leeds get an understanding of local services. The project also offers community members the opportunity to become a Migrant Community Networkers (MCN). Childrens Services have committed to attending each of these sessions to build and strengthen relationships within the community, and to provide support and guidance within meetings as to what Early Help support is available for families in Leeds.

During the Summer, services have supported the uptake of the summer holiday Library reading challenge. This enabled families to register with the library and become aware of their universal services. Across Leeds 6318 children signed up to the challenge, and 2723 completed. of these, 92 were children accessing the Healthy Holidays provision.

During 2023 we also worked with 'Leeds 2023' who have provided free activities for children and families including theatre productions and art sessions aimed at celebrating diversity and culture. We have also worked with Leeds 2023 to support their ambition for children from marginalised communities to receive a free poetry book.

During October Child Friendly Leeds held a focused workshop for ambassadors on Mitigating the impact of Poverty. This workshop was an opportunity for businesses & organisations to connect and understand what child poverty is and how we can work together. Guest speakers included; Cllr Venner, BabyBank, ZeroWaste Leeds and Healthy Holidays. The session was very positive and solutions discussed included; actively recruiting volunteers through Leeds Universities to support projects, working with Schools and businesses to donate their lost property to ZeroWaste Leeds, approaching logistics companies with requests of storage space to support projects and sharing good practice examples of how CFL ambassadors have supported projects in order to recruit more businesses.

It has been highlighted during 2023 that there are a number of Children living in B&B accommodation. Childrens services are developing an Early Help offer of support for these Families which will be in the form of a bespoke leaflet specific for the location providing advice on local amenities such as; the library, local children's centre, parks and children's activities.

Childrens Services will join Zarach strategic board to support the Charities aims and ambitions and offer support.

We continue to work alongside the Leeds Childrens charity who have provided many free activities for disadvantaged children and families over the summer period. This has provided opportunities for Children to take part in new activities as well as meet footballers from Leeds United. Leeds Childrens Charity will continue to provide free Christmas gifts for disadvantaged children in Leeds.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

Childrens Services delivered an introduction to Early Help briefing to the MAP community. This was well received, and members would like to continue to develop relationships, and learn more about support available to Families.

EPEC delivery for January 2024 will target East Leeds. Going forward we will deliver in other areas of Leeds.

Leeds Children's Charity at Lineham Farm has been delivering support to the most disadvantaged children in Leeds for years. The base for the charity, Lineham Farm is 30 years old this year and offer support to over 2500 children and young people each year and free activities during school holidays for our most deprived children and young people.

## **Next steps**

EPEC (Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities) will deliver two programmes in January 2024, and the 'Living with a Teen' course will launch Spring 2024. EPEC delivery for January will target East Leeds. Going forward we are currently devising the 2024 timetable which will see expansion into other areas of Leeds.

Childrens Services will continue to attend each of the MAP forums to build relationships with communities and progress this work.

Childrens Services continue to support ZeroWaste School uniform exchange and the winter coat campaign. This has seen 4 dedicated Childrens Services collection points to support the project.

## **7.2 Priority 2 – tackling inequality in accessing services and support.**

### **Update on recent activities.**

Childrens Services are committed to the voice of parents and children being at the heart of everything we do. We have held an annual 'Let's talk' session for several years, and the session was held in November 2023 with over 30 parents attending. The event was also attended by Senior Leaders committed to hearing the voice and experiences of parents.

Let's Talk has been instrumental in developing parent led training for social workers, advocacy for parents involved with child protection conferences and peer training courses.

## **Next steps**

To complete evaluation of the session and continue to work with Parents on next steps.

