

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors D Cohen, J Elliott, C Gruen,
M Harland, M Iqbal, P Latty, K Renshaw
and B Selby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Ms J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Bewsher – Looked after Children and Care Leavers

67 Late Items

There were no late items of business.

68 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

69 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dawson and Ogilvie. Councillor Harland attended the meeting as a substitute for Cllr Dawson. Apologies were also received from Mr EA Britten; Mr A Graham; Ms J Hazelgrave; Ms C Foote; Ms M Owen; Mrs S Hutchinson and Ms C Hopkins.

70 Minutes - 25 January 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

71 Increasing the Number of Young People in Education, Employment or Training

The report of the Director of Children and Families provided an update on the NEET obsession and on activity to meet the monitoring requirement of the Scrutiny Board following the 2013 review into the support for young people identified as being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or at the risk of becoming NEET.

The report identified that of the 13 recommendations arising from the review, only Recommendation 6 remained outstanding: “That the Director of Children’s Services works with Clusters across the City to share good practice and establish programmes in primary schools which reduce the risk of NEET, such as the concept of ‘World of work Wednesdays’. Such programmes should also be adapted to suit the needs of young people in secondary education.”

The following information was included within the report:

- Pathways Support Team – Summary for the City October to December 2017
- Year 12 & 13 NEET story behind the baseline

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor L Mulherin, Executive Member for Children & Families
- Councillor A Lamb, Chair Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth, Culture & Sport)
- Steve Walker – Director of Children & Families
- Andrea Richardson – Head of Services, Learning for Life
- Jean Ellison – Youth Offer Lead
- Peter Storrie – Intelligence & Policy Service

(Councillor Iqbal and Councillor Lamb joined the meeting at this point)

The Board received a presentation which outlined the following matters:

- The new DfE headline performance measure which combined the NEET rate with the ‘not known’ rate
- The role of the Pathway Team, providing Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) support for 18 months and locality working through provision in Community Hubs
- The use of the Leeds Pathway Grant to commission voluntary sector organisations to engage with hardest to reach/least likely to engage young people
- Future plans included further use of assertive outreach work and the annual Leeds Apprenticeship Fair scheduled for 5th March 2018

Referring specifically to Recommendation 6; the Board heard that the structure of Clusters/primary schools had changed and practice now centred on “readiness activities” provided by Children & Families in conjunction with the Jobs & Skills Service. A cross-directorate strategic group had been established to develop shared work and the Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth, Culture & Sport) was currently reviewing the Draft Leeds Talent & Skills Plan and would revisit the picture of programmes in primary schools in order to introduce children to the concept of work and reduce the risk of NEET.

The Board also received assurance on the NEET and ‘Not Known’ data sets. Some of the data collection methods required review in respect of individual settings before the annual data was submitted to the DfE.

Councillor Lamb reported on the findings so far of the Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth, Culture & Sport) inquiry, and the nature of the IAG service provision across the city. He reported it was likely that the Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth, Culture & Sport) would continue to monitor that provision and highlighted the importance of the development of the IAG Charter, developed by young people for young people.

Key areas of discussion included the following:

The cause of NEETS/not knowns –

- The impact of the changing system of post 16 education;
- Entry level requirements for apprenticeships could be prohibitive for some;
- The feedback that some schools remove students from A level courses during the first term if the school perceived there was a risk of them not achieving;
- Children being excluded or encouraged to be home educated.
- Concern regarding an offer of an apprenticeship being withdrawn.

Support for young people making Post 16 choices –

- Alternatives to university education must be highlighted. Apprenticeships also provided higher education and could lead to a degree qualification when supported by an employer;
- The importance of young people being prepared for interview.
- The importance of impartial IAG provision within schools and the Pathways service; noting a comment that some young people would not access services based outside of their locality;
- The Next Steps event focussed on post-GCSE options – the event was now timed to capture any A' Level age students who may be considering a change of direction.

Leeds City Council as best practice –

- Information was requested on the number of apprentices employed by LCC, the nature of their work and wage level was sought alongside consideration of the impact of changes to the Apprenticeship Levy;
- Clarity was sought about the support and recognition for young people without qualifications but who had other skills and if LCC set minimum qualification requirements for entry level jobs
- Noted LCC had launched a supported internship scheme for young people with SEND.

Data –

- Data showed the same four wards recording the highest number of NEETS/Not Knowns, further information was requested to clarify if this had been the case over a number of years;
- Further information was requested for those wards relating to the IAG on offer in those wards. The Board were advised that Hub provision was available in the four wards in response to high levels of need across various service areas. Additionally, Innovation Funding was utilised to establish restorative early support teams to work within the four wards.
- Further information was requested regarding the schools not providing NEET information to the Local Authority. It was suggested that Ward Members take this up and stress the importance of providing NEET information.
- In response to the Board's questions relating to sustained NEET and information relating to Children Looked After and Care Leavers, Members were advised that a more detailed annual NEET report will

be produced once Government data has been shared with Local Authorities. The Board requested that this report be scheduled into the 2018/19 work programme.

RESOLVED –

Having considered the report of the Director of Children and Families, to make the following recommendations:

- a) Having considered and noted the progress made relating to recommendation 6, the Board agreed that this be given a status of 1 (Stop Monitoring) as it will be under further scrutiny as part of the IAG inquiry currently being progressed by the Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth, Culture & Sport)
- b) To note the contents of the report and the comments made during discussions on the progress made to reduce the risk of young people not accessing appropriate employment, education or training.
- c) That the information requested be provided to the Principal Scrutiny Advisor for circulation to the Board
- d) That the NEET annual report be scheduled into the 2018/19 work programme (subject to agreement by the Scrutiny Board in the new municipal year).

72 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be agreed.

73 Adjournment of the meeting

Due to the lack of heating in the meeting room, the Board

RESOLVED –

- a) To adjourn the meeting.
- b) To defer the remaining matters on the agenda to the next Board meeting
 - i) Youth Service – Review of Impact and Outcomes since Service Reconfigurations

74 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 15th March 2018 at 9:45 am (with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.15 am)