

SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)

Title of review:

The Children's Workforce: Recruiting, Retaining and Growing Talent in Islington

Scrutiny Committee:

Children's Services

Director leading the review:

Jon Abbey, Corporate Director, Children's Services

Overall aim of the review:

To explore the ways in which the council can accelerate how it attracts, grows and sustains an agile and responsive workforce which is increasingly confident, in sufficient numbers, to make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families.

Objectives of the review:

To further understand, and evaluate the impact of, the strategic challenges to:

- recruit people into the children's workforce and promoting more flexible entry routes.
- develop and retain people within the children's workforce.

To consider promising practice that can strengthen the children's workforce in the following areas:

- strategic approaches to recruitment which can enable Islington to be a London employer of choice for children and families' services, including tackling and encouraging talent from the local community, those with care experience and local young people to join it
- ensuring that progression routes are accessible, high quality and help people in the workforce to develop their skills and their careers
- support people in the workforce to grow the skills and behaviours they need to work effectively in partnership with children, young people and parents from our diverse and changing communities, and with each other, in ways that help to secure better outcomes

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

The scrutiny review will contribute to the Council's strategic priorities that are set out in its' Islington Together 2030 Plan.

The scrutiny review will contribute to the workforce priority of creating "**A Child Friendly Islington**", in that it will seek to explore and recommend ways in which the Council can ensure there remains a Children's workforce that is equipped to respond the needs and challenges of the borough's children and young people.

The Scrutiny Review will contribute to the priority of creating a "**A safe place to call home**", in its' exploration of the resilience and resourcefulness of the workforce that safeguards the safety of the borough's children and young people.

The Scrutiny

In exploring the ways in which the Council can ensure that the Children's workforce is adaptive to, and demographically reflective of the community that it serves, the scrutiny review is supporting the Islington Promise to "**relentlessly tackle inequality**" and to "**be bolder and more innovative**".

Scope of the review and evidence to be received:

The review will focus on:

- The challenges and opportunities to recruit, develop and retain people within the children's workforce in the following areas:
 - Early years and childcare
 - Education including school governors

- Health where they are a core part of the offer to children and families e.g. speech and language therapists, health visitors and emotional wellbeing/mental health support
- Social care and parenting and family support including foster carers and those working in residential children's homes
- Youth
- Youth justice and crime prevention including police in school liaison or safeguarding roles
- Any disproportionality and disparities across the children's workforce, both at practitioner and leadership levels, and how this may affect recruitment, retention, and growth.
- Different models and approaches to recruitment and retention, including growing our talent, and explore how this can be more effective, inclusive and achieve the change required to make Islington a London employer of choice for children and families' services.

Subject to agreement, the Committee will use the following to receive and gather the evidence:

1. Documents and data information to include:
 - Summary of data, reports, strategies, and studies that pertain to the subject matter
 - How other boroughs and organisations have approached recruitment, retention and growing talent
2. Insight visits and/or meetings with:
 - Care-experienced and other young people
 - Staff from different areas of the children's workforce
 - All relevant senior council officers
 - Other organisations who recruit/retain/grow people within the Islington children's workforce e.g., MOPAC/the Metropolitan Police, Whittington Health
 - Other organisations and boroughs with models of promising practice for recruitment, retention, and growing talent

The Committee will receive the following evidence:

- 1. Committee Meeting, 19th July 2023 – Introduction (Agenda publication, 11th July)**
 - Introductory presentation
- 2. Workshop: September 2023 – Islington Futures**
 - The Committee will hold a focus group with Islington Futures, a federation of community school governors in Islington.
- 3. Workshop: September 2023 – Careers Pathways with City & Islington College**
 - The Committee will speak with City & Islington College, part of the Capital City College Group, on their approach to careers pathways for young people in Islington.
- 4. Committee Meeting, 31st October 2023 – Metropolitan Police (Agenda publication, 20th October 2023)**
 - The Metropolitan Police will be invited to discuss how they engage with young people, and the staff that are dedicated to that work.
- 5. Workshop: October 2023 – Retired Teachers (in-person)**
 - The Committee will hold a focus group with retired teachers to obtain their views on what can be improved in the Children's workforce.
- 6. Workshop: October 2023 – Residential Care Home workers (including out-of-borough) (Teams)**
 - The Committee will speak to those working in the residential homes where Islington children are based, including those that are out of the borough.
- 7. Visit: November 2023 – IFCA**

- The Committee will visit the Islington Foster Carers Association.

8. Workshop: December 2023 – Early Years Teachers (Teams)

- The Committee will hold a focus group with early years' teachers.

Review timetable

1. SID to be agreed:
Wednesday 19th July 2023
2. Witness evidence to be received:
September 2023 to January 2024
3. Draft recommendations to be considered:
Monday 26th February 2024
4. Report to be approved:
Monday 29th April 2024
5. Report to be submitted to Executive:
May/June 2024
6. Provisional date for Executive response:
September 2024
7. Provisional date for 12-month update report back to the Committee:
September 2025

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.