

SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)

Title of review: Making Children Visible

Scrutiny Committee: Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Director leading the review: Jon Abbey, Corporate Director, Children's Services

Lead officers: TBC

Overall aim of the review: To assess the way the council works to improve the visibility of vulnerable children in relation to 1) attendance and wellbeing; 2) children missing from education; 3) children who are not in education, employment or education (NEET); 4) children who are being home-schooling; 5) children being supported by the virtual school.

Objectives of the review:

1. Attendance – To assess the attendance figures for the 2022 summer and autumn terms and disaggregate the data by reference to children with a social worker,

2. NEETS – To ascertain where care experienced young people aged 16+ and 18+ without A Levels/GCSEs/vocational qualifications are gaining the support they need. To assess how effectively the care leaving service and council services prepares care experienced young people for work? Where there is the disproportionality in the data (what can be done about it?)

3. Voice of the Child - where is the voice of the child and family voice heard across the system and how can it be captured more effectively and inclusively?

How does this review contribute to the Council's priorities?

This scrutiny review will contribute to the Council's strategic priority to nurture our vulnerable children and young people in Islington so everyone has the very best start. Making children visible enables young people have the access to the opportunities they need to thrive in life, including an excellent and inclusive, trauma informed education.

This scrutiny review will enable the committee to explore issues related to making children visible, intergenerational issues resulting from children being invisible, work currently being undertaken, changes to legislation and explore areas for further service improvements.

Scope of the review and evidence to be received:

The review will focus on...

1. The Legislative Framework in which we operate now and into the future.
2. Current work being undertaken to improve the visibility of children.
3. Challenges, opportunities and developments
4. Potential areas of work to improve the visibility of children.
5. Disproportionality/disparity in equalities.

The Committee will receive the following evidence:

Meeting 1 - 8 September 2022

- Scrutiny Initiation Document
- Introductory Presentation
- Documentary Evidence

Meeting 2 – 18 October 2022 – Focus on the voice of the child/family

- Data on where the voice of the child/family is heard across the system and suggestions for how this could be captured more effectively and inclusively.
- Experiences from other local authorities.

Meeting 3 – 29 November 2022 – Focus on NEET, employment, readiness for work and the youth employment hub

- Data, destinations and pathways to include colleagues from the wealth building team.

Meeting 4 – 17 January 2023 – Focus on attendance

- Attendance data to include which groups of young people are/are not attending, pre-school and nursery complexity, transition points (e.g. attendance is 98% in primary schools and 89-93% in secondary school), and what care leavers are doing if they aren't at school? Attendance breakdowns should include those with medical issues, EHCPs and SEN funding.
- Work and interventions being undertaken.

Meeting 5 – 28 February 2023 – Focus TBC

Additional information:

In carrying out the review the committee will consider equalities implications and resident impacts identified by witnesses. The Executive is required to have due regard to these, and any other relevant implications, when responding to the review recommendations.

Visits/evidence gathering to be agreed potentially including:

1. meet young people and their carers who are home-schooled
2. meet young people and their carers who are supported by the virtual school
3. meet with young people who are NEET and in supported living to ascertain why they disengage in the first place, and how all the work around them is impacting on their lives.
4. visit Lift and Platform to meet the professionals who provide advice for young people and meet some young people who are accessing that advice
5. meet Job Centre workers to find out what their approach is when meeting NEET young people (so we can find out what works, what doesn't etc)
6. meet the Executive Members for Job and Inclusive Economy (Cllr Bell Bradford) and Children and Families (Cllr Ngongo)
7. meet with secondary schools and further education colleges to hear how they succeed with students who are disengaging and what support they would like from the council
8. meet with charities/third sector organisations operating in the borough in different ways and working with the cohorts of young people we are concerned with
9. meet with all relevant senior council officers
10. look into how neighbouring boroughs are capturing the voice of the child
11. review of policy papers, think tank reports, and academic studies that pertain to the subject matter