

Report to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

14 November 2022

Subject:	Impact of the Lockdown on Children and Families Working Group
Director:	Director of Children and Education, Michael Jarrett
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1 Recommendations

That the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board considers the Impact of the Lockdown on Children and Families Working Group report and debate whether to make any recommendations to the Cabinet on the following:

1.1 That the Council:

- 1.1a). Welcomes the Borough's designation as an Education Investment Area by the Government and work co-operatively with the Department for Education to improve the education standards of children and young people;
- 1.1b). Be proactive in working with schools in the area to consider the creation or adoption of multi-academy trusts;
- 1c). Be proactive in considering suitable locations in the Borough for specialist sixth-form free schools which are funded by central government;



Join the Department for Education's 1-2-1 attendance mentoring pilot to monitor issues in schools across the Borough.

- 1.2 That, the Cabinet Member for Children and Education attend the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board at least three times per municipal year to:
- 1.2a). Present an overview of their work in relation to their Cabinet portfolio;
 - 1.2b). Produce and present a report on the Council's progress to deliver Ambition 1 of the Council's Vision 2030 in particular the delivery of raising aspirations and resilience, young people to have skills for the future and raising the quality of schools.

That, the Council pledge to improve and increase the Borough's educational assessment data in line with the national average by 2027, in line with the aims and objectives of Vision 2030.

That, the Government engage with education practitioners to understand the long-term problems caused by the national pandemic and prepare appropriate resources to help children and young people recover academically, socially and psychologically.

- 1.3 The Council encourages and supports schools in the Borough to provide sports programmes and extracurricular activities to help children catch up in all areas of lost learning, experiences and to improve mental and physical health;

That, the Government should provide specific monetary assistance to children eligible for free school meals to take part in extracurricular activities;

That, the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board receive a future report on the implications of the Government's white paper on 'Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child';



That, the Council review its partnership working with education providers and the Sandwell Children's Trust to ensure that actions, outcomes and best practice work are shared to ensure we are working cohesively together.

- 1.4 That, the Council and Sandwell Children's Trust:
- 4a). Ensure that all SEND children in Sandwell have access to the right services, provisions and support;
 - 4b). Continue to monitor the progress of SEND and EHCP children in regard to educational attainment;
 - 4c). Examine ways to effectively and appropriately communicate with parents and carers of families with SEND or EHCP children to ensure they are not alone and have the right support;
 - 4d). Assess and capture lessons learned data following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.5 That the Council investigates ways to connect with young people and offer extra support, mentoring and encouragement such as:
- 1.5a). Establish a peer mentoring programme;
 - 1.5b). Encourage social youth work, sports, drama, and outdoor activities;
 - 1.5c). Encourage and support volunteering;
 - 1.5d). Engage with local businesses to improve the number of available apprenticeships;
 - 1.5e). Support a holistic youth services experience which accompanies physical and digital offer;
 - 1.5f). Support and Champion a new Eco Bus with young people involvement.




- 1.6 That, the Government be requested to provide adequate, realistic funding to address young peoples' recovery to support academic improvement, socialisation, conversation, mental health and wellbeing;
- That, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board undertake a review and monitors the recovery strategy of mental health services within the Borough.
- 1.7 The Council in partnership with Sandwell Children's Trust continue to monitor the challenges facing the industry including the recruitment and retention of social workers;
- The Council and Sandwell Children's Trust continue to support the Borough's children in care and care leavers in their post-pandemic recovery.
- 1.8 That, the Council works with our multi-agency partners to support, engage and monitor the stability within the early years setting;
- That, the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board receive regular assurance on the Covid-19 Recovery Plan of the Council, Children's Trust and relevant partner agencies.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

For the Board to consider the findings and conclusions of the working group and make any recommendations as applicable to the Cabinet.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people The Covid-19 pandemic had and continues to have an impact upon children and families across Sandwell. The Scrutiny Board wanted to examine the impact of the pandemic and understand the key pressures now facing children and young people.</p>
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4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 At its meeting on 23 August 2021, the Board established a working group to consider the educational and social impact of the national lockdown on children and families in the Borough.
- 4.2 The working group has engaged with multiple stakeholders to gain further understanding of the issues within the education sector.
- 4.3 The final report details the findings of the Working Group and recommendations for Cabinet to consider. The report is attached at Appendix 1 for approval by the Board.

5 Implications

Resources:	There are no resource implications as a result of this report.
Legal and Governance:	Overview and Scrutiny Board can make recommendations to the Cabinet in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000
Risk:	There are no risk implications.
Equality:	There are no equality implications.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no health and wellbeing implications.
Social Value:	There are no social value implications.
Climate Change:	There are no climate change implications.

6 Appendices

Impact of the Lockdown on Children and Families Working Group – Final Report and appendices.