## **7.3 Priority 3 – Workforce Development**

### **Update on recent activities.**

The launch of the revised early help documentation and notification (formerly registration) process happened between June and July 2023:

The launch reached colleagues from across the Children and Families Partnership with 398 accessing the on-line briefings and 248 accessing the early help practice and process development sessions. Attendance of the latter was dominated by primary school, children centre and cluster staff. 73% (180/248) of attendees at the practice development sessions completed an evaluation; 70% (126/180) had attended an on-line briefing first. Feedback overall was very positive with 88% affirming that their skills, confidence and knowledge had been enhanced and 93% finding the activities and materials very useful. The full report includes an analysis of feedback which was grouped into three themes: (1) the response to the revised documentation and processes generally, (2) attendees' experience of the early help practice and process session and (3) further support needs. Multiple recommendations were made in response and to progress this work further.

The Report's recommendations include:

- 1) Implement a sustainable rolling programme of early help practice and process sessions - as structured in July 2023 - delivered once per term for an average of 15 participants and supported by two or three leaders.
- 2) Review the extent to which the cascading of the strategic message has reached senior leaders in settings and services and identify further opportunities through existing forums (e.g., Head teachers Forum, Best Start Board etc.) to promote these and secure alignment with the revised documentation and notification process.
- 3) Liaise with Targeted Service Leads to explore further support and training needs required for schools within cluster arrangements to adopt the revised documentation.
- 4) Target secondary schools outside of cluster arrangements to ensure key messages have been cascaded and to encourage their adoption of the revised documentation.

- 5) Liaise with the youth service to explore further communication and support needs to ensure key messages have reached this service and respond to any further support to adopt the revised documentation.
- 6) Identify how best to communicate with post-16 providers and ensure they have received the key messages and understand expectations to adopt the revised documentation.
- 7) Liaise with health colleagues to determine if there is additional support required to cascade key messages and support the adoption of new processes and the early help notification only documentation.
- 8) Establish the Early Help Champion role to create a supportive network that brings practitioners together, develops relationships and shares knowledge and skills across the system.
- 9) Create a film targeted at young people and families that explains the early help documentation and notification process.
- 10) Develop and resource a plan for the quality assurance of early help work submitted to the local authority for the purposes of notification in order to inform further training and development needs.

During October 2023 2 bespoke briefings were delivered by the Financial Inclusion team to Childrens Services covering support available for families. The briefing included details of household support fund, healthy holidays, utility support, food support and general money advice. Over 300 practitioners attended the training and found the information very useful. Practitioners told us the most common needs they support families with are; damp/ mould problems, overcrowded housing, debts for utilities including water, families not attending hospital appointments due to travel costs, foodbanks having to limit families access, childcare provision closing which in turn is seeing parents not able to work, family stress and the link this is having on school attendance, demand in need for baby essentials, and a rise in criminal exploitation.

Delivered by Professor Claudia Bernard, the “Poverty and neglect masterclass” was delivered to Services practitioners in November 2023. The masterclass drew on current knowledge to address neglect- the most common form of child abuse. It also focused on the discourse about the links between poverty and neglect.

### **Outcome and Outputs**

- 248 practitioners attended Early Help practice and process in person sessions. 398 attended the online briefing.
- 300 practitioners attended the ‘available support for families’ briefing.

### **Next steps**

The Early Help Registration Task and Finish Group is implementing the recommendations from the Early Help paperwork process. Recurring feedback includes an ask that there is the ‘buy-in’ of senior leaders; supporting them to have the time and capacity to align their early help work to the Leeds Practice Model. The extent to which this workstream has impacted upon an increase in early help notifications is to be analysed in Spring 2024.

Beginning in 2024, Poverty briefings will be delivered within Childrens Services every 2 months. These will cover various topics including practical support for families, risk of loan sharks- how to identify and what support is available, supporting conversations with families around poverty, Marmot city, regular updates from the Poverty board workstreams.

