

# Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children & 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 and council's ambitions

- The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of 'Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds', and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred during the pandemic. This report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.
- This report is an updated report that was presented to the Scrutiny Board in September 2021
- In 2016, Children & Families started to develop a plan around mitigating the impact of child poverty across Leeds. In 2017/2018, a scrutiny enquiry on child poverty recommended that Children & Families integrated more of a central focus on child poverty. The first Child Poverty Impact Board met in 2018, and Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds was launched in 2019.
- The child poverty strategy has been co-created with children, young people, families with direct experience of poverty, third, private and public sector, schools, academics and other organisations.
- We know that the feeling of being in poverty, the feeling of being excluded and the feeling of being ashamed can impact a child for the rest of their life. We don't want this in Leeds. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people. This is our moral imperative
- This report provides information on poverty, which is a key city, regional and national challenge. This priority is reflected in all city strategies contributing to the *strong economy, compassionate city* including the Best Council Plan 2020-2025, the Inclusive Growth Strategy, the Joint Health and Well Being Plan and the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Executive Board report.
- Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this work. Disadvantaged pupils are not a single group; characteristics such as Special Education Need and Disability (SEND), ethnicity, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) interact with disadvantage with varying impacts on progress rates, gaps with non-disadvantaged pupils and the long-term impact of disadvantage. Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 – 2020 have been

developed to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 by helping the council to identify work and activities that reduce disadvantage, discrimination, and inequalities of opportunity.

- The work fulfils some of the best council objectives and priorities as defined in the Best Council Plan 2020-2025. These include; improving educational achievement gaps; providing skills programmes and employment support; improving school attendance and reducing the percentage of young people who are not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).
- The strategy aligns with local and city-wide strategies such as the Priority Neighbourhoods work, the Children and Young People's Plan, Child Friendly Leeds, Future in Mind Strategy, and the Best City for Learning.
- This strategy directly relates to most of the Best Council Plan priorities:
  - tackling poverty, helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential
  - reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles
  - making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in
  - improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities
  - providing homes of the right quality, type and affordability in the right places and minimising homelessness
  - keeping people safe from harm and promoting community respect and resilience
- This strategy relates to the council priority around the climate emergency. As the climate continues to change, extreme weather patterns across the globe will become increasingly common. The knock-on effects of these changes will be profound; however, it is hard to determine what specifically they will look like. What is certain is that there will be scarcity of various resources, such as food and energy, which could lead to price increases, which will have a disproportionate impact on people who live in poverty. We should seek to mitigate the impact of poverty and reduce insecurity and inequality around these basic needs to build strengthened communities for the future.

## **Recommendations**

That the Scrutiny Board endorses the strategic framework in place to mitigate the impact of child poverty, and the work being undertaken by the council and other partners in the key areas of activity.

### **Why is the proposal being put forward?**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of 'Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds', and the work that sits underneath the strategy, including work that has occurred during the pandemic. This report gives an update on each of these workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

**Wards Affected:**

Have ward members been consulted?      Yes      No

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

2. Extensive consultation has been carried out with regards to this strategy, with private, public, third and education sectors, children, young people and parents, universities and community groups.

### **What are the resource implications?**

3. Each project has an individual resource implication. Where possible, a partnership approach has been implemented to pool resources from a variety of directorates and sectors across Leeds.

### **What are the legal implications?**

4. There are no legal implications.

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

5. None.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth       Health and Wellbeing       Climate Emergency

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **a) What other options were considered?**

6. This is an agreed corporate wide strategy which is ongoing.

#### **b) How will success be measured?**

7. The outcomes and outputs set out in Appendix One report the outcomes and outputs of each project.

#### **c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

8. This is an ongoing strategy.

## **Appendices**

9. Appendix 1 – Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

## **Background papers**

10. None.

## Appendix One

### Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

#### 1. Main issues

This report will provide an overview of Thriving, the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy and the various workstreams that sit underneath the strategy. It will also detail our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing work, impact and next steps.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report<sup>1</sup> published in early 2022 outlined the picture of poverty in the UK at the start of 2022, referencing that we do not yet know the full impact of the pandemic. Deriving its data from the latest published data from 2019/20 Department of work and Pensions<sup>2</sup>, it states the 1 in 5 people (22%) are living in relative poverty – which is 14.5 million people. Of these 4.3 million are children (31%). This latest data tells us that almost 1 in 3 children in the UK are living in poverty (31%). which equates to 31% of children or 9 in a classroom of 30. This is a 12-year high. Nearly half of children in lone-parent families live in poverty, compared with 1 in 4 of those in couple families. Of the working-age adults, lone parents are by far the most likely of any family type to be struggling with poverty. The poverty rate for children in larger families with three or more children is now back to around where it was in 1996/7 (48%). Children from Black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to be in poverty: 46 per cent are now in poverty, compared with 26 per cent of children in White British families

An article<sup>3</sup> by Community Care updated/published in January 2022 detailed that child poverty rises linked to 10,000 more children going into care over 5 years. The research<sup>4</sup>, which is currently being peer-reviewed, suggests 10,356 more children living in English local authority areas became looked after than would have been the case had poverty levels remained at 2015 levels. The research team's modelling showed that within English local authorities, between 2015 and 2020, a 1% increase in child poverty was associated with an additional five children entering care per 100,000 population.

The price cap changes to energy bills are set to exacerbate financial challenges for families who are already living in poverty. A recent publication from Citizens Advice Bureau<sup>5</sup> states that frontline advisors are already seeing a 40% increase in people seeking help on fuel debts. Further rises to the energy price cap will put energy bills as a proportion of benefit levels at a generational high and tip many more into hardship, according to Citizens Advice. They estimate that the average proportion of core income-based benefit spent on energy bills this year will be 37%, compared to 14% in 2002.

Poverty is estimated to affect 173,600 people across Leeds (after housing costs are deducted from income (DWP), 2019/20). Child poverty is increasing, in Leeds and nationally, and it is having very serious impacts on children, the adults children become, and on the societies in which children live in poverty. Latest local data<sup>6</sup> from the DWP for year end 2020 revealed 24% of children under 16 (36,496) in Leeds lived in poverty (before housing costs are deducted from income) which is an increase of 9% in a year. This compares to the national figure where 19% of children under 16 lived in poverty (before housing costs are deducted from income).

Poverty intersects with other demographics such as class, ethnicity, age, disability and gender; 46% of children who are from black and minority ethnic groups live in poverty, compared with 26% of children in white British families. Nearly half of those who live in poverty are either a disabled person or live with a disabled person<sup>7</sup>, and the poverty rate for families with a disabled family member rose from 28% in 2011 to 30% in 2017<sup>8</sup>. Women are more likely than men to live in poverty, with 20% of women experiencing

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<sup>1</sup> [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Department of Work and pensions \(updated annually\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Community care](#)

<sup>4</sup> [SSRN](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Citizens Advice Bureau](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Department of Work and pensions \(updated annually\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Disability Rights UK](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Citizens Advice June 2021](#)

poverty compared to 18% of men. Forty-five per cent of single parents - of which 90% are women<sup>9</sup> - are living in poverty<sup>10</sup>.

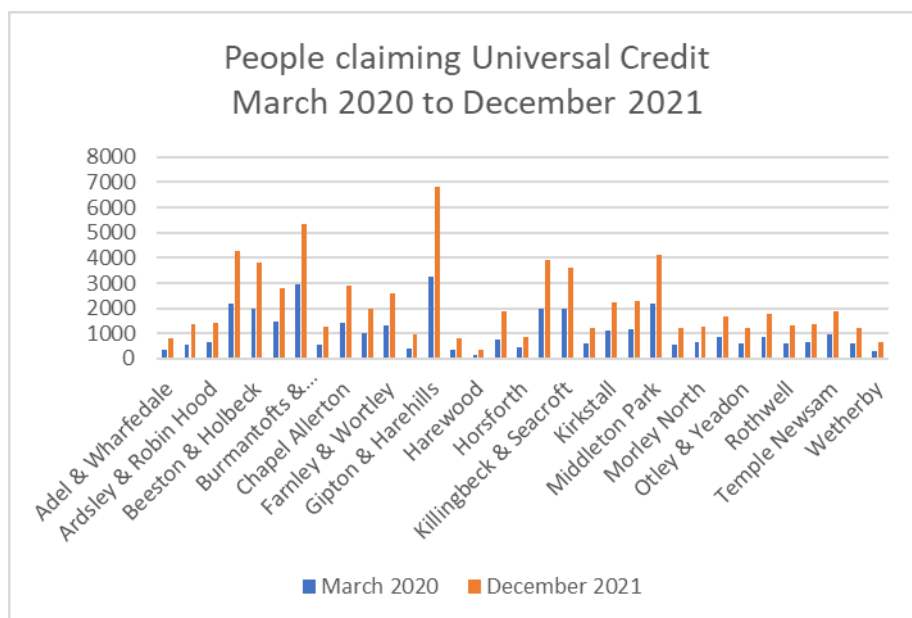
### Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Over the next few years, we will start to see statistics that show the extent of poverty across the UK, and how this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Early indications appear to show that those who were previously experiencing poverty have been pushed deeper into poverty, and those who were previously living above the poverty line have been pushed into poverty. The pandemic has worsened existing inequalities, with vulnerable children facing severe and long-term impacts.

Prior to the pandemic, 3 million people in the UK were behind with one or more key household bills<sup>11</sup>. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced household income, led to a rise in unemployment, resulted in significant increases in claims for Universal Credit, and led to six million people falling behind on bills<sup>12</sup>.

The benefit system has been crucial to the national COVID-19 response but has been under extraordinary pressure from an unprecedented wave of applications for Universal Credit (UC). In December 2021 the provisional figure for the total number of people claiming UC in Leeds local authority area is 71,041; this includes all claimants whether they are in employment or not in employment and is 13.6% of working age population (WAP), which is lower when compared to 14.0% in England and 15.6% in West Yorkshire. There is an increase of 583 claimants on the previous month in November 2021 and an increase of 100% since March 2020. The number of people claiming UC in Leeds that were not in employment in November 2021 is 41,609, which is 8.0% of the working age population. This is a decrease of 617 claiming on the previous month in October 2021 and an increase of 76% since March 2020.

All wards in Leeds have seen an increase in people claiming UC due to not being in employment, with the highest impact on our poorest wards. The most affected wards are Gipton and Harehills, where claimants have increased from 10.6% of WAP, 2,210 claimants in March 2020 to 20.7% of WAP, 4,309 in November 2021, and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward where claimants have increased from 11.0% of the working age population, 2,068 claimants in March 2020 to 17.3% of the working age population, 3,253 claimants in November 2021.



