

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DRAFT CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

Cabinet 6 October 2022



Scrutiny Management Board Review of the Draft Child poverty action plan

At an informal meeting on the 13 Sept 2022, members of the Scrutiny Management Board met to discuss the Draft Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-25.

Ming Zhang, Service Director of Education, Participation and Skills was in attendance and the Board also benefitted from the input of Councillors who sit on the Child Poverty Working Group.

Following and introduction from the service director the Board made a number of comments –

1. The City had seen a reduction in child poverty over the course of the last year. The increasing cost of living was having a very real, immediate impact and this should be reflected in the final Child Poverty Action Plan.
2. The Board reaffirmed the urgent and ongoing concerns that young people in the City were unable to access adequate dental care and were surprised to see that the proposed outcomes only included young people under the age of 16 years. There were also concerns that the proposed outcome measures of a year on year reduction to the waiting list was vague and that a more specific target / outcome was required.
3. With the current cost of living having a real impact on families, and with further expected increases, the Board considered that the Child Poverty Action Plan should remain flexible and able to accommodate emerging priorities over the lifetime of the plan. Whilst Councillors recognised that the plan could not be exhaustive there were elements which would require further action. For example urgent action was required to ensure that families can escape bed and breakfast and be found more suitable long term temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation can be found. The Board also remained concerned that young people in temporary accommodation experience disruption getting to and from their existing school placement and that this has a negative impact on family finances.
4. The outcomes and targets relied on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data and many did not describe the outcome adequately. The Board would suggest further work is undertaken to ensure that outcomes are more clearly specified.
5. The Board remarked that the plan was seeking to achieve significant changes for young people and families. Such changes required the commitment not only of the council but also some of its larger public sector partners, such as NHS England, to use their influence to improve outcomes for young people. The Child Poverty Working Group should seek to include these partners in future conversations during delivery of the plan.

Cabinet Response to comments

1. The data contained in the report to the scrutiny management board was, and remains, the latest available. The information will be updated when next data is available (Spring 2023).
2. Data used in the development of outcomes for the plan was based on the cohorts used by NHS England to strategically plan and deliver their services, this will ensure consistency of

reporting. The council will play its part by delivering against its aspiration for year on year increases to the supervised teeth brushing programme.

3. The Plan is a three year plan and as in previous years, will be monitored and reviewed every quarter. Any issues arising that are not covered by the 2022-2025 Plan, including those highlighted by the Scrutiny Management Board can be raised through the Chair for discussion at a Child Poverty Working Group.
4. Further work on outcomes would be discussed at a future Child Poverty Working group.
5. All partners have been fully involved in setting these outcomes and the Working Group and Cabinet will continue to work with external partners to deliver for Children and Young People in Plymouth.