

**Report of Head of Democratic Services**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)**

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

**Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling – Session One**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open 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. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report presents key information linked to the first session of the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling.

**2. Background information**

- 2.1 During its October 2019 meeting, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board received a report from the Director of Children and Families setting out national concerns regarding the rising level of exclusions and elective home education numbers, as well as reflecting the position in Leeds linked to school based data.
- 2.2 In consideration of this report, the Board agreed to undertake further scrutiny surrounding the issues linked to exclusions, elective home education and also off-rolling. The terms of reference linked to this Inquiry were agreed by the Scrutiny Board in November 2019 and are set out in Appendix 1.

**3. Main issues**

- 3.1 In accordance with the terms of reference, the purpose of this first inquiry session is to consider the following:

- The data collated by the Council in relation to exclusions and EHE and any identified gaps that may need addressing;
- Methods of identifying and addressing the practice of off-rolling;
- The potential implications of any future reforms and expectations stemming from the recent national reviews by Timpson and the School Commissioner;
- Internal isolation approaches used by schools as a disciplinary measure;
- Examples of good practice locally in managing children identified as being at risk of exclusion and in reducing exclusion rates;
- The support available for schools in managing pupils who are at risk of exclusion, with particular reference to the role of local Area Inclusion Partnerships, and any identified gaps in this support.

3.2 The report of the Director of Children and Families to the Scrutiny Board in October 2019 provided a comprehensive overview of the data that is collated by the Council in relation to exclusions and EHE. As such, this report has been attached again for ease of reference (see Appendix 2).

3.3 During the Scrutiny Board's meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020, Members also sought clarification surrounding registered and unregistered education provision. Linked to this, the Directorate agreed to provide further detail surrounding the number of pupils being placed in alternative provision via the Area Inclusion Partnerships. This information will be shared during the meeting.

3.4 The Director's report in October 2019 had also acknowledged the national focus surrounding the issue of exclusions, EHE and off-rolling, which stemmed from the findings of recent national reviews undertaken by the former Minister of Children, Edward Timpson, and the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield.

3.5 These relevant national reports have therefore been attached for the Scrutiny Board's consideration:

- Appendix 3 – Report of the Children's Commissioner: Skipping School: Invisible Children. How children disappear from England's schools (February 2019);
- Appendix 4 – Report of the Children's Commissioner: Exclusions. Children excluded from mainstream schools (May 2019);
- Appendix 5 - Timpson Review of School Exclusion (May 2019)

#### **4. Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 The Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment and other senior representatives of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board will be attending today's meeting to contribute to this first inquiry session and address the relevant key areas set out in paragraph 3.1 above.

4.1.2 During the course of this Inquiry, the Scrutiny Board will also be surveying the views of local Head Teachers and Governors and holding a focus group discussion with members of the Leeds Youth Council.

## **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 The publication of exclusions and elective home education data, coupled with challenging the practice of off-rolling puts a strong focus on protecting some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the city and ensuring they are being educated in the settings most appropriate to their needs.

## **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 Ensuring children and young people “do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life” is a key outcome of the Best City Council Plan and improving Attendance, Attainment and Achievement levels amongst all children is the aim of the new 3As Strategy within Children and Families Directorate. To achieve these objectives, it is imperative that children and young people remain in school.
- 4.3.2 These priorities are also reflected in all city strategies contributing to a strong economy and compassionate city including the Best Council Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21, The Best City for Learning 2016-2020, the priority around being a Child Friendly City, Best Start in Life Strategy, Leeds SEND Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 and Thriving - The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds 2019-2022.

### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.3 There are no specific climate emergency implications linked to this report.

## **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

- 4.4.1 This report has no specific resource implications.

## **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

## **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 This report has no specific risk management implications.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake an Inquiry into exclusions, elective home education and off-rolling. The first session of this Inquiry will be undertaken during today’s meeting in accordance with the agreed terms of reference.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 Members are asked to consider the information shared during today’s meeting as part of its inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.