

Child Poverty Strategy – consultation

Responses from CYP Scrutiny sub group

Following presentation of the draft Child Poverty strategy to the Children and Young People (CYP) Scrutiny Committee it was agreed that Julia Beard – Senior Commissioning Officer would meet with a sub-group of members to develop a formal response to the consultation on behalf of the CYP Scrutiny Committee. The details below outline the areas of discussion and provide the proposed formal response from the CYP Scrutiny Committee to the consultation.

The bullet points below provide an overall summary response

- There was overall support for the draft strategy;
- The strategy document needs to more strongly emphasize that this is not just either a Children’s Services nor a LCC document;
- There was support for the strategy being linked to an Early Intervention approach;
- There was agreement that the former “Narrowing the Gap” agenda and the associated local action plan should be incorporated into the Child Poverty Strategy;
- There was agreement that it should be a targeted strategy;
- Governance arrangements would be important to hold partners to account.
- Confirmed that aspirations need to be realistic;
- The strategy should seek to promote enthusiasm;
- The strategy should seek to promote existing positive initiatives that others may implement in their own localities;

The following bullet points outline key issues to consider in finalising the strategy

- We should look to learn from initiatives that have worked well including safeguarding improvements and associated governance arrangements;
- There is an opportunity to communicate and promote positive initiatives already happening e.g. £10 challenge. – Other organisations may then take such initiatives on board developing a movement of positive activities which support the raising of aspirations;
- Target support where it is needed, not just geographically but on specific groups, e.g. teenage mothers, young people that are at risk of underachieving;
- Particular support for targeted support for teenage mothers; help them to aspire to be good parents and to focus on their child’s needs and break cycle of poverty;
- Provide support to ensure that children, young people and adults are making well informed, realistic decisions about their future career plans; aspirations needs to be owned by the individual and not imposed by another agency;

- The Strategy document needs to more strongly emphasize that this is about targeting, multi agency working and reducing duplication;
- Reduce duplication of effort by working more closely with other agencies;
- Consider emotional and psychological poverty as well as economic, access and aspiration;
- If work in communities is to succeed, community leaders need to be identified as they can be a route to the wider local population;
- Some disappointment that the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes have disappeared as they made more sense that Brilliant Lincolnshire, which some people associate with tourism;
- Intensive support for families with complex needs, using a similar model to the Families Working Together project; all agencies involved with an individual need to be mindful of the fact that s/he may be a parent of a child with needs;
- Encourage children and young people to be more competitive;
- Focus on schools in areas where levels of achievement are low, e.g. the primary schools in the coastal area;
- Co-ordinate services in a way that provides more intensive support for individuals and families; this should be via a lead agency;
- Consider different learning styles and structure learning provision to accommodate these, e.g. those that learn by doing rather than by listening, in order to drive up levels of achievement;
- Organisations need to consider that many of their employees will be parents. Organisations may be encouraged to consider that they have a responsibility to ensure that employees are mindful of his/her parental responsibility and supported in developing parenting skills.

It was confirmed the action plan was important to bring the strategy to life. The following were actions that were suggested for consideration

- Develop news letter to communicate key issues and initiatives;
- Consider developing a “virtual school” type arrangement for children living in poverty to support young people in areas where achievement of 5 GCSEs Grade A* - C is low, e.g. Boston Fenside; this has proved successful for Looked After Children;
- County wide £10 challenge – Where pupils are given £10 and asked to develop an entrepreneurial initiative that refunds the £10 and makes a profit;
- Identify community champions in organisations and in communities with high levels of Child Poverty. Develop a Network of champions to share good practice and to act as co-ordinators of activities.
- Suggested that a list of practical things that can be done to raise aspirations could be produced and made available;

- Facilitate parents working together as a collective, e.g. to provide their children with a healthy meal, possibly via a Children's Centre;
- Promote field trips and create opportunities for children at risk to participate in field trips that can be inspirational and life changing;
- Promote sport and the development of community clubs as positive activities that build confidence;
- Promote initiatives that encourage parents to limit the amount of TV children watch and engage in family activities as an alternative.