## **8.0 – Readiness for Learning**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of children and young people who live in poverty.***

### **8.1 Priority 1 Early Years - Take up of free nursery places for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds.**

## Update on recent activities.

Leeds entered into a long-term partnership with Nesta alongside York and Stockport called Fairer Start Leeds and is a three-to-five-year innovation partnership with an aim to work together so that all children have a brighter start for a stronger future. The partnership centres on a shared commitment to reimagining early years support to deliver tangible improvement to the lives of disadvantaged children. There is a greater focus on collaborative working with York and Stockport, sharing the learning across the partnership.

We are now in the third year of our partnership with Nesta and the focus for the project involves NESTA working with the Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service, Leeds' Library Services and Leeds Council to see if we can find new ways to work together to improve support for children and parents by looking into how Speech and Language support and services can be improved within Leeds.

This work aimed to develop a better understanding of:

Common referral sources to the CLST service and characteristics of children/families referred from different sources

- Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of children and families currently on the CLST waitlist broken down by whether or not they are re-referrals and/or accepted by the service.
- Whether wider language and communication support in Leeds (inc. library services) is geographically targeted by need, correlated with outcomes and whether there are differences in acceptance to the CLST service by area
- Differences and accuracy in CLST service pathways
- Differences in episodes of care including wait times between discharge and re-referral and between re-referral and appointment

## Outcomes and Outputs

As a result of the above, a revised pathway into the speech & language therapy service has been developed along with a communication & language toolkit available for all practitioners to use. Recent workshops have been delivered across the city to launch this toolkit and were attended by health & early years/ education practitioners.

### Two-year-olds take-up

Leeds has an average take-up city wide of 72.7%, based on three terms worth of data (Spring 2023, Summer 2023 and Autumn 2023). The inner-city areas of Harehills (50.5%), Woodhouse (56.9%), and Holbeck (62.4%) are still significantly below the city average. Further work to increase take-up in these areas is a priority as is Richmond Hill (59.1%) which is now also a priority area.

Burmantofts, which was a priority area in 2022, now has an uptake close to the city average (72.6%)

### Inner City Areas with lowest uptake (2023)

PPA	Average Uptake of 2 Year Old Places (2023)
Harehills	50.5%
Woodhouse	56.9%
Richmond Hill	59.1%
Holbeck	62.4%

## Eligible Children

City wide, the number of 2 year olds eligible for FEEE funding has decreased over the past 3 years: From 3609 in Spring 2021 to 2746 in Autumn 2023.

## Three and four-year-olds take-up

Take up of FEEE for 3 and 4 year olds in Summer 2023 was 92.2%, which is an increase of 0.6 percentage points on Summer 2022 (91.6%) and an increase of 3.2 percentage points since Summer 2021 (89.0%).

The area of Harehills is an outlier with significantly lower uptake than other areas; in Summer 2023 there were 1,119 children living in this area who were eligible for a funded place, but only 70.4% took one. This means 331 eligible 3&4 year olds in Harehills did not access nursery funding in this term. Harehills is deemed to be the priority area in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, to increase take-up.

Other areas of concern are: Chapel Allerton (85.9%); Burmantofts (88.1%) and Holbeck (89.8% uptake).

### **Next steps**

In preparation for the new Two-Year-Old scheme from April 2024 for eligible working parents, Leeds Family Information Service are hoping to capture some data from providers (via a survey), to understand the number of children currently in settings and paying for childcare, who are likely to become eligible for a funded place of 15 hours from April onwards. The Department for Education haven't yet launched the application portal, but the criteria will broadly follow that for the current 30 hr scheme. This will help inform where there may potentially be sufficiency issues within Leeds. The survey closes on 26 January.