<sup>10</sup> [Women's Budget Group](#)

<sup>11</sup> [University of Birmingham](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Citizens Advice](#)

The number of children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM) has also increased substantially. Data from the January 2021 census showed 30,599 pupils to be eligible, of which 5,299 were reported to not take up the offer of the FSM (82.7% take-up). Recent data (February 2022) shows that 33,325 pupils are entitled to a FSM.

The former Children's Commissioner has estimated that, as a direct result of the pandemic, 300,000 additional children have been pushed into poverty nationally. She has written that COVID-19 has exposed and amplified the existing inequalities which face children *"Those children already facing the worst life chances have felt the greatest burden from the virus and our response to it... Unless we act now, COVID-19 will become an inter-generational crisis, with the impact of the economic fall-out on parents determining the future prospects of their children"*<sup>13</sup>.

## 2.0 Background information

### 2.1 Measures of child poverty

One of the difficulties in discussing child poverty is that there is not one accepted measure of child poverty. Different people define and measure poverty in different ways.

The government use two main measures, relative poverty and absolute poverty:

- Those who live in relative poverty have a household income of less than 60% of the current UK average - so households whose total earnings are currently less than £17,760 are living in relative poverty. One in five households in the UK have an income below the poverty line after housing costs, and 30% of children live in households below the poverty line after housing costs<sup>14</sup>.
- The government's definition of absolute poverty is not the same as other organisations' definition of absolute poverty. It is not an international poverty line, and it is not defined as being able to afford basic essentials. The government's definition of absolute poverty is those who earn less than 60% of the median income of 2010/11. So, households currently living on less than £13,166 after housing costs are living in absolute poverty.

However, poverty cannot just be measured in terms of household income. Because of this, in Leeds, we take a wider understanding, alongside the statistics. Poverty is about what you possess in comparison to what the society around you has.

### 2.2 Causes of Child Poverty

***"Child poverty is not inevitable. In the past, child poverty levels in the UK have been significantly lower than they are today"***<sup>15</sup>. There is a debate around the causes of poverty that tends to blame individuals for their circumstances. Some people point to addiction, worklessness and lack of aspiration as the causes of poverty. People who live in poverty, however, are not to blame for their poverty. Research shows that people who live in poverty do not do anything differently from those who do not live in poverty (Main & Mahony, 2018), they are trying to achieve the same outcomes with less resources, fewer opportunities, and more barriers to success. There is not a simple answer for what causes poverty, instead there are different aspects that often have some interplay between them: "Poverty rarely has a single cause. A range of factors including rising living costs, low pay, lack of work, and inadequate social security benefits together means some people do not have enough resources" (Child Poverty Action Group).

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<sup>13</sup> [Children's Commissioner, 2020](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Child Poverty Action Group](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Child Poverty Action Group](#)

## Living Costs

Increasing costs of rent have resulted in poverty rises in northern England and the Midlands (End Child Poverty). Price rises are outpacing wages, putting pressure on low-income households. Many of these are essential costs, such as food, energy and transport. Households on low incomes tend to be more reliant on public transport, so the increasing costs of buses, trains and coaches is restricting the access of people on low incomes to low-priced food, jobs and accessing healthcare and other services. Energy costs and food costs are increasing year on year, with increases in the prices of food and fuel costing the UK's poorest households an extra £130 per year in 2018<sup>16</sup>.

## Employment

"The long-term deterioration of the terms of employment for workers in the lowest-paid 20 per cent of the UK labour market has been a major cause of enduring poverty in the UK. Low wages, the high cost of childcare and part-time work all conspire to reduce incomes. Many low-paid jobs offer no opportunities to progress to better work and better wages. Others are insecure, with unpredictable hours and incomes"<sup>17</sup>. People who are not working overwhelmingly want to work, but face barriers to employment (Child Poverty Action Group), such as ill-health, childcare and caring responsibilities for family members. In the past, there has been a focus on strengthening the social security system to ensure that those who are in low paid jobs, or who aren't working, are provided with support so that they don't fall into poverty. However, ongoing welfare reforms are contributing to increases in child poverty.

## Social Security

"In-work benefits, such as Universal Credit, are currently insufficient to overcome these labour market challenges and keep people out of poverty. In addition, the very high costs of housing and childcare increase families' risk of poverty. It is generally accepted that where people are out of work or don't earn enough money, the social security system should provide a safety net to prevent them falling into poverty. Unfortunately, this is not the case."<sup>18</sup>. The Economic Affairs Committee presented evidence to the Government<sup>19</sup> showing that the five-week wait for the first Universal Credit payment had a damaging impact on adults and children. This wait is the main factor pushing people into deep poverty, entrenching debt and disproportionately harming women and disabled people. Universal Credit has been named as a key factor in causing soaring rent arrears and the increasing use of foodbanks.

A list of suggested actions that could be taken to lift families out of poverty can be found through Child Poverty Action Group<sup>20</sup>, however ensuring decently paid jobs, providing good, accessible childcare, improving the social security system and having a central focus on tackling child poverty would all help. *"Modest increases in income reduce hardship swiftly and effectively. In 2001, child poverty was 400,000 lower than in 1999 and severe hardship among out-of-work families almost halved – from four in 10 to less than one-quarter in just two years"*<sup>21</sup>.

## 2.3 The Leeds Approach

In 2016, Children & Families started to develop a plan around mitigating the impact of child poverty across Leeds. In 2017/2018, a scrutiny enquiry on child poverty recommended that Children & Families integrated more of a central focus on child poverty. The first Child Poverty Impact Board met in 2018 and Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds was launched in 2019.

The child poverty strategy has been co-created with children, young people, families with direct experience of poverty, third, private and public sector, schools, academics and other organisations.

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<sup>16</sup> [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Child Poverty Action Group](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Child Poverty Action Group](#)

<sup>19</sup> [The Economic Affairs Committee](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Child Poverty Action Group](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Child Poverty Action Group](#)



We know that the feeling of being in poverty, the feeling of being excluded and the feeling of being ashamed can impact a child for the rest of their life. We don't want this in Leeds. So, we are working together, as a city, to reduce the impact of poverty on young people.

This is our moral imperative

There are 7 workstreams which sit under the Child Poverty Impact Board:

1. Readiness for learning and school-aged education
2. Housing and provision
3. Empowering families and safeguarding
4. Financial health and inclusion
5. Transitions and employment
6. Best start for health and wellbeing
7. Green spaces

### **Our Ambitions**

- We will be innovative, together, to break down the barriers that poverty creates.
- We will be brave, together, to revolutionise the way that Leeds works with children, young people and families who live in poverty.
- We will fight, together, to ensure that every child and young person who experiences poverty can thrive.

Thriving has **five fundamental principles**:

- 1) All work needs to be informed by the knowledge of children, young people and parents/carers
- 2) All projects need to work with a wide variety of partners
- 3) The focus is on changing structures, not individuals
- 4) We need to reframe the language and understandings that are used
- 5) Research is incorporated into every project

## **3.0 Main issues**

This section provides an update on each impact workstream, the projects that sit within the impact workstreams and details responses to COVID-19, impact and next steps.

### **3.1 Financial Health & Inclusion**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every family to be equipped with the support, guidance and opportunities needed to live financially secure and stable lives.*** This workstream is led by Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare Communities and Environments.

The main projects are: Financial health and inclusion support directly to families; Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion; and Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support.

#### ***3.1 Priority 1: Increasing engagement in financial health and inclusion support directly to families***

##### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

The key areas of activity for priority 1 are the Healthy Holidays programme, Household Support Fund, and Free School Meal uptake.

##### **a) Healthy Holidays**

Leeds City Council leads the Healthy Holidays programme, which has been running since 2017, in partnership with Leeds Community Foundation. The programme provides enriching activities and healthy

food to children living in poverty in the city. In 2021, the Department for Education allocated Leeds £3.8 million for delivery of holiday programmes over the Easter, summer and Christmas holiday periods.

Over 140 providers, including schools, third sector organisations and council provision reached thousands of children and young people in 2021. Provision was a mixture of face to face, online or activities delivered to homes over Easter and Christmas, due to COVID impacts, and provision was fully face to face for summer 2021.

Activities over in 2021 have included: assault courses, food preparation, pottery painting, cooking, professional artist visits, multisport, forest school, PSHE/ SEMH, podcasts, trips out, theatre trips, lego, drawing, gymnastics, go-karting, rocket building, sports tournaments, computing, recycling sessions, scooting, circus skills, BMX, golf, dance, Ping-Pong, health and wellbeing, nutrition, active maths & literacy, theatre school, arts & crafts, den building, campfire cooking, skateboarding, climbing, bouncy castles, science experiments, obstacle course, reptile visits, yoga, free play, acrobatic skills, story time, T-shirt printing, home-made board games, face painting, archery, teacher led multi-sensory play, jewellery making, animal encounters, water slide, swimming, confidence building sessions, zoom cooking sessions.

The programme focuses on providing food and activities, and also provides a huge range of additional benefits to children, young people, families and organisations in Leeds. These benefits include: relationship building, safeguarding, mental & physical health, link into wider support networks, social support, friendships, stability, confidence, reducing isolation, wider experiences, fun, informal learning, and lifelong habit building.

Additional support was provided by a wide range of council and external providers, which complimented the programmes. Food support was provided through Catering Leeds, Fareshare, Rethink food, Hamara and Give a Gift. Active Leeds ran swimming catch up programmes which were attended by over 1,300 pupils, Parks & Countryside's provided trips to Temple Newsam and Lotherton, LS14 Trust delivered over 27,000 activity packs and information leaflets were distributed to providers.

The Department for Education have confirmed that the programme will be funded for the next 3 years. For 2022, Leeds City Council has been allocated over £3.4million for delivery over the Easter, summer & Christmas school holidays.

#### **b) Household Support Fund**

Following the ending of the COVID Local Support Grant funding at the end of September 2021, in October 2021 the Department for Work and Pensions announced that a new Household Support Fund would be made available to local authorities in England to support those most in need this winter with the costs of food, fuel and essential items between October 2021 and March 2022. At least 50% of the total funding must be for families with children. Leeds City Council has been allocated £7.1 million, and is using the funding in a number of ways including;

- Food support for all children and young people eligible for free school meals and in low-income households for October, Christmas and February school holidays
- Food support for families on low income with children aged 0-4
- Support for care leavers on low income
- Fuel support for families in receipt of Council Tax Support
- Funding for charities and food aid providers

#### **c) Free School Meals**

The Health and Wellbeing Service (HWS) work with the Council Tax and Benefits Service (CTBS) to support schools and communicate information relating to FSM and COVID-19. A face-to-face training event took place in October attended by 14 schools to share learning on FSM and Food Poverty. This course was delivered by the HWS in partnership with the CTBS. Full guidance on free school meals during the coronavirus outbreak is available [here](#).

