

Report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 19 October 2017

Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry– The impact of Child Poverty on Attainment, Achievement and Attendance

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| 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 type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" 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 |

Summary of Main Issues

1. At its meeting on the 15 of June 2017, the Scrutiny Board considered potential sources of work for the 2017/18 municipal year. Following discussion with representatives from Children’s Services the Board expressed a desire to undertake an inquiry which would consider the effect of child poverty on educational attainment, achievement and school attendance. The Scrutiny Board expressed a desire to understand how the impact of child poverty on a child’s education is being challenged, strategically and practically, and also how the impact is managed in order to improve educational outcomes for children, particularly those who are vulnerable, in order to narrow the attainment/achievement gap and improve school attendance.
2. The Scrutiny Board agreed the terms of reference and conducted the first part of the inquiry on the 20 July 2017. At this meeting the Scrutiny Board determined that there would be further focus on the statistical data which would enable the Board to analyse the potential links between poverty and poor achievement, attainment, attendance, and the numbers of identified vulnerable children. This work was originally scheduled to be undertaken in September. Children’s Services requested that the analysis of statistical data be deferred until the November meeting of the Scrutiny Board. This request was agreed by the Board at the September Meeting.
3. On the 4th of October Cllr Sue Bentley and Sandra Hutchinson met with the Education Reference Group of the Leeds Safeguarding Children’s Board to discuss the Scrutiny Inquiry with reference group members. The information gathered at

that meeting will be presented to the Scrutiny Board at the meeting of the 19 October 2017.

4. With regard to the inquiry terms of reference the areas planned for the third session of the inquiry on the 19 October is focused on how Council managed service areas are drivers for strategic and practical change to reduce the impact of child poverty on attainment, achievement and attendance, with particular focus on:

- School Improvement and Governor Support Services
- Free School Meals and Child Hunger, - the take up of FSM in comparison to entitlement, the known/perceived barriers to parents taking up free school meals and what Leeds City Council is doing to raise awareness of entitlement, target parents and promote take up.
- Initiatives run or supported by the Council which aims to ensure that children are not hungry at school and are ready for learning.
- Voice and Influence and the extent to which the impact of poverty is understood from a Child's perspective and how impacts on them at school.

The Director of Children's Services has prepared a report for the Scrutiny Boards consideration.

5. Recommendations

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is recommended to:

- a) Note the information contained within this report, and the information provided by the Director of Children and Families.
- b) Note the verbal information presented at the meeting
- c) Make recommendations as deemed appropriate.