## **8.2 Priority 2 – Emotional Health and wellbeing/ Mental Health**

### **Update on recent activities.**

The My Health, My School (MHMS) annual school survey 2022-23 launched to schools in September 2022 for the academic year. All participating schools were able to access their own survey data to inform planned interventions. The Health & Wellbeing Services collated data at a city-wide level. The MHMS survey is included in the actions within priority 4 of The Refreshed 3As Plan.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

A total of 25,648 pupil responses were received from 202 Leeds schools and settings participating in the 2022-23 survey. The raw data survey results were made publicly available on Data Mill North. A number of resultant Annual Reports, reflecting the survey themes were also published. Broadscale consultation on the MHMS survey question set for 2023-24 commenced at the beginning of February and was open for a 4-month period. Leeds City Council Service representatives were invited to review and suggest amendments to the survey questions to be used with schools for the 2023-24 academic year as well as being tabled as agenda items on various strategic Programme/Project Boards facilitating broader discussion. Following the review, the survey was revised, amendments made and drafted for approval by Steering Group members over summer 2023. The revised My Health, My School survey went live to schools in September 2023. As of January 2024, there have been an encouraging number of 6871 survey responses from 53 Leeds schools and settings indicating a degree of confidence that the total number of survey returns for the 2023-24 academic year will be at least in line with last year's results.

### **Next steps**

December's MHMS Steering Group meeting 2023 considered survey results from the 2022-23 survey and endorsed a subsequent survey consultation this year on the question set for the My Health, My School SEND survey 2024-25. In light of the continued increased annual uptake of the survey, both in the number of responses and numbers of participating schools year on year a proposal to further strengthen governance arrangements for the survey was accepted. The plan is to complement the Steering Group through establishing a new, formalised, multi-agency Management Group capturing expertise from beyond LCC (e.g. NHS, Leeds University, Leeds Trinity University, etc.) to work alongside LCC colleagues. This will provide greater, more immediate day to day support and a bridging mechanism between the Operational and Steering Groups. The Management Group will provide further rigour on the question set, data analysis and proposed changes going forward aiding development of the survey and is to be underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

## **8.3 Priority 3 – The 3 As strategy - working with schools to improve attendance, achievement and attainment.**

Update of recent activities

The 3A's Strategy is has been refreshed. The refreshed strategy takes into account the change of one of the CYPP obsessions that "*young people in Leeds attend school, achieve, and attain well*", and they also "*continue their route of a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination*".

The '3 As' is a directorate-wide strategy which identifies how LA services can support schools in their work with young people to raise outcomes.

- **Attainment:** children reach their full potential in learning
- **Attendance:** children need to attend school as much as possible for them, not just to learn, but to be safe and build friendships
- **Achievement:** all children have the opportunity to take part in positive activities in their local community such as sports, the arts and volunteering.

The strategy focuses on the learning and outcomes of all the children and young people in Leeds including those living in areas of the city with high indices of multiple deprivation, children looked after, children and young people with SEND, vulnerable learners and children and young people experiencing SEMH problems.

The Refreshed strategy has the following five priorities...

- Priority 1 - All children and young people in Leeds are supported to improve their communication, language, and literacy so they develop into strong readers taking into account their individual needs.
- Priority 2 - Support education providers to ensure children and young people regularly attend.
- Priority 3 - Support education settings to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Priority 4 - All children and young people and staff in learning settings feel safe and supported with their wellbeing.
- Priority 5 - Ensure all young people in Leeds participate in education, employment and training after statutory school age and progress to a positive destination.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

The new 3As strategy was approved at the end of December 2023 and will be launched in early 2024 and therefore outcomes and outputs will be reported at the next meeting.

### **Next steps**

Once approved the next steps will be to implement the actions detailed on the plan. An update will be provided on the next report.

## **9.0 Green Spaces**

The aim of this workstream is: **We want to improve access to green spaces by improving the quality of existing green spaces, influencing the location and quality of new local green spaces through the Planning System, creating an online map of all Leeds green spaces, and making travel to green spaces easier, safer and more affordable.**

This workstream is led by Sarah Wilson, Senior Design Officer and Jenny Rutherford from Child Friendly Leeds Team.

