

Report of Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 4th March 2020

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

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 second 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.

3. Main issues

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

- The provision of training for school governors in terms of their role in monitoring school exclusions and challenging head teachers on their strategies for reducing exclusion.
- The extent to which parents and carers are supported in understanding the exclusion process including arrangements for appeal.
- The views of young people, including case study evidence that provides an insight into the experiences of children at risk of, as well as having first-hand experience of, being excluded and the broader lessons that have been learned in terms of supporting the needs of such children.

3.2 The following information has been provided by the Children and Families Directorate in relation to the points above:

- Appendix 1 - Summary of training and support offered to governors and parents and how the views of young people are taken into account.
- Appendix 2 – Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England. Statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion. Department for Education. (September 2017).
- Appendix 3 – Report of the Children’s Commissioner: Exclusions. Children excluded from mainstream schools (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 second inquiry session and address the relevant key areas set out in paragraph 3.1 above.

4.1.2 As part of this Inquiry, the Scrutiny Board was keen to engage directly with young people and therefore arrangements were made for representatives of the Scrutiny Board to meet with members of the Leeds Youth Council on Saturday 15th February 2020. The Chair will therefore be inviting those who attended the LYC meeting to provide feedback to the full Scrutiny Board.

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 second 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 documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ 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.