## **Outcomes and outputs**

### **a) Healthy Holidays**

Summer provision was delivered through:

- 51 third sector groups
- 68 schools
- 5 Breeze camps
- 6 Youth Service provisions
- 26 Community Hubs

In total, all provisions reached:

- 14,239 children and young people
- 108,433 portions of food were provided

Christmas provision was delivered through:

- 42 third sector groups
- 44 schools
- 11 Community Hubs

For Christmas provisions reached:

- 6884 children and young people
- 30,387 portions of food were provided

For the year 2021, in total, all provisions reached:

- 27,000 children and young people across all holiday periods
- 202,000 portions of food were provided

### **Feedback from school provisions:**

*"One attendee is on the child protection register, with Asylum Seeker status. Prior to coming to our school, the child missed a lot of education. Really keen to attend our holiday club as wanted to make new friends, which was successful. VERY keen on football and sports so thoroughly engaged and enjoyed the weeks' activities. The child said they had prayed for a 'good Christmas' and cried tears of joy when told about going to Old Trafford. "Going to Manchester United football ground is the BEST Christmas present EVER""*

*"A big thank you! The impact it has had on our students is huge and they thoroughly enjoyed the event. As a group of staff, we want to give our students experiences and skills that will change the way they see their future. The grant went along way to give them opportunities they would never have experienced normally. Thank you"*

### **b) Household Support Fund**

By the end of February 2022, the funding had been used to support families with children in the following ways;

- Providing food support in school holidays for approximately 36,000 children and young people eligible for free school meals and in low-income households for each school holiday period in October, Christmas and February (approximately 144,000 in total)
- Providing food support for approximately 5,000 children aged 0-4 years living in low-income households.
- Supporting 700 care leavers on low income, with food and fuel costs.
- Providing Fuel support for over 16,000 families in receipt of Council Tax Support
- Providing additional support for over 100 families with children claiming Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Providing support with Council Tax payments for 800 families with children.
- Funding for charities and food aid providers through the Leeds Food Aid Network, Leeds Baby Bank and Zarach.

### **c) Free School Meals**

The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals continues to grow, as a result of the changes made by Department for Education in light of the roll out Universal Credit and the proactive work carried out by LCC. The number of pupils eligible in Leeds for free school meals as of February 2021 is 33,325 children which is an increase of nearly 10% from last year. Take up of free school meals has been running consistently between 75% and 81% since 2013. This year there has been an increase above the trend to 82.7% which is positive news.

In terms of Universal Infant Free School Meals, which are available to all children in Reception, Year One and Year Two, recent data for Leeds, shows a decrease in take-up from 91.3% in 2019/20 to 87.9% at the October 2021 census. This maybe be due to the impact of the pandemic and classroom meals over the past year, this data will continue to be monitored closely. In addition, publicity material has recently been shared with school to encourage take up [School Wellbeing](#).

### **Next steps**

In terms of Healthy Holidays planning for the 2022 programme is currently underway, with Easter delivery being the key focus.

Work continues to ensure that Household Support Funding is allocated and spent by the end of March. The government have not indicated whether there will be any further funding made available via the Household Support Fund beyond March 2022.

## ***3.2 Priority 2: Increasing engagement in wider support and guidance to families to support financial health and inclusion***

### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID:**

In terms of engagement in wider support and guidance, current focus is on the Uniform Re-use scheme and gambling-related harm work.

### **a) Uniform scheme**

Leeds City Council and Leeds Community Foundation have funded Zero Waste Leeds to bring a co-ordinated uniform reuse scheme to the city. The aim of the scheme is to reduce the amount of uniforms sent to waste, reduce the stigma of wearing second hand clothing and tackling poverty through encouraging more families to reuse and donate rather than to feel pressured to buy new uniform every term.

Despite the delays and difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, 'The Big Leeds School Uniform Giveaway' successfully launched in Summer 2021. As well as providing good quality, free school uniform, the shops provided a highly visible opportunity to promote the wider scheme. Details of the events were shared publicly and with cross Council colleagues and financial inclusion partners, specifically those supporting children and low-income families.

Uniform exchange promotional events are now taking place across the city, during half terms and seasonal periods. Various regular weekly exchanges have now also been established, alongside other support services.

In addition Zero Waste Leeds is now exploring additional opportunities, including 'Together for Sport' project, which aims to establish a framework for the donation and distribution of sport kit and equipment, and a Winter Coat Donation Campaign.

### **b) Gambling Related Harm**

Communications and training remain the key priorities for 2021, informed by the learning from the My Health, My School survey results for 2019/2020. A Communications Plan was developed for 2021 and included content timed around key events, such as Safer Gambling Week. The Communications Team are

supporting this work via Leeds City Council's corporate channels alongside the Financial Inclusion Team via the Money Information Centre social media accounts, supported by Public Health. Public Health are currently analysing the results from the My Health, My School survey results for 2020/2021, which will inform the forward plan for communications and training.

Public Health have supported charities YGAM and GamCare to establish links within Children's Services, including Children's Centres, Early Help, Youth Service and Workforce Development. This has resulted in the charities working in partnership to develop an offer for both primary, secondary and Post 16 settings, which was promoted via the Health & Wellbeing Service via their website and networking events.

Both agencies have independently delivered training workshops to Leeds City College. GamCare also worked in partnership with the council's workforce development team to offer training sessions aimed at foster carers, social workers and youth workers. As well as jointly delivering a with the Leeds Public Health team a webinar on Gaming, Gambling and Young People hosted by the PH Resource Centre which was attended by various local authority staff and third sector providers. The session was repeated during Safer Gambling week in November 2021.

Social media posts were scheduled for Children's Mental Health Week from 7-14<sup>th</sup> February with targeted messaging around gambling and mental health and links to the dedicated gambling pages for young people on Mindmate.

## **Outcomes and outputs**

### **a) Uniform Scheme**

There are now 273 uniform exchanges operating in the city, covering 92% of schools in Leeds. Work is now ongoing to provide targeted support and encouragement to identified schools that without an exchange, estimated to be less than 20 schools.

The Leeds School Uniform Exchange Facebook page has 2300 members, and a further 30 independent Facebook exchanges have also been established.

Over the summer a total of 44 'pop up shops' ran in various locations across the city, distributing an estimated total of 8,500 items. Based on the DfE's average uniform costs, this has saved Leeds families approximately £144,000. Zero Waste Leeds has also estimated the combined environmental impacts of the event; saving 1,700kg of potential textile waste and 30.600kg of CO2.

The Winter Coat Campaign received donations of over 300 coats, saving families an estimated £8,000.

### **b) Gambling Related Harm**

The Gaming, Gambling and Young People training sessions held during November were attended by 35 people across the two sessions.

During Safer Gambling Week, social media posts covering topics relating to children, gambling and gambling were shared across both twitter and Facebook via the Leeds Money Information Centre accounts reached a total of 14,676 people with 233 engagements. The analytics show that parents were particularly interested in posts sharing tips around online gaming and gambling. This will help inform future communications planning.

## **Next steps**

Work will continue to develop the Uniform Re-use scheme across the city, Zero Waste Leeds have received further funding from the council for phase 3 of the project and support for the 'Together for Sports' project. The projects will continue to link with Healthy Holiday activities.

In terms of the gambling-related harm work, the insight gathered over recent months will be used to inform future communications planning and training packages during 2022.

### **3.3 Priority 3: Ensuring knowledge and understanding of financial health and inclusion issues and support**

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID:**

A range of awareness raising sessions have been undertaken over the past 3 months focussed on financial health and inclusion issues. These have included sessions on financial wellbeing, illegal money lending, money mules, Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space), gambling harms and young people gambling & gaming.

Each session has been facilitated by the financial inclusion team in collaboration with the relevant partners organisations and experts. Sessions have been promoted across the council and attended by a range of services including services working directly with families with children. On average each session has had around 25 participants, with over 140 people attending overall.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

As reported above.

#### **Next steps**

Work for this priority over the coming months will include:

- Establishing a clear and concise narrative using poverty statistics, data and local evidence.
- Working with colleagues in children's services to develop training and engagement material to promote routes to support for financial health and inclusion.

## **4 Best Start for Health & Wellbeing**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every Leeds baby from conception to age two to have the best start in life, especially those who are the most vulnerable.*** This workstream is led by Kathryn Ingold, the Chief Officer - Public Health.

### **4.1 Priority 1 Preparation for Birth and Beyond (PBB)**

The virtual PBB courses continue to run with good attendance from pregnant people and their support partner, from 1<sup>st</sup> Aug 2020- Feb 2021, 230 mothers attended the course along with 150 fathers. The sessions are delivered in partnership by 0-19 service and children's centres with 4 courses being delivered per month on a rolling programme. The face-to-face PBB sessions have had to be paused for January by the 0-19 service due to capacity issues, however we are exploring how these can be run without a 0-19 practitioner in the short term. This will also help to upskill other practitioners to future proof the offer. The face-to-face courses will recommence this month (Feb) and will build up to 4 courses per month.

The practitioner PBB forum continues to run quarterly to ensure that practitioners are skilled and confident in facilitating the sessions.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

Verbal feedback from virtual sessions continues to be positive, with many commenting on how much they have learned about caring for baby and about baby brain development. The electronic survey has been reintroduced with a reminder to complete at the end of each session.

Many of the recently run virtual courses have seen large numbers of fathers/partners attending the sessions, fathers/partners have commented that they feel much more part of the pregnancy journey and that they feel more informed and involved.

Feedback from practitioners:

- People enjoy the activities and like the opportunity to chat in the break and stay in touch after the course.