### **Priority 1 Play Sufficiency**



Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds are working in partnership on the Play Sufficiency project. Play Sufficiency is about securing sufficient opportunities for children's play and that involves far more than simply looking at designated provisions (although these are still important). Securing sufficient opportunities for play is about cultivating the time, space and attitudes needed for children's play to flourish, in their homes, on doorsteps and residential streets, within local neighbourhoods and across local authority policy and practice.

Play Sufficiency is an ongoing process of research and action to assess, improve and protect children's opportunities for play. The assessment stage explores what is working for who, where and why at a neighbourhood and organisational and/or local authority level.

Research has been conducted in priority wards in the South, East and West of the city (Boggart Hill; Lincoln Green; Cliftons and Nowells; Holbeck and Beeston Hill; New Wortley). Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds are currently writing up the Play Sufficiency Assessment Report, which collates all of the background, context and findings from the extensive research programme.

On September 26th the Play Sufficiency team hosted a Strategic Priorities Workshop at John Charles Centre for Sport. Ben Tawil and Mike Barclay, play consultants from Ludicology commissioned to guide us through the Play Sufficiency work in Leeds, provided a brief overview of the Play Sufficiency process and the principles behind this approach. Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds then presented each priority, with supporting background research. Over half of the session was dedicated to discussion focused on each strategic priority: What work is already going on? What are the challenges to delivering this priority? How can we work collectively to progress this priority for children, families and communities in priority wards.

See below for Play Sufficiency priorities:

- Priority 1: Facilitate the cross-service endorsement of Play Sufficiency and embed key principles within Leeds City Council departments.
- Priority 2: Celebrate and enable parents and carers permissions, confidences and skills for play.
- Priority 3: Grow a play workforce of adults whose work directly and indirectly impacts upon children and their play.
- Priority 4: Facilitate sufficient time, space and attitudes towards play in educational settings.
- Priority 5: Enable sufficient time, space, design and attitudes to play for children with protected characteristics.
- Priority 6: Create streets that are safe, welcoming and encourage children's play.
- Priority 7: Improve the variety of spaces available for play for all age groups within close proximity of children's homes (including informal and designated spaces).
- Priority 8: Improve access to nature-based play environments.
- Priority 9: Improve the perception of teenagers and improving their opportunities to play and hang out.

The Strategic Priorities Workshop brought together representatives from across the council to think collectively about how to improve opportunities for play in priority wards. The energy and commitment in the room was evident. From the Open Space Spotlight key ideas and actions were put forward that can be fed directly into the next phase: the write up of the Play Sufficiency Action Plan.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

Full Play Sufficiency Assessment report to be completed in the new year. This will share detailed findings about factors supporting and constraining children's freedoms to play. The Play Sufficiency Assessment report will be shared with partners who have been involved with the project so that they can comment on the draft report.

Play Sufficiency is being taken to Exec Board in December 2023. This is a joint report by Child Friendly Leeds and Active Leeds and will be presented by Cllr Venner, with comments from Cllr Arif. The work follows the 2007 Play Strategy which included a call for a citywide Play Partnership. A strategic board – the Play Sufficiency Partnership, supports the project, formed of LCC representatives and partners. The paper proposes that a Play Champion is appointed from Executive Board, who will lead the development of an Action Plan which will report annually to Executive Board. Councillor Venner has agreed to be the named champion.

Play Sufficiency research has been used to bring in significant external funding to priority wards in the south of the city. The National Lottery Reaching Communities bid funding will deliver a project that focuses specifically on play, responding to the Play Sufficiency insight which articulates how children feel about their opportunities to play in their local area.

Play Sufficiency was presented at Executive Board (December 2023)

### **Next steps**

- To share finding of the research through a series of community workshops
- To embed Play Sufficiency principles, findings and recommendations within the Priority Neighbourhood Partnership Plans in priority wards of the city.
- Complete all resources to share across teams within the council. This will include:
  - The development of a video outlining our key research findings and priorities
  - A set of Play Pamphlets that will go into greater detail focusing on our key themes.
  - A full Play Sufficiency Assessment report
  - An abridged Play Sufficiency Assessment report
- Produce a Play Sufficiency Action Plan

### ***Priority 2 Planning for Play***

#### **Update on recent activities.**

The Planning Service influences the provision of green space and play in new developments through engagement with National Government, Local Plan policies, design guidance and consultation with technical specialists during the consideration of planning applications.

Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee Inquiry

The (LUHC) Committee has recently launched an inquiry looking at how better planning and building and urban design in England could enhance the health and well-being of children and young people.

The inquiry states:

It's important for children and young people's mental and physical health that they have access to spaces to play and to socialise.

In our inquiry, we want to find out more about how children and young people experience outdoor spaces in towns, cities and rural areas across England. What policy interventions from local and central government could help to deliver streets, estates, villages, neighbourhoods and parks that enable kids to enjoy active outdoor lifestyles and engage with others?

Child Friendly Leeds and Strategic Planning (Policy and Plans) are coordinating a response to this inquiry that articulates best practice in Leeds (and elsewhere) and makes recommendations regarding next steps. The CFL 12 Wishes, Play Sufficiency and play streets will feature heavily as part of this submission to demonstrate the ways in which Leeds City Council are already working to tackle the issues that this inquiry highlights.

## **Local Plan update**

The Leeds Local Plan is made up of a number of documents that contain planning policies that guide the amount and location of development in the Leeds district. It also includes more detailed topic-specific policies that will guide different types of development, and make sure that priorities such as design, green space, heritage, infrastructure, flood risk management are considered during decision making.

We are required to review our planning policies every 5 years, to check they are still working, relevant and fit for purpose, and to identify any policy gaps that may have arisen. Following a review of all our Local Plan policies in 2020, a number of policies requiring update were identified. These include policies on green space and new policy G4b is proposed to ensure new developments include good quality green space and play:

In order to be considered high quality new green and blue space should seek to meet the following objectives:

- c. serve multifunctional purposes for human health, recreation, play sufficiency, ecology, carbon capture and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.
- e. usable for recreation including facilitating movement, play – both formal and informal, rest and observing nature
- o. a mix of formal and in-formal play provision with innovative spaces using natural materials and varied planting to allow imaginative play and connection to nature.
- p. is suitable for children and young people of different ages and abilities in line with local play sufficiency.
- q. Any play provision needs to be designed in accordance with national guidance (such as Fields in Trust) and local play sufficiency assessments.

Additionally, further consideration is being given to how the Local Plan can include reference to the provision on indoor play facilities associated with high density residential schemes particularly in the city centre.

Final public consultation on the first Local Plan update is underway before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination. A further Local Plan update is currently being scoped ('Local Plan 2040') and this is likely to include specific play sufficiency policies.

## **Design guidance**

Green Space guidance for how green spaces should be designed in planning applications for proposed developments was finalised and published on the Council's website in August 2023 for use by Developers, Designers, Planning Officers.

The guidance is intended to set the standard for good quality green space and play until new Local Plan policy G4b is adopted; and includes good design principles for green space location, layout, accessibility and play provision.

## **Outcomes and outputs**

Ongoing monitoring of policy and guidance use by officers and resulting green space and play quality will be carried out.

## **Next steps**

Coordinate response to LUHC inquiry and submit document December 2023.

Continue to support Planning Policy colleagues with adoption of new green space policy, and advocate for the inclusion of play sufficiency in Local Plan 2040.

## **Priority 3 Urban 95 Project Update on recent activities.**

A Leeds team of three representatives from the Council have recently completed the Urban95 Academy programme: a global sponsored leadership course designed for local governments that are dedicated to

early childhood development. The programme was delivered online over seven weeks, during which city leaders learned how to plan, design and implement child-focused infrastructure, policies and programmes related to public space, neighbourhood planning, mobility and transport whilst also developing effective analysis, strategy and leadership skills. The programme focused on how to design better cities for babies, toddlers and their caregivers.

