

Report of Director of Children and Families

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 20 July 2017



Subject: Impact of child poverty on children's learning outcomes

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Summary of main issues

- 1.1. At the July meeting it is intended to provide an initial presentation to inform the Boards future work into the impact of child poverty on learning outcomes and what is being done to mitigate this in Leeds. This report provides an introduction to the subjects to be covered in the presentation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are recommended to:

- Use the information provided in this report and subsequent presentation to inform their inquiry work.

3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1. This report is an introduction to the Board's inquiry work into the relationship between child poverty and learning. The report presents a succinct overview the supporting detail of which will be presented at the July board meeting and



then in subsequent evidence requests. Some of the detail has been presented in previous reports to the board including those covering annual schools standards and performance against the Children and Young People's Plan.

4. Main issues

- 4.1. Improving outcomes for Leeds children and young people is integral to our strategy of being a strong economy and a compassionate city. This is reflected in the council Business Plan, in the Health and Well-being strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan. Our approach recognises the need for good universal, targeted and specialist services that respond to need, manage risk and secure good outcomes for all. Addressing child poverty, deprivation/disadvantage and promoting equalities are implicit in our strategy and in our support for learning improvement.
- 4.2. Addressing child poverty both its causes and impacts including supporting social mobility and strengthening families are accepted national and local priorities. In 2010 the Child Poverty Act was passed with cross-party support. In 2016, the Welfare Reform and Work Act superseded the Child Poverty Act, this included changing expectations around how child poverty is measured and the need for specific strategies. These changes can be considered more about the how than the goal itself. How best to measure need and impact to effect improvement remains contentious, similarly over the decade there has been a move from distinct child poverty strategies to having the focus built into broader strategies and plans for improving education, employment and for strengthening families.
- 4.3. **Definitions** Listed below are current ways in which child poverty is articulated. These measures all have their own limitations, largely based on the dependencies contained within them, these include: changes in eligibility criteria for benefits; being based on a proportion of a moving national average; or being a generalisation for a geographic area.
 - The most commonly applied national measure is the proportion of children living in families either in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credits with a reported income which is less than 60 per cent of national median income. In 2014 23.1% of Leeds children were living in low income families. Other national measures or indexes of measures are proposed or exist around income, family employment status, parental education, child education and social mobility.
 - Within schools free school meal eligibility, pupil premium eligibility and disadvantaged pupils are fairly interchangeable ways of defining the cohort of children and young people where poverty is considered a factor that may impact on their learning. Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility remains a proxy measure available from the school census that is often used, increasingly this is both current FSM status and eligibility in previous years. It is FSM eligibility in the previous 6 years that determines pupil premium eligibility along with looked after status or being a service child, with a parent currently or previously in the armed services. Pupil premium funding and accountabilities differ for each



group. The term disadvantaged pupils applies to FSM 6 and children looked after continuously for more than one day in the last 12 months.

- The 2015 index of multiple (IMD) deprivation measures relative deprivation for 32,844 areas of England (local super output areas LSOAs), of which 476 areas are in Leeds. We can match home address of Leeds children attending schools to LSOA and measure for example the percentage of Leeds pupils living in an area considered in the most 10% deprived nationally. A sub index IDACI –income deprivation affecting children index is also used. Where an authority ranks in terms of deprivation can influence national funding formulae, Leeds with its size and diversity contains a high number of children living in deprived areas but it can be argued that this gets mitigated and to an extent lost in city averages.

4.4. **Child Population** The Leeds child population is growing and changing. At the beginning of the century around 7,500 children were born annually, for a number of years now it has been close to or above 10,000 births per year. The greatest, but not only, growth in the child population has been concentrated in areas of high deprivation. The population is also increasingly more diverse in terms of ethnicity. Some categories of special educational need and disability are more evident in deprived populations.

4.5. **Learning outcomes** It is a long standing pattern that Leeds children and young people not entitled to free school meals or non-disadvantaged generally achieve in line with their national peer groups. For FSM entitled or disadvantaged the gaps to national peer groups are consistently wider. Leeds patterns are consistent with regional patterns. The Department of Education increasingly emphasises the key gap to be closed is that between the outcomes for local disadvantaged pupils and national non-disadvantaged pupils. In addressing the gaps between Leeds and national and between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged the focus must also remain on raising overall standards as this will have the greatest impact on the most children.

4.6. **Addressing outcomes** The committee may want to consider the following areas in terms of how the impact of child poverty on learning is being addressed.

- Using and measuring free school meal entitlement in terms of achievement is long established and built into accountability arrangements for schools. This has been strengthened through accountability for pupil premium and by changes in national assessment frameworks. The focus of these frameworks has shifted to the progress of all children and away from a proportion of children reaching a defined level. This makes all children count. While this should be considered a positive it is important to ensure that these new incentives don't have any negative impacts on access to provision.
- Pupil premium funding exists to support the learning of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- School Improvement activity including school to school support has and will continue to have a strong focus on the learning of disadvantaged groups.



Ensuring that children and young people are in learning, safe and secure in their learning and making good progress in their learning.

- A refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan is being proposed that will further emphasise the importance of learning and support for vulnerable learners. This will be brought to the committee later in the financial year.
- Within the context of Children's and Families Trust arrangements good engagement and good progress in learning are clear objectives of early help and targeted support. The local Families First programme as part of the national troubled families initiative is an example of a clear focus on the employment status of families.
- Leeds City Council's locality approach is focused on areas of greatest need supporting communities and families, employment opportunities for parents and the engagement of children in learning being central to this.

5. Corporate considerations

5.1. Consultation and engagement

- 5.1.□1. This is an introductory report and as such does not need to be consulted on with the public. The subject matter covered is publically available..

5.2. Equality and diversity/cohesion and integration

- 5.2.□1. This is an information report, rather than a decision report and so due regard is not relevant. However, equality issues are implicit in the subject matter.
- 5.2.□2. Some children and young people are statistically more likely to have relatively poor outcomes, including those living in poverty and in areas of deprivation.

5.3. Council policies and city priorities

- 5.3.□1. The subject matter of this report is consistent with the Best Council Plan and the ambition of a strong economy and a compassionate city.

5.4. Resources and value for money

- 5.4.□1. There are no specific resource implications from this report.

5.5. Legal implications, access to information and call in

- 5.5.□1. All information is publicly available. This report is an introductory report to inform scrutiny's enquiry work.

5.6. Risk management



- 5.6.□1. The subject matter of this report as appropriate is considered within the risk management process in the council and directorate to monitor and manage key risks.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1.□1. This report is an introduction to the Board's inquiry work into the relationship between child poverty and learning.

Recommendations

- 6.2. Members are recommended to:

- Use the information provided in this report and subsequent presentation to inform their inquiry work.

7. Background documents

- 7.1. Further information will be presented at the Board's next meeting.