- More partners are attending the virtual session 5-7pm. Fathers ask questions.
- People are receptive and interested in the content. They are taking on board information shared.
- Dads particularly seem to like the in utero and baby brain information and love to ask questions about this.
- After initial challenges around the virtual aspect ie sharing screen etc virtual PBB is easy to deliver and there are a more diverse range of parents attending.
- Some will keep their cameras off and this can be hard work for facilitators but with support most parents will put cameras on when they are speaking
- Its lovely to see mums and dads all comfortable at home.
- The parents need support to converse with one another during virtual breaks
- Staff have enjoyed the face-to-face PBB sessions and like the new content

#### Feedback from parents:

- Good advice re Baby buddy app - I've downloaded this and looked in the break, looks really good.
- Really enjoyed the last activity on how the baby will look
- Really useful to learn about talking to baby and the positive impact this has
- Made us think about more than just the practical aspects (like feeding and sleeping) and the importance of bonding with baby and how to do this
- Learnt about the signals baby can give you which (DAD) thought was very useful.
- Really liked imagining what baby will look like and also watching the videos seeing the interactions and communicating with baby
- baby cues was interesting, mimicking from birth. playing music or singing to the bump.
- found feeding cues helpful.
- Generally very informative about the benefit of breast feeding but it was delivered in a way that I felt didn't put pressure on me
- Learnt - really useful safe sleeping tips thank you and I've just bought some sleeping bags online. Thanks very much
- One thing we have learnt how to put the baby to bed properly. One thing we have changed is no teddies in cot and one thing that could be better can't think of anything
- thank you so much for everything.

#### **Next steps**

To develop a forward timetable for 3 months of courses including 4 virtual courses 4 face to face courses per month.

Through the project with Best Beginnings, we will use the Baby buddy app to provide 'pop up' prompts to remind users to access the PBB offer and how to do that.

The infant mental health service is providing on-going training to enable more practitioners to be able to facilitate the courses. Top-up breastfeeding and relationship building training will be offered to any staff who will be newly taking the lead on running the face-to-face sessions.

#### **4.2 Priority 2 - Baby Buddy App**

##### **Update on recent activities including impact of covid**

Baby Buddy is an app that is free to use. It provides evidence-based support and information which is accessible at any time. Currently, approximately 41% of expectant and new parents in Leeds use the app, an increase of 7% in the last quarter. In the early stages of COVID-19 the app was updated to reflect relevant guidance and has continued to do so throughout the pandemic, providing a central point of evidence-based information for users 24/7.

**Baby Buddy 2.0** launched on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021. The new App has been completely updated with additional functions including content up to the first birthday, information for fathers/partners, choice of place of birth and in App support plans/spaces.

There is currently a short-term project (from Oct 1<sup>st</sup>-March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022) between Best Beginnings and Leeds City Council to work collaboratively with partners to maximize the uptake and usage of Baby Buddy amongst mothers, fathers, co-parents and caregivers, with a focus on reaching parents that are from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, asylum seeker and refugee communities. The current progress for this project is as follows:

- Information is being collated from services and organisations to be included to localise and enhance Baby Buddy 2.0
- So far over 40 multi-disciplinary professionals and staff across Leeds have been trained in using and sharing the App
- Localized training videos have been developed
- Training has been provided for parents and volunteers from Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations across Leeds to ensure they are engaged and empowered to use Baby Buddy and its resources with the communities they support
- Branded Baby Buddy leaflets, banners, posters and flyers with Leeds logos are being developed and these were distributed in February to a range of services across Leeds to reach parents.

Through the delivery of the complete programme of work it is expected that by end March 2022 at least 40% (this target has already been reached) of new and expectant families across Leeds will be actively using Baby Buddy 2.0, with this percentage rising to more than 60% of families by the end of 2022.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

There were over 2,500 new registrations for Baby Buddy 2.0 September 2021 – Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022. In addition to this, there were 670 new registrations for Baby Buddy 1.0 and 829 existing Baby Buddy 1.0 users moved over to Baby Buddy 2.0. The registrations as a percentage of the birth cohort in Leeds increased by 7% from 33.67% in September 2021 to 41.35% in February 2022.

22% of the downloads were from mothers aged 15-24 years, with the highest number (38%) being from mothers 30-34 years. The top 3 areas for downloads are Chapel Allerton, Killingbeck and Seacroft and Calverley and Farsley. 27% of mothers downloading the App were from BAME communities. 70% of users recorded that they are in paid employment.

Feedback from staff attending the training:

- *App is now more user friendly.*
- *A very informative session. I feel that it has increased my knowledge and will support me to support families I work with.*
- *Well done Laura you didn't over complicate anything and made me feel more than confident to use the new app and I'm keen to use new features such as personal spaces with colleagues so we can have a collection of useful information for groups and courses we deliver to families.*
- *I'm impressed with the ease of use and would be confident to share with parents.*
- *Really enjoyable and knowledgeable, gained more skills of the use of Baby buddy app and brought it back to the forefront of making sure parents are aware.*
- *I really enjoyed the training. I'm always keen to hear about new developments and any learning opportunities.*
- *I have a great interest in antenatal education, so it's been great to be part of. I'm looking forward to starting to promote the app with parents and colleagues now I have up to date knowledge about how it works.*
- *The app looks amazing I think this will be a really useful tool to share with families*



### **Next steps**

To continue to work with Best Beginnings and services/organisations on the interconnected workstreams and activities to increase the uptake of Baby Buddy 2.0 in Leeds. This includes

- Distributing the bespoke Leeds resources, promotional materials and social media assets
- Sharing the bespoke training video across services in Leeds City Council
- Developing the short films for the App using parent volunteers from varying communities including young parents, families from GRT communities and those from BAME communities
- Collating feedback via the App and via the Champions form new and expectant parents

### **4.3 Priority 3 Economic wellbeing pathway**

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

The 0-19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service has reviewed and updated the economic wellbeing pathway and uploaded onto the internal intranet to make it easier for practitioners to access. The pathway describes how the 0-19 PHINS and Early Start practitioners will support families to achieve economic wellbeing. This includes support to families to:

- Maximise income
- Manage debt
- Access support services
- Reduce fuel bills
- Develop financial literacy
- Access education and work

The pathway includes links to a huge range of support that practitioners can signpost to.

Staff training is still ongoing on the economic wellbeing pathway and there will be a repeat referral audit over the coming 12 months.

The service has received some additional food vouchers which are being distributed to families in food poverty, specifically to families with children under 2 years. The service delivers universal support to families who other services may not see and ensure families with small children get economic support. Practitioners have expressed their appreciation of being able to help families that are in crisis and give them some practical support that provides instant help.

There are still numerous housing concerns mainly in the Harehills area with infestation in privately rented housing in the Harehills area which has been addressed with councillors and public health. The practitioners refer to the private sector housing enforcement team however they have not yet been able to visit due to covid restrictions. Plans to address this are in place.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

The 0-19 PHINS practitioners come across families with social and economic needs on a daily basis. The arrival of a new baby often puts additional pressure on a low-income household. Needs are identified via mandated contacts and through these interventions they enquire about debt, benefit entitlements and employment. They signpost/refer families to benefit support, healthy start vouchers, child benefit application process and local support networks including One Stop centres, Children's Centres or libraries.

#### **Case study**

Young mother 18 years old – significant abuse herself in her own childhood that has impacted on her sense of wellbeing and feeling happy and her partner who had a father who was physically abusive. She attended the Baby Steps programme referred through by her midwife but was living in an overcrowded house with extended family. Economic wellbeing was recognised as an issue by the 0-19 PHINS practitioner and the pathway followed to offer support to improve situation and ability to access own housing and social needs.

Referred to Gipsil for housing needs and the Market Place for counselling. Awaiting an appointment with limited ability to access through confidence and travel costs. Family then moved out of Leeds which delayed the ongoing support but on arrival back in Leeds the continuing support via 0-19 PHINS will help family access services. Due to the shared record across health which extends across other geographical areas the 0-19 practitioners can track the family's needs for secure accommodation, movement and whereabouts. This is a safety net for the young child to ensure their needs are being met within the emotional availability of the parents and the other pressing issues that are faced when you do not have lifestyle stability and a happy place to live.

### **Next steps**

Training for 0-19 staff and monitoring of the economic wellbeing pathway is ongoing.

The universal offer reaches those families hidden from view and provides a way to engage families. The service continues to advocate the needs of families, signposting and referring to support services.

Continual updating of the service directory ensures parents are given correct information and new services are included.

## **5.0 Housing & Provision**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to support every family and young person living in social housing in Leeds to achieve a sustainable tenancy***

This workstream is led by Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer Housing, Resources and Housing.

### ***5.1 Priority 1 – Joint Working Between Housing and Children's Social Work Teams to Support Families in Council Tenancies***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

Representatives from Housing Management are now attending the Housing Working Group for looked after children and care leavers to strengthen connections and working practices between teams.

Housing Management and Targeted Services are working together to identify and resolve problems with children, young people, parents, carers, or adults within a family particularly where it is having an impact on education.

Representatives from Housing Management have met with Children's Social Work (CSW) Area Management Teams and the citywide CHAD Management team to make introductions, strengthen connections and communication between teams. Meetings and introductions have helped with reactive problem solving and signposting between area leads to help support priority and urgent cases.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

**Case Study: Mrs R– single parent with 3 children.** Case picked up by a Housing Officer following report by contractors they were unwilling to carry out work in the property due to the unhygienic condition of the property.

Housing Officer visited with a colleague from our in-house Support team to inspect / discuss with tenant who admitted was not coping and burying her head in the sand. Subsequent referrals made to Children's Services and Family Outreach Team for support.

Follow up visits carried out by Housing Officer and Social Worker to discuss and implement ongoing support, clean-up of the property which was financed by Tenancy Sustainment fund with further work to the garden supported by the local housing office to bring the property and garden back to a manageable level for the tenant to maintain.

Tenancy has been earmarked for a biannual check to ensure standards are being maintained and any future support needs can be acted upon quickly.

#### **Next steps**

Continue to improve and embed links between local teams - details for local Housing teams, Housing Options and Private Sector Housing have been shared with Children's Social Work area teams and citywide CHAD team to enable direct contact with the correct teams. Invites to be extended between local Housing and CSW Teams for regular attendance at each other's team meetings to make introductions / discuss local priorities and opportunities for proactive joint working to prevent tenancies from failing.

### ***5.2 Priority 2 – Refreshing the Rehousing Pathway for Care Leavers***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

We are in the process of agreeing a continuous service development/improvement plan with Corporate Parenting. The main themes are:

- Ensuring a robust, joint assessment process is in place for young people presenting with accommodation needs.
- A more coordinated approach to OWL referrals, ensuring that spaces are allocated appropriately.
- Reviewing our offer for kinship/foster care.
- Reviewing our offer to care leavers during their tenancy.
- A better process in place for CSWS to access housing (private, supported, social) at short notice for placement purposes.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

Continued representation at the Housing Working Group for looked after children and care leavers - to discuss joint solutions to complex cases and address blockages in the move on process.