As part of this work, the Leeds Team highlighted a local challenge for our city and designed an outline strategy for how to address this challenge. The priority for Leeds was to address the dominance of the car and how this impacted children's opportunities to play in the streets and green spaces around their homes. Children are becoming less visible in our streets and across our built environment. Nationally and globally there has been a significant shift in the function of streets, with competing demands between the place and movement function. It's about a better design of streets that need to function as spaces that allow people to connect with one another, that can connect cities but at the same time offer opportunities as places for public engagement and play.

The strategy focuses on how the Council could introduce low traffic/active travel type initiatives positively to communities through the lens of play (It's worth noting that the terminology 'active travel' and 'low traffic' would not be used as part of this project).

This proposal places great emphasis on the importance of playful, in-depth and thorough engagement. There are two strands to this engagement:

1. Partner engagement – the power of play as an organising principle to ensure that stakeholders across different departments and directorates are working towards a collective vision and set of outcomes.
2. Community engagement – empowering communities to make decisions about the spaces and culture of their neighbourhood. Residents work towards a collective vision of what they want their neighbourhoods to look and feel like

Community engagement would focus primarily through the lens of play and would be coordinated through the organisation Playful Anywhere. Playful Anywhere CIC is a Leeds-based social enterprise with a mission to catalyse creativity, inventiveness and playfulness, where we work, live and travel. Founder Emma Bearman says: 'Play is a great way to bring people together to catalyse a space and to imagine the potential of what it could be'. This is really the guiding principle of our engagement approach.

## **Engagement Methods**

### **The Playbox**

- Catalyst for play: The brightly coloured box is an immediate invitation to play and be curious. It draws people to a space and gives permission for play. This is really important. So often in Leeds it's not the case that neighbourhoods contain no playable space, but rather that spaces aren't giving permission for play and inviting social interaction. The presence of the Playbox – in an immediate sense will facilitate play and provide opportunities for play. This is crucial to healthy childhood development and ultimately creating better cities for children, for families and for everyone.
- Catalyst for conversation: The Playbox animates a space and creates an inviting environment that draws people in. This is often one of the most difficult parts of community engagement: the initial starting point. The approach with the Playbox helps to break down these initial barriers. Its physical structure is robust, and it can be left in situ without fear of damage. It can collect and share stories, data and information like a gallery space. It prompts the imagination by virtue of being in a space and makes people think differently from the get-go.

### **Play Streets**

Running alongside the neighbourhood planning thread catalysed by the Playbox will be the second strand of community engagement: play streets. Supporting residents to open streets for play will allow them to experience how streets change when you remove the dominance of the car. It is a powerful way to visualise

your neighbourhood: presenting opportunities for play, socialising and positive interactions. Caregivers can conceive how it feels for toddlers to play in public realm without fear of speeding cars; possibilities for unused space to become a focus for exploring nature and growing plants; plain walls can become a canvas for local art. Residents start to reclaim space and understand how they have the power to shape the neighbourhood they live in.

### **Play Street Enablement Project**

Child Friendly Leeds have secured funding to continue work on the Play Streets Enablement project. This project focuses specifically on priority wards, where the benefits of play streets would be significant, but where a resident's capacity for completing the play streets application process independently may be limited. Third sector partners will be commissioned to support residents to organise play streets and get them up and running, with the long-term vision being that residents will feel confident in sustaining these sessions independently. Focused work (via community partners – soon to be confirmed) is likely to take place in the following areas: Seacroft; Lincoln Green; Halton Moor; Osmondthorpe; Middleton; Holbeck. There are plans to launch a winter play streets campaign to support outdoor play through the colder months. We will be looking to coordinate this project with a range of services who can signpost to much needed support and resources.

