

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 8th November 2012

**Subject: Foundation Years - providing the best start in life for Children to succeed –
Session 3**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 20th of June 2012, the Scrutiny Board resolved to undertake an Inquiry looking at foundation years (age 0- 5) and how services in Leeds are provided to promote the best start in life for children, to equip them with the skills to succeed and promote their social mobility.
- 1.2 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
- The universal and targeted health, wellbeing and developmental support in place for Children and their families during foundation years (0-5) in Leeds.
 - Levels of support and engagement with families particularly those that are disadvantaged or hard to reach
 - Provision and delivery services, particularly those delivered in partnership with others such as the NHS and private and voluntary sector, the promotion of services and how accessible these services are.
 - To determine how well Leeds is working to identify challenges and take appropriate measures to improve outcomes for children and their families.
 - To identify how take up of free early education provision can be improved in the more deprived areas of Leeds.
- 1.3 Terms of reference were agreed by the Scrutiny Board on the 23rd of August 2012 and the first session of the inquiry was conducted on the 27th of September 2012.

2.0 Submission of evidence – November Meeting

2.1 In accordance with the terms of reference the Scrutiny Board requested information on the following areas:

Child Development

- Leeds Education Challenge – Foundation Stage: Children’s Services and Cluster approach to the three prime development areas,
 - personal, social and emotional development,
 - communication and language and
 - physical development.
- Progress since the Education Standards – Entering the Education System inquiry 2009.
- Early Years Foundation Stage (Sept 2012) Legislation changes
- Free early education – take up of places for 3 and 4 year olds, increasing take up and engaging parents.
- Extension of free early education to 2 year olds (Sept 2013) – Preparation, promotion and strengthening the quality of providers

In addition the board raised a question about the support provided to parents with young children and pregnant women who are subject to domestic violence. Attached as appendix A is the Domestic Violence Action Plan for Leeds 2012/13, elements of which are directly relevant to this inquiry. A representative from the Environment and Neighbourhoods Department has been invited to the board to provide a brief explanation of the support provided.

2.2 The Board should note the Scrutiny inquiry published in June 2009, Education Standards – Entering the Education System which has already examined the following areas:

- How information on attainment is collected by childcare providers, and in particular what impact the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will have on this
- How this information is shared with primary schools
- How attainment is measured within primary schools, both on entry to foundation stage and at KS1
- More broadly, how the transition between pre-school provision and primary provision is managed
- How children at risk of underachievement are identified at an early stage, and how information relating to them is shared between the different services involved
- How information about the needs of all children aged 0-7 and their families is collected and used by other services.

3 Corporate Considerations

3.1 Consultation and Engagement

Where the board deems it appropriate to undertake in consultation in order to conduct this inquiry or gather necessary evidence consultation will be undertaken.

3.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.

- 3.2.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.
- 3.2.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.
- 3.2.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 3.2.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

3.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

This inquiry will assist in achieving outcomes and priorities as defined in the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011-2-15 and the Child Friendly City Priority Plan.

3.4 Resources and Value for Money

There is no resource or value for money implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified impact will be reported in the final inquiry report.

3.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

None

3.6 Risk Management

None

4.7 Recommendations

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

- 4.7.1 Note the information contained within this report, and consider the information appended to this report and presented to the Board on the 8th of November 2012.
- 4.7.2 Make recommendations as deemed appropriate.
- 4.7.3 Note that this is the final session of the inquiry however the terms of reference may incorporate additional information to extend the inquiry should the Children and Families Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence.

4.8 Background documents¹

None

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