Following attendance at our Lettings Forum, local Lettings Teams are working with Our Way Leeds(OWL) and Beacon Leeds support to overcome barriers to clients accessing move on accommodation and exploring appropriate alternate locations / areas.

#### **Next steps**

We have secured funding to employ a service expert to help us with early intervention for young people and joint work around homeless 16- and 17-year olds. Whilst Leeds doesn't have a proportionately higher homeless rate than other cities and we don't see any 16/17-year olds in the rough sleeper counts. We do see a high number of approaches from young people asking for help with accommodation. We need to understand why and what preventative work we can do to combat this. Work will start this month with a project team within our Housing Options service.

Further work is needed to reduce the number of bypasses for tenancy ready OWL and BEACON clients' discussions are ongoing regarding better information sharing between support providers and the service such as sharing support plans and ensuring information is up to date on applications to enable lettings staff can make an informed choice.

### ***5.3 Priority 3 – Supporting Families in Council Tenancies to Maximise their Income***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

During the pandemic our officers have noted the following trends:

Whilst the number of new UC claimants has decreased throughout the pandemic, we have seen an increase in the number of tenants who require assistance to submit their UC claim.

In addition, we are seeing an increase in 'advice' only calls. This is due to tenants either claiming benefits for the first time or having changes in circumstances, such as returning to work or changing their hours worked and wanting to know how they will be affected.

We continue to receive a large number for requests for help with budgeting and debt issues. Not only have we sought to respond to these issues by making referrals for support, but we also undertake benefit checks to ensure that families are getting the benefits to which they are entitled and at the right amount.

We are referring to external partners for practical assistance, such as food parcels and utility top-ups. We make referrals to Money and Budgeting Service (MABS), food banks, food clubs, Green Doctors, as well as sector specific charities, like Royal British Legion.

We are seeing a marked increase in the number of Mandatory Reconsiderations that we are submitting to the DWP, where applications for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) are refused at the initial stage. We are seeing a reasonable number of mandatory reconsiderations being successfully upheld.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

**April 2021 – June 2021** – we supported 1222 households of which 415 were households with children – securing £493k additional income of which £140k was for households with children

**June 2021 – September 2021** - we supported 1974 households of which 636 were households with children – securing £686k additional income of which £196k was for households with children.

**October 2021 - December 2021** - we supported 1017 households, of which 283 were households with children, securing £130,000 additional income, of which £26,170 was for households with children.

**Case study: Mrs A** was in a violent relationship and her partner had coerced her into moving into his property. Mrs A feared saying no to him and was also terrified that she would lose her LCC tenancy, so had not engaged with the area housing team. As a result, large rent arrears had accrued. Mrs A's partner had also removed all furniture and white goods from her property.

Once Mrs A made contact seeking help, she advised that the violence had increased since she had moved, and it had also affected her daughter, who had begun bedwetting on a regular basis. Our officer undertook a range of activities to support Mrs A in moving back into her LCC property.

These included:

- Ensuring the locks were changed for Mrs A's safety.
- Made contact with gas and electricity suppliers. There was debt on both services which our officer managed to have cleared and credit placed onto meters.
- Referred to Leeds Welfare Support Scheme who replaced white goods
- Referred to St Jude's who replaced furniture and provided additional bed linen due to daughter's bed wetting.
- Referred to St Vincent's for ongoing debt advice and support.
- Carried out Benefit Check, but all benefits were in payment at the time
- Completed successful DHP application to address Mrs A's arrears.

Mrs A has advised that it was important to her that she didn't leave her property, as she wanted to try and carry on with her life and not just give up. She now feels safe and secure, and her daughter's situation has improved dramatically since moving back home.

## **Next steps**

We continue to strengthen our partnership with Scope and Yorkshire Water to support tenants with their energy costs. Training has been provided to staff and we are able to make direct referrals for their services to help tenants who are low incomes or claiming UC or legacy benefits.

DWP Co-Location Programme, re launch was postponed due to continued restrictions due to the Omicron outbreak we are working with the DWP and will hopefully relaunch late Spring, this will support links between the 7 Job Centre Plus sites across Leeds and LCC local area housing offices. Our officers will be based in the 7 sites to enable closer working with the DWP to help identifying issues that may prevent UC claims being paid correctly and on time and assisting each other to solve the issues when raised for the benefit of our tenants.

## **6.0 Employment & Transitions**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want every young person and family to have the relevant skills and experience to access and secure well paid employment.*** This workstream is led by Martyn Long, Head of Service Employment and Skills

### ***6.1 Priority 1 - Raise awareness for access to employability and skills provision to support people into work and/or improve their skills.***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

The Employment and Skills service offers a wide range of targeted employment support programmes and employer-led sector specific interventions alongside the universal information, advice and guidance offer available from Jobshops in Community Hubs. All Jobshops are now fully open, 5 days a week for face-to-face appointments.

Employment and Skills continued to act as a Gateway to help provide placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. 660 placements have been approved with 321 placements filled to end of December 2021 date with Employers across the city, 47 of these are with Leeds City Council.

The Adult Learning programme continues to deliver an effective, broad, and inclusive curriculum to support the continuation of learning in response to Covid-19 through an online platform in collaboration with subcontracted partners. Courses were delivered through a range of models to include online face to face and through distance learning, opening new opportunities for adults to learn and develop their confidence. For the 2021/22 Academic Year 135 courses are also planned for on-line delivery.

Leeds Adult Learning Summer 2021 saw a range of activity across the city to raise the profile of learning and engage Leeds. Activity included a community engagement / marketing campaign, a summer programme of taster courses and a partnership approach with family learning supporting the delivery of the Council's Healthy Holiday programme.

Over 202 new businesses were supported to recruit new staff, provide support for staff facing redundancy and developing initiatives to address staff shortages and filling a high number of vacancies within key sectors.

A Restaurant Ready programme is a 5-day course aimed to upskill individuals to successfully enter the hospitality sector through providing practical experience within Leeds City College's café and restaurant facilities. An opportunity for participants to be signposted to work trials and interviews with employers. A Christmas recruitment fair took place on Wednesday 22nd September 2021 held at the Engine Room at Leeds Bid, 265 people attended.

The service is continuing to work with HMP Wealstun and the Leeds Hotels and Venues Association around the recruitment of ex-offenders into the hospitality sector. McDonalds hosts Breakfast Events at the Briggate store to support the recruitment of 30 vacancies. Further events planned in 2022.

Health and Social Care Jobsfairs were held in October and November 2021 with 45 Employers/Training Providers. To promote the events and engage with people within the Priority Neighbourhoods, the HUGO Bus (Helping You Get Online) visited the communities over three days. A total of 790 people engaged over the 5 events.

Recruitment commenced in September 2021 for the Civil Service Care Leaver Internship Programme. An information session was held on the 7th September, 4 young people attended. A total of 10 young people were supported and submitted applications before the 27<sup>th</sup> September deadline.

### Outcomes and outputs

Parents can access a range of employment support services and the data shows that between April to December 2021 a total of 8,439 customers accessing the services, of whom 60% are from the 20% most deprived SOAs in the city. 22% had a child under 16 years of age and 10% were lone parents. While this information is requested of service users, a number prefer not to provide this information.

April – December 2021	No. of residents supported	Residents supported with a child under 16 yrs.		Lone Parents supported	
		Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Jobshops	2,403	731	30%	354	15%
Employment Hub	3,395	832	25%	411	12%
Adult Learning	2,641	323	12%	97	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,439</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>10%</b>

### Next steps

The Leeds Health & Care Careers, narrowing inequalities targeting engagement in Priority Neighbourhoods (PN) and deprived wards adapting recruitment practices to remove barriers to simplify access to the sector. In 2022 the new delivery model will be launched in the PN and deprived Wards in the East that expands the pathways to careers within the sector, simplifies the referral mechanism and incorporates the newly funded Healthier Working Futures, Community Renewal Fund (CRF) project to support young people (16-25).

Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair (LARF) took at Leeds First Direct Arena on Monday 7th February 2022. Schools were offered opportunities to block book timeslots to bring groups of young people. Promotion about the fair including resources to use with students and any Covid-19 updates were delivered to schools through various channels throughout the run up to the event.

The new “Apprenticeships in Leeds” website will be launched in February 2022 will allow people to identify employers and training providers who offer Apprenticeship opportunities and programmes in Leeds. A promotional campaign is planned, with the new website going live in February 2022

## **6.2 Priority 2 - Connecting parents / carers to Family Learning provision to enhance children’s learning through activities, techniques and games delivered in schools**

### Update on recent activities including impact of covid

Covid continues to impact Family Learning delivery, particularly in terms of the types of activity being requested from schools and Children’s Centres. In particular, 18 months of restrictions have impacted phonics, maths and English development for children, particularly those in reception and year 1 meaning that these types of courses continue to be in huge demand and remain a key focus of delivery. Work to strengthen relationships with localities teams continues and is proving to be an effective tool for ensuring

delivery is happening where it is needed the most. Primary schools which are in or adjacent to priority neighbourhoods continue to be a priority when targeting provision. ESOL provision continues to increase within the Family Learning team. A consultation exercise looking at the needs of children and their parents with English as an additional language has taken place and a new course is currently being set up with Park View Primary Academy in Beeston. The course is aimed at second language learners whose children attend the school and aims to give them the tools to support their children's learning. A course aimed at developing the English skills of Afghan refugees who have recently arrived in the city started in November 2021. The programme has been developed in conjunction with Leeds City Council's Resettlement Team. 29 learners are currently enrolled on the course. Achievement data will be highlighted in future reports. The team continues to support the Healthy Holidays agenda and are currently developing a family 'Let's get Crafty' course, which will be a two-day programme delivered in a women's refuge in the south of the city over the February half term holidays. This is a partnership between the Family Learning Team and Hyde Park Source. The work to ensure Family Learning has an impactful social media presence is continuing. The team are now active on the service communications group and a communications plan is in development.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

In this period, 20 courses have been delivered in 13 primary schools and Children's Centres across city. There have been 182 learners and 265 enrolments on courses so far. There is currently a 97% retention rate and 62% achievement rate (a number of courses have not yet completed so full achievement data is not yet available), 66% of learners were from BAME communities.