Child Friendly Leeds have also secured funding in partnership with Leeds University to receive portable air quality monitors. This project will run in conjunction with the play streets enablement work so that residents (ideally it will be children who are leading on this work) can monitor levels of air pollutants outside of, during and after playstreet sessions.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

Data collection regarding play streets will be collected at a city-wide level e.g., Number of play streets (including number of new play streets); number of regular play streets (streets that have an Annual Pass and hold play streets regularly throughout the year); location of play streets (with a particular focus on deprivation).

Through the Play Streets Enablement project, third sector partners will support in reporting on progress in priority wards e.g., number of new and regular play streets; occurrence of play streets; evaluation and impact (with a focus on the voice of children and young people); case studies etc.

Leeds University will collect and analyse air quality data from streets/play streets and will report on key findings. There will be a focus on priority wards.

Play Strategy Officer (Child Friendly Leeds) is also beginning to deliver training sessions to key Leeds City Council services based on the Urban95 learning.

Where the Urban95 Academy strategy is piloted, a case study will be produced to evaluate and monitor impact.

### **Next steps**

As part of the Urban95 Academy, the Leeds Team submitted the local challenge and outline strategy (referenced above: How to positively introduce low traffic/active travel type initiatives through the lens of play). Ten cities are selected to attend a residence week in London where they are matched with a technical partner (e.g., Arup; Gehl; NACTO etc.) who can work intensively with the Local Authority to develop the outline strategy and have it ready for delivery. Due to the strength of Leeds' outline strategy, the Leeds team are now an alternate city. Should any city not be able to attend the residence week, then the Leeds Team will attend.

The Child Friendly Leeds team are pushing ahead with the outline strategy – having received high recommendation from the Urban95 Academy team – and are currently in the process of sourcing funding to pilot this work in Lincoln Green (as well as Meanwood).

Partnership working to progress the play streets and air quality monitoring projects will continue to develop. These projects will be ongoing from September 2023. Third Sector partners are currently being identified and are in the process of being commissioned for this piece of work.

#### **Priority 4 – Lincoln Green**

##### **Update on recent activities.**

Roxby Community Garden (former disused play area) was completed in May 2023 and Mafwa Theatre (community theatre company working mainly with women from migrant backgrounds) have held several community events in the space including theatre performance, live music, dance, art, gardening and craft activities for children and adults.

The Lincoln Greeners gardening group continue to meet every Tuesday and are growing a range of fruit, vegetables and flowers.

Urban Trails are being designed across Burmantofts, Richmond Hill, Harehills as part of a Department for Transport funded walking, cycling, wheeling project and Lincoln Green has been identified as a pilot area for a play-focused trail. A series of design workshops and a site visit were held in August and September and detailed proposals are now being designed by the project team for discussion with community stakeholders. It is planned for the play route to be temporarily marked out as part of a consultation day in Spring 2024.

Plans for a Playbox are at the very early stages. Play Sufficiency research highlighted that there were very limited opportunities for children to play in their local area. The Playbox – a corrugated shipping container – provides a prompt for children’s play, as well as holding a space for community conversations. The design and content of the Playbox is unique to each space it inhabits and can be developed by the local community and key partners. Currently, the idea of a partnership with Mafwa Theatre is being explored.

A Neighbourhood Plan for Mabgate, Lincoln Green and Burmantofts is under development by local groups supported by the Council. In partnership with Leeds City Council’s Planning and Housing teams and East Street Arts, the future play box has been identified as a useful tool to engage with children, young people and families (as well as the wider community) in developing the Neighbourhood Plan, influencing the design of their neighbourhood and responding to the strategic priorities from the Play Sufficiency Assessment

##### **Outcomes and outputs**

Success of completed and developing green space and play improvement projects to be measured through ongoing engagement with Shakespeare Primary School, Mafwa Theatre and the Lincoln Greeners.

##### **Next steps**

Design development of the Urban Trails and play box and ongoing partnership working with Neighbourhood Plan team, Housing team and third sector partners.