

Inquiry into Tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families – Formal Response

Date: 16th February 2022

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The former Children and Families Scrutiny Board had used its final meeting in March 2021 to begin exploring what the potential long-term impacts of Covid-19 are likely to be on children and their families and what further actions the council can actively take, along with key partners, to begin mitigating these impacts.
- An inquiry report summarising the Board's views and proposed recommendations arising from its March discussion, but also reflecting any developments and issues raised since March, was considered by the Scrutiny Board in July 2021. As the Board's meeting in July was held as a remote consultative meeting, Members were unable to formally approve its draft report, but were still invited to share any initial views on draft report prior to it coming back to the next formal public meeting for approval. The draft inquiry report was subsequently approved by the Scrutiny Board during its formal public meeting on 8th September 2021.
- In accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, a formal response to the recommendations arising from this inquiry work has now been provided by the Director of Children and Families for the Board's consideration.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the formal response to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry into tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. During its meeting on 8th September 2021, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board formally approved its inquiry report into tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families. This report is set out in Appendix 1.
2. In accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, a formal response to the recommendations arising from this inquiry work has now been provided by the Director of Children and Families for the Board's consideration. This is set out in Appendix 2.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

3. The attached inquiry report summarises the key findings of the Scrutiny Board around specific issues that had been raised primarily during its discussion in March 2021, such as the psychological impacts on children and young people; the impact and recovery needs surrounding lost learning, including the need to deliver a quality remote learning offer in the future; and the impact on early years.
4. In undertaking this piece of work, the Scrutiny Board also identified a number of areas where scrutiny has already played a key role and can continue to add value. This included maintaining a key focus on recovery actions linked to education settings; tracking the implementation of the new Future In Mind Strategy; maintaining a focus on delivering the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy; and maintaining its commitment to resume its ongoing inquiry work in tackling school exclusions, elective home education and off-rolling. Such areas have already been reflected as part the Scrutiny Board's work programme this year.
5. However, the Scrutiny Board also made a number of recommendations for the Director of Children and Families to take a lead in implementing, which are reflected within the attached inquiry report and summarised in Appendix 2 as part of the formal response.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

6. Details of those engaged in the Scrutiny Board's inquiry when compiling the recommendations are set out within the attached inquiry report.
7. During the Scrutiny Board's meetings in July and September 2021, the relevant Director and Executive Board Members had also been invited to share any initial views on the draft inquiry report prior to it being formally approved by the Board.

What are the resource implications?

8. There are no resource implications relevant to this report.

What are the legal implications?

9. This report has no specific legal implications.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

10. There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

11. The Scrutiny Board's inquiry supports the Best Council Priorities in terms of supporting families to give children the best start in life and improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

Appendices

12. Appendix 1 – Tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families – Inquiry Report.
13. Appendix 2 – This presents the formal response of the Director of Children and Families to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry into tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families.

Background papers

14. None.