Feedback from 'Fun with Maths' learner, Beeston:

*"Since attending Family Learning sessions I feel it's had a positive impact on my life as I've been able to get out of the house and meet new people living in and around the neighbourhood who are now my lovely friends. The tutor has been absolutely fantastic. She puts me at ease and is always there to listen and support. She has great qualities, extremely kind, polite, welcoming, full of knowledge and friendly."*

Feedback from a learner who went on to become a parent governor at Hillcrest Academy, Chapeltown:

*"These courses had a practical style of learning instead of the traditional method of sitting by a table with a notebook and pencil. I became more creative in helping my children to learn by using various methods picked up on the teaching styles. The learning is more fun, interactive and innovative, utilising recycled items to make art & craft, flash cards, puzzles, masks, and puppets to create own stories. It's helpful with literacy, phonics and numeracy development and it's more fun for my kids who love it. I love it. One of my best experiences is when Family Learning organised a trip to Leeds University lifelong learning centre. Myself and other Family Learning group members had a fabulous experience attending the taster sessions. I took away lots of ideas about Further Education which was concluded with a campus tour and topped off with a group lunch."*

### **Next steps**

Continue to work with the wider service and partners to develop provision in priority neighbourhoods to ensure those with the most need are accessing our learning. Continue to develop the ESOL provision to ensure it meets the needs of existing and new families in all communities in the city. Continue targeted development work to ensure we are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children and families in the city. Develop a social media strategy and communications plan.

## **6.3 Priority 3 - Ensuring career information, advice and guidance supports young people to move into Education, Employment or Training (EET) from school**

### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

There has been Green Energy and Low Carbon working with Ahead Partnership, Sustainable Energy, and the Air Quality Team to promote careers in the Green Energy and Low Carbon sector. An event was held at Citu – The Place, Leeds' first zero carbon office building in November 2021, in line with the UN Climate

Change Conference (COP26). The event, with Leeds secondary schools featured a careers panel from professionals in the industry and a tour for students. Following the event, a film is being produced to be sent to schools unable to attend the live event. This will be distributed as a resource for schools to use for the future.

A 6 month Children Looked After (Year 11 - Post 16 Information, Advice and Guidance Pilot) was designed to add value to the existing standard information, advice, and guidance (IAG) offer delivered to children looked after in year 11. Following the success of the year 11 pilot, a DFE funding bid submitted by the Virtual School has been successful. The funding will be used to provide additional Careers Information Education Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) support for children in year 12 and 13. Resources have been developed to link with the Start in Leeds careers platform.

The CEIAG network took place virtually in October. Agenda items included careers input in Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for children who are looked after, careers education and Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) within the local authorities SEND and inclusion strategy and a presentation/discussion about destination data returns.

The next meeting will take place in March. Agenda items include an update on skills for the green economy, an overview of the Pinc college and details of the forthcoming SEND careers event.

A monthly CEIAG newsletter is produced and circulated to all careers practitioners on a regular basis.

Start in Leeds is the city's online careers guidance platform which is available free of charge to all secondary schools, FE and sixth form colleges. A new version of the platform was launched for the start of the academic year which has 28, 150 active users.

Next Steps Event - a virtual offer on the 'Start in Leeds' website was available to signpost young people and parents and carers to the individual providers details and websites as due to the pandemic the Leeds Next Steps event could not take place. The Next Steps Event webpage received 650 views with the Education, Training and Support Providers pages receiving a total of 122 views.

Start to Apply is a single gateway portal allowing students to apply for post 16 destinations and also for schools to receive applications more than one destination.

Employability activities to schools include virtual mock interviews (John Smeaton Academy and Leeds East) a virtual apprenticeship presentation at Lawnswood school and a careers fair supported by employers at Woodkirk Academy.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

Since April 2021 the service has engaged with 1,836 young people in schools and colleges across Leeds, with 9 in-school activities including attendance at careers fairs and delivering careers presentations to students. The lifting of government restrictions at the start of the academic year in September 2021 resulted in an increase in requests from schools. Future school activities will be reviewed in accordance with the current government guidance.



	Deprivation Rank	Young people who are NEET <sup>1</sup>		Young people whose status is not known <sup>2</sup>	
Time Period	IMD 2019	As at 25/01/2022		As at 25/01/2022	
Leeds		2.3% (400)		5.8% (1003)	
Cluster	1st most deprived: 22nd least deprived	No.	%	No.	%
2gether	7	30	2.3%	60	4.7%
Aireborough	19	11	1.4%	33	4.3%
ARM	17	11	0.8%	39	2.8%
Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton	4	37	4.1%	56	6.2%
Bramley	3	34	4.2%	49	6.1%
Brigshaw	14	10	1.8%	17	3.1%
EPOS	22	5	0.7%	53	7.1%
ESNW	16	<5	0.8%	21	4.3%
Garforth	18	6	1.4%	19	4.6%
Headingley - Kirkstall Partnership	10	9	1.6%	22	3.9%
Horsforth	20	<5	0.2%	14	3.5%
Inner East	1	38	2.8%	65	4.8%
Inner West	6	35	3.7%	62	6.5%
J.E.S.S.	2	52	4.3%	69	5.7%
Lantern Learning Trust	8	<5	1.4%	8	2.8%
Leodis	15	6	1.6%	16	4.2%
Morley	11	16	1.9%	50	5.8%
Otley/Pool/Bramhope	21	<5	0.9%	18	4.0%
Pudsey	12	16	1.5%	34	3.2%
Rothwell	13	9	1.4%	37	5.6%
Seacroft Manston	5	43	4.2%	77	7.5%
Templenewsam Halton	9	15	2.3%	42	6.5%

### Next steps

Following a number of requests from schools the service is currently working with colleagues in Children and Families Services and in the SILCs to organise a progressions event for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The event which will be the first for the city will be held at Leeds first direct arena in June and will be open to all young people who have additional needs. Teaching staff, parents and carers will be encouraged to attend. There will be information about opportunities post 16 including training, jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships, and volunteering opportunities

## **7 Empowering Families & Safeguarding**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to change the structure around social care to better support children, young people and families living in poverty.*** This workstream is led by Farrah Khan, Head of Service / Principal Social Worker, Children and Families Service.

### ***7.1 Priority 1 – Connecting services to better support families***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

Since the last report, it has been announced that Leeds will be receiving a total of £3,558,667 for 2022/23 through the Supporting Families Programme which is a £1,104,667 uplift on the last financial year. This significant increase is because of The Spending Review which included an additional £200 million. This £200m represents an approximate 40% uplift in funding for the programme by 2024-25. As an Earned Autonomy area, this funding will be provided in full, at the beginning of the financial year.

Early Help Hubs continue to support the early help landscape by offering specialist support around domestic abuse, substance use and mental health. Police Officers continue to work collaboratively in the hubs, focusing on protecting vulnerable people, reducing crime, reducing criminality, and providing reassurance. Multi-disciplinary pathways meetings have been established in each of the hubs to ensure a well-considered offer of intervention for families with more complex needs.

Three early help practitioners from the Hubs are now based at the front door to better align early help services and duty and advice. There are early signs of this being of significant benefit to the children and families of Leeds, ensuring a timely response and avoiding the need for social work intervention where not absolutely necessary. The front door Early Help practitioners deal with approximately 55 cases per week. All referred families will receive an offer of support.

Since the last report we have also highlighted 'literacy poverty' which is defined as a child who is read to or with for 15 minutes or less per week. Families First are supporting the library service with their peer review. This fits well with the NESTA work that we are also involved in. The overarching aim of the review is to increase uptake of the library card amongst early years to improve speech and language. This is a positive step for children in Leeds as the BookTrust estimate that 345,000 children are living in literacy poverty.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

In partnership with Shepherds Lane Childrens Centre and Bankside Primary School, the Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) team began a new drop in to target families living within that catchment area. As mentioned, we see a low uptake from Roma families with the Childrens Centres so the team undertook street outreach to engage with families to explain the services on offer at the Childrens Centre and to invite to the drop-in sessions.

The GRT team encourage all families with Under 5 year olds to attend their local Childrens Centre. The GRT worker explains the offer and arranges an introduction visit where they accompany the family on the initial visit.

Poverty has been added into the virtual guides for social workers when completing child and family assessments so they can ensure they consider this when exploring support.

The Early Help Hubs ask families who received advice & support or direction intervention for feedback on their experience working with the Hubs. This can involve working with Early Help practitioners or specialist coordinators (Mental Health, Domestic abuse or Substance use). Over the 12-month period of Dec 2020 to Nov 2021

**Respondents:**

- 115 families provided feedback on their experience
- 34% were from BAME groups
- 31% identified as Carers
- 66% of parents/carers were aged between 30 and 44
- 50% of families had children aged 11-15
- 49% of families had children aged 5-10

**They were supported on a range of issues:**

- 70% received support on a range of worries (This can include family relationships, housing issues, child behaviour etc)
- 34% on domestic abuse
- 26% on mental health
- 15% on substance use
- 47% of respondents received direct intervention support

**Overall views on the hubs:**

- 100% agreed or strongly agreed they were treated with respect
- 98% agreed or strongly agreed they were asked about what matters to them, their main worries and what would make life better
- 99% agreed or strongly agreed their views and opinions were listened to
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed we helped them to identify their own strengths and skills
- 82% agreed or strongly agreed that working with the Hubs helped with their situation

**Next steps**

The hub evaluation is moving into the next phase and consultation with practitioners, families and partners will be taking place in the coming months with a view to considering outcomes.

We are currently recruiting more volunteers for the EPEC (Empowering Parents Empowering Communities) programme. The volunteers will then deliver the parenting programme to other members of their community.

The GRT team are also in the process of recording welcome videos for the Childrens Centres with volunteers in Slovak, Czech & Romanian. These will be an introduction to the Childrens Centre including information on the local offer

**7.2 Priority 2 – tackling inequality in accessing services and support****Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

We know that health inequalities are disproportionately experienced by vulnerable groups, and as such these groups are more likely to be experiencing poverty.

Over the past 6 months we have highlighted the Roma community and needs we see such as overcrowded & poor housing, limited access to green spaces, regular use of food and clothing banks, higher rates of A&E attendance, and low uptake of Childhood Immunisations and vaccinations. GRT communities also see a significantly lower life expectancy. Dental hygiene and access to dentists is also a concern within the community.

We see a low uptake of Universal services from our Roma families such as Childrens Centres. In turn, we encounter Children not being School ready and nationally on average just 14% of Roma children succeed in reaching expected GCSE levels.

We have also highlighted bed poverty, and the work that Zarach charity do to tackle inequalities. Zarach are a Leeds based charity which was established in 2018 with the aim of tackling bed poverty. In 2018 there was an estimated 5500 Children in Leeds without beds. Bed poverty is a state of material deprivation

that occurs when families can't afford basic essential items and are unable to provide a bed for their children. Without a good night's sleep children are at an immediate disadvantage each school day. Children that regularly get adequate sleep have improved attention, behaviour, learning, memory, and overall physical and mental health which supports the 3As plan to attend, attain and achieve.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

In 2022, The GRT Team were nominated for an LGA award for their engagement with the community to offer COVID messaging and the vaccination.

We know that there is an ongoing need to develop positive, trusting relationships with the Roma community, and we know that by developing these relationships this is the way we can support the community to improve outcomes. We are currently recruiting Community Roma volunteers who will support the team to develop these relationships, lead parenting groups, support information sessions and identify additional community volunteers.

The GRT team have also funded an ABCD worker who came into post in February 2022 and are managed by Give a Gift charity.

From 2018 to the present day Zarach have delivered over 1600 beds to children across Leeds.

We are currently working with the library service to be able to provide a book with every bed for children in need.

### **Case study** for a family who Zarach had supported:

*"My ex-husband who I'd suffered domestic violence and abuse from found out where I was living so I had to flee my house.*

*I left with only things I could get into suitcases and bags so all my furniture was left behind. I ended up in a refuge which was horrible. We temporarily moved into my Nan's house.*

*My girls were sleeping in a very small room like a cupboard and sleeping on mattress toppers and I was sharing a room with my Nan. I felt depressed.*

*Social care helped me find a house and Zarach brought us beds and sofas. I now feel happier and feel safe making a family home and the girls are settling in and thriving. I feel safe and I'm going to look for a job to fit around the girls".*

### **Next steps**

Children and Families services will work with Zarach to raise awareness of bed poverty through social work and early help teams so that we can support 'a bed for every head'. We will do this by providing awareness sessions to teams supporting families to ensure that the right questions are asked at the right time to support families experiencing bed poverty. We will also work alongside Zarach to identify and respond to other support needs they identify with the family and raise awareness of our early help offer.

The GRT Team are working hard to tackle health inequalities by working alongside Public Health to identify trends and themes and raise awareness of services within the community.

## **7.3 Priority 3 – Workforce Development**

### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

The Early Help Workforce Development offer has been updated by the Workforce Development Team in partnership with colleagues from early help services and voluntary organisations. The range of training is being delivered on a virtual and, where appropriate, face to face basis and includes a range of courses including Reducing Parental Conflict, Trauma Informed Practice, Recognising and Responding to Neglect and Equality and Diversity.

The Hub staff continue to deliver bespoke training sessions where there is a need and coordinators have a focus on mental health, substance use and domestic violence and abuse. In the coming months, the

Domestic Violence and Abuse Coordinators will be supporting colleagues to develop specific programmes of work for children affected by domestic violence and abuse. This was recognised in the recent review undertaken by the LSCP in relation to domestic violence and abuse. The Mental Health Coordinators will be supported to have a greater emphasis on workforce development and the Substance Use Coordinators will continue to deliver their training offer.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

Training offer being devised for the parental advocacy service in collaboration with Advonet.

We developed a poverty briefing which was delivered to Step Up Social Work students in February 2022. This was designed to define poverty and upskill workers on how to empower Families.

Early Help Open Mic Sessions (forums) taking place monthly to provide an opportunity to anyone wanting to know more about early help to attend. The sessions are fully booked and have good attendance evidencing a need for these sessions.

### **Next steps**

Poverty awareness is a part of Leeds induction for social workers and embedded into the workforce development offer.

The Early Intervention Qualification level 3 has received 33 expressions of interest and is due to begin in March 2022. This is delivered to a multi-agency audience and a 'golden thread' of the qualification is around highlighting the impact on families when experiencing poverty.

## **8.0 – Readiness for Learning**

The aim of this workstream is: ***We want to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of children and young people who live in poverty.***

### **8.1 Priority 1 Early Years - Take up of free nursery places for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds**

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

- Nesta Fairer start Leeds is a three to five year innovation partnership with Nesta, Leeds, Stockport and York with an aim to work together so that all children have a brighter start for a stronger future. In Leeds the priorities for the first year will be around engagement with the two year old offer, continuing to look at how we improve outcomes in speech, language and communication and evaluation of the Peers Early Year Partnership (PEEP) programme. Leeds has signed up to a partnership agreement which provides funding to Leeds of £50,000 per year and a shared innovation pot of £50,000 along with Stockport and York. The programme is a collaborative programme with Nesta and the three authorities with a focus on shared learning and peer support.
- Golden ticket approach - Following identification of families not taking up two-year-old offer for free early education entitlement a community plan for supporting at home has been actioned. Golden ticket approach has been implemented which means every parent who has a child who is eligible for a place receives a letter with a golden ticket which they take along to their preferred provider. Home learning activity packs have been produced by the children's centre teachers and these are being distributed by children's centre family outreach workers to all families who are eligible to take up a 2-year-old place; during the visit a discussion takes place to encourage take up.
- 2021-22 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has identified priorities and actions.
- The NESTA partnership is currently exploring options for a randomised control trial to assess the impact of Local Authority communication methods on take-up of places.
- Start-up phase of NESTA group completed and NESTA Programme Board established. Early Years steering group now EY operational Group to support implementation of work alongside other key EY workstreams.

## Outcomes and outputs

### Two-year-olds take-up

Leeds currently has a take up of 65.8% (Spring term 2020/21) & 72.2% (Summer term 2020/21) of eligible children for 2-year-old free places in early education. Areas with no increase in take up have been identified including Beeston, Harehills, Burmantofts.

### Three and four-year-olds take-up

Take up of 3 and 4-year-olds is at 97%. Variation in areas has been identified.

## Next steps

- Targets for increase in take up of 2 and 3 years olds for the next three years in high needs clusters and with lower take up, and targeted groups i.e. children open to CiN and CP Plan with action plan. There will be targeting of 170 CIN, CP and CLA children aged 2-4 not taking up early learning offer through social workers, Early Help Hubs RES teams, Early Start teams.
- NESTA Programme Board is taking the role to develop with partnership the next phase for 2year old take up for targeted groups and areas of disadvantage.

## 8.2 Priority 2 – Emotional Health and wellbeing/ Mental Health

**DfE Wellbeing for Return to Education Grant** – a free joint offer between services to schools and clusters in a recovery curriculum on emotional health and wellbeing. This offered a response to support specific mental health needs arising locally as a result of the pandemic.

Recovery curriculum and resources for CYP with Special Educational Needs (SEN) – developed and delivered free online.

**Phase 1** - Recovery curriculum and resources for CYP with Special Educational Needs (SEN) – developed and delivered free online.

**Phase 2** available from Educational Psychology Team focusing on key area of SEMH formulation of needs, practice development and extended school non-attendance.

**Phase 3** - Core offer one day to every school in Leeds. Making meaning of SEMH and Extended school non-attendance two key themes from feedback. Includes EY focus.

## My Health My Schools Survey

Health and Wellbeing Service have reviewed the MHMS survey and published the 2021- 2022 survey. All schools who take part have access to their own data and can plan and access intervention and support accordingly.

Newly reviewed survey out this year and is a priority in the 3As strategy and plan.

## Outcomes and Outputs

### DfE Wellbeing for Return to Education Grant

Local evaluation has contributed to the national evaluation of the project. Positive outcomes identified across the board including:

101 settings accessing training with 92% of participants that gave feedback rated the training as good or excellent.

All clusters offered focused work on recovery including focuses on SEMH needs and extended school non-attendance.

Additional online resources access to date accessed by more than 3000 school and setting staff.

Identified gap for early years settings which has led to the training being adapted for children's centre staff.

## **My Health My Schools Survey**

With partners Health and Wellbeing Service have reviewed the survey and published the 2021-2022 analysis.

- 5000 returns from 63 schools
- 2020-2021 approximately 10 000 responses from 100 schools
- 2019-2020 (partial) Approx. 5000 responses from 50 schools.

## **Next steps**

Ongoing offer to school from the Learning Inclusion service as part of the core and traded offer. Continued offer to all schools to support targeted mental health needs in response to the pandemic within the schools' context. Embedding of universal and systems support in the education context.

Adaptation of well-being resources for early years settings.

This will link significantly with the work on trauma resilience and adversity.

Mental Health Lead Training for schools will continue this work alongside Learning Inclusion Teams and the Mental Health Support Teams initiative which is rolling out to clusters over the next 3 years with the first two coming online in January 2022.

## **8.3 Priority 3 – The 3 As strategy - working with schools to improve attendance, achievement and attainment.**

### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

- Impact of COVID on schools- Several initiatives were implemented swiftly to respond to the needs of schools during the pandemic including a centralised single point of access for schools and settings to contact with queries regarding COVID-19, a strengthened outgoing communication with regular bulletins to schools, settings, partners and other stakeholders, Bronze meetings have taken place for primary, secondary and special schools, led by the Head of Service for Learning Improvement.
- Many of these support initiatives have continued or have been blended into existing pre-pandemic systems to strengthen partnership working with schools and settings and continue to develop positive relationships with the sector

### **3As strategy**

- The 3As strategy has been amended to reflect the new context and needs within the city. Following consultation in the 'Big Learning Conversations' a 3 As plan has been finalised and action plans have been drawn up.
- The 3As strategy has been officially 'launched' at secondary and primary briefings and officers are now working on implementing agreed actions. Feedback and accountability for the 3As strategy will be reported to the Good Learning Places Board.

### **Attendance and Elective Home Education (EHE)**

- Register checks offer – Attendance service offer to all schools in Leeds.
- Tracking of EHE numbers over COVID via PowerBi.

### **Outcomes and outputs**

- Impact of Covid on schools - The additional communication channel between the Director of Children and Families, and the Children and Families' leadership team, with schools and settings across the city has seen a strengthening of our relationships, including with the academy sector.
- A Refreshed 3As Plan presented to Education Scrutiny Board and the Executive Board has led to a development plan designed to shape our focus and support to schools and settings. Outputs include a deep dive reading or curriculum review for all primary schools, professional development offer for secondary schools to improve the reading fluency of their struggling readers; and SEN Inclusion Team training offer to schools about meeting the needs of children with specific learning

difficulties and literacy difficulties.

- Social care colleagues will also support this priority by giving advice to parents on how to read to their child using the appendix from the DfE Reading Framework as a guide.

#### **Attendance and Elective Home Education**

- Tracking of COVID attendance trends continues; 89% of pupils with FSM on site \*  
Register checks offer prioritizing schools with high non-attendance rates.
- Data for this academic year suggesting a fall in EHE requests.
- Tracking of identified vulnerable groups.
  - 6<sup>th</sup> December – 807 EHE with 26% registered FSM when they became EHE (206)
  - 24 with social work involvement.
  - EHE team involved in all Child in Need and Child Protection cases.

#### **Next steps:**

- 3As Plan - Service areas are already working on the priorities through service developments.
- Feedback and analysis of reading deep dives and SENIT support.
- EHE and attendance offer to continue. Feedback requested from partners in schools.

### **8.4 Priority 4 – Support for Vulnerable learners**

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of COVID**

- Educational Psychologist (EP) support provided to Early Help Hubs and Signpost during the period of the pandemic to strengthen SEND offer at Early Help level.
- EHE (see priority 3)
- Schools' forums, family of schools' meetings feedback responded to in relation to vulnerable learners via DIS alert.
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) panel continues to operate to provide an immediate advisory service. AIP provision remained open throughout.

#### **SEND and Inclusion Strategy**

- SEND and Inclusion strategy finalised, shared with partners. Steering group for SEND and Inclusion Practice Framework established. Links with Future in Mind Inclusion priority and Early Help Strategy.
- Development of work on data and intelligence to target more effectively work with most disadvantage groups - SEND Operational data group and SEND and Inclusion PIMS (Strategy Group).

#### **Children at risk of exclusion**

- Fixed term exclusions pilot 2020-2021. Originally part of Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) pilot offered to 40CYP with approximately 20 uptake. Extended to an invitation in the summer term to schools with FTE periods of 10 days+ to attend a multi-agency SEMH panel meeting to problem solve. To be repeated in January 2022 with AIPS following up with settings this term.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

##### **SEND and Inclusion Strategy**

- 550 Leeds partners, including around 150 parents and carers and 30 young people with SEND were active participants in the consultation.
- SEND and Inclusion Action plan developing. Strengths and threats identified.
- SEND and Inclusion Practice Framework a key vehicle for driving the changes.
- SEND operational Data included in the monthly C&F reporting to leadership.

##### **Children at risk of exclusion**

- Exclusions Leeds Data; SEND data higher risk than non-SEND CYP; evidence of decrease in length of exclusions.
- Comparisons in regional data showed Leeds had the lowest percentage of pupils subject FTEX over



the three years. Pupils with SEND remain at significantly higher risk of exclusion which aligns with national data. SEMH panel and AIPs continue to offer support and challenge to develop inclusive options.

- Data shared with AIPs on school level exclusions and followed up by AIP leads.

### Next steps

- SEND and Inclusion Strategy publication and launch. The strategy will encompass the SEND and Inclusion focuses for disadvantaged groups and draw on key data on poverty and other vulnerability. It will report to the SEND Partnership Board.
- January 2022 exclusion offer to settings to continue.
- Governor training on exclusions being rolled out on statutory duties.
- Continuation and evaluation of attendance register checks.

This will cross reference with employment and skills priority for vulnerable year 11 and Virtual School.

## 9.0 Green Spaces

### Green Spaces

Research<sup>22</sup> notes that access to green space has a positive impact on physical health such as self-assessed general health, cardiovascular mortality in adults, weight management, mental health, stress management and associations with a favourable birth weight.

This research also shows that access to green space has a positive impact on mental health – reduced stress, emotional well-being and improved resilience. For children and young people, the benefits of having access to green space are influenced by both developmental stage and the type of green space they have access to.

Evidence of the impact on health related to COVID-19<sup>23</sup> outlines that exposure to green spaces may strengthen resilience and support mental health in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Outdoor recreation in green spaces has emerged during the present pandemic as an essential tool to combat distress.
- Proximity to a park or significant green space (within a 5-minute walk) was the strongest predictor of satisfaction with neighbourhoods during lockdown.<sup>24</sup>
- Exposure to green spaces facilitates recovery from physiological stress and improvement of cognitive performance. This aids in strengthening mental resilience by dampening the body's stress response.
- Green spaces may stimulate physical activity and improve physical resilience.
- Purposeful or pro-environmental behaviour and the anticipation of seeing interesting species may activate positive emotions and improve emotional resilience.
- Gathering outdoors, even at a safe distance, improves social cohesion and helps people to feel connected to the outside world, thus reinforcing social resilience.

The most economically deprived areas have less available good quality green space and people who live in these areas, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled people experience complex barriers to accessing green space including physical accessibility, cultural relevance and feeling safe.<sup>25</sup> People exposed to poor quality environments are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes than people who enjoy good quality environments. Unequal provision of good quality green space means those who are at greatest risk of poor physical and mental health may have the least opportunity to reap the health benefits of green space.

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<sup>22</sup> [PHE Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020](#)

<sup>23</sup> [BMJ](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Place Alliance Home Comforts 2020](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Groundwork Out of Bounds: Equity in access to urban nature 2021](#)

Nationally one in eight British households has no garden, the percentage of homes without a garden is higher among ethnic minorities, with Black people in England nearly four times as likely as White people to have no outdoor space at home.<sup>26</sup>

There is a lot already happening in Leeds to improve the quality and accessibility of new and existing green spaces and the Child Poverty Impact Board has agreed that influencing access to and provision of green space in Leeds will become a new priority

### **Green Space Policy & Provision in the Planning System**

Leeds aims to use the development process to strategically deliver the best type and the best quality of green space to where it is most needed in Leeds. As part of the Planning System any new residential development (and some commercial development in the city centre) is obliged to provide new on-site green space dependant on certain triggers. This new green space aims to mitigate the extra burden that new people place on existing green space.

In certain circumstances a developer may not be able to provide green space on the actual site. In these cases it may be appropriate to take a financial contribution i.e. a sum of money instead of the green space. This money is then used locally, often to provide green space facilities that the community needs.

We currently have strong policies that resist inappropriate development on existing green space unless a surplus in the area, replacement green space or wider planning benefits can be evidenced. As part of the Local Plan Update, we have received representations from the public calling for greater levels of green space protection and are currently exploring this as one of the many Green Infrastructure Policy possible improvements to take forward.

### **Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Strategy 2022-2032**

The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy sets out a vision to provide the best parks and green spaces in the UK with priorities, aspirations and actions to achieve this over the next 10 years, for example:

- Quality priority: better quality parks and green spaces improve visitor satisfaction and reduce anti-social behaviour<sup>27</sup>
- Aspiration for all community parks to reach Leeds Quality Park standard during the life of the strategy, and this will be achieved in part by establishing a strategic investment fund to improve parks and green spaces in areas most in need.
- Aspiration for all community parks to have a 'plan on a page', produced in consultation with the local community which will set out a clear vision for each park and be used by the council and partners to help deliver the 'Best Parks' vision.
- Access for all priority: parks and green spaces are a public service and must be managed for people of all physical abilities, backgrounds and interests. A process will be developed to audit the accessibility of all parks and green spaces to inform management plans and funding allocation.
- Child-friendly priority: aspiration for a wide range of good quality play facilities for children of all ages and abilities across the city, achieved in part by top slicing income from chargeable family visitor attractions to improve play facilities in areas where external funding isn't available (often inner-city areas). Temple Newsam play barn project (approved September 2020) will allocate 10% of the gross surplus allowing support for families to access the attraction as well as allocate funds within deprived communities to help deliver improvement projects that benefit children.
- Health and Wellbeing priority: includes an action to prioritise investment in green spaces in areas of deprivation where the positive impact on health will be greater.

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<sup>26</sup> ONS.

<sup>27</sup> [University of Leeds - Leeds Parks Survey 2018, Cabe Space Preventing anti-social behaviour in public spaces 2004](#)

### ***Priority 1 Lincoln Green Mini-Holland***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of covid**

Construction works almost complete to make key streets in the Lincoln Green priority neighbourhood safer and more attractive to walk and cycle with additional improvements to the grassed areas around some of the tower blocks in collaboration with Parks & Countryside:

- Expanded and improved Lindsey Gardens play area with climbing structure, primarily for children aged 8-12 who are not currently well provided for in the locality.
- Informal play features including earth mounds, boulders and stepping stones for all ages.
- New trees and colourful bulb planting.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

Success of new play features to be measured through ongoing engagement with Shakespeare Primary School as part of Play Sufficiency project led by LCC Active Leeds officers.

#### **Next steps**

Improvements to Lindsey Gardens play area currently being finalised through consultation with residents which began on 14th February, construction planned for spring/summer 2022.

### ***Priority 2 Holbeck Moor improvements***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of covid**

Events space proposals (hardstanding, electric trader point, shelter/bandstand) under development led by LCC Regeneration team as part of feasibility and consultation work to understand how Holbeck Moor could be more usable, accessible and safer for all users with a focus on community events and facilities for families and children.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

Ongoing engagement with local Councillors and community groups.

#### **Next steps**

Ongoing design development.

### ***Priority 3 Draft Green Spaces Design Guidance***

#### **Update on recent activities including impact of covid**

Green Spaces guidance aimed at developers of all types of private residential schemes to help ensure new green spaces are good quality, include play and natural features and are attractive and accessible to all.

Drafted guidance currently under review by senior Landscape colleagues.

#### **Outcomes and outputs**

Once guidance published, ongoing monitoring of use by officers and resulting green space quality will be carried out.

#### **Next steps**

Draft guidance reviewed by Policy & Plans colleagues and relevant Members, aiming for publication on the Council website by end of March 2022.

## **10. Conclusions**

Experiencing poverty has a significant correlation to poorer outcomes across a wide range of life indicators. This is a problem that is growing, both in Leeds and nationally, and it is clear that a radical approach is needed to reduce the impact of poverty.

In Leeds, we believe that a young person's life chances should not be impacted by their background or the area in which they live. We want to ensure that poverty presents no barriers for our children and young people, and we want all people to have access to the same opportunities, regardless of their background. We believe that all children and young people should have the freedom to choose their pathway, and that

we can work together as a city to tackle any limitations that poverty may place on these pathways. This is a moral imperative.

We also know the challenges that are faced, both by the people who live in poverty, and by the services who work across the city. We need to focus on mitigating the impact of poverty on children and young people whilst we work as a city to improve the structures around people who experience, or are at risk of, poverty.

For this reason, we need to continue to work as a city, to share our understandings, knowledge and practice, to learn about the day-to-day impact of poverty for children and young people and then to work with children and young people to tackle this impact.