

Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update March 2025

Scrutiny Review – Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

The Select Committee's review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment culminated in a report setting out 17 shared objectives.

Given the breadth of the work, a recommendation lead has been identified for each objective and it is the intention that progress updates will be provided at each future Select Committee meeting on particular recommendations with the relevant recommendation lead attending each meeting.

At the February meeting the Select Committee received action plans in respect of:

- Recommendation 2 – Forge Positive Relationships
- Recommendation 5 – Managing Emotions
- Recommendation 12 – Strengthen Transition Arrangements
- Recommendation 14 – Review Behaviour Policies

Key issues highlighted and discussed:

- Work was underway to analyse suspension data to understand if there was a correlation with behaviour policies. Some policies were less relational whilst others were more influenced by trauma informed practice. Officers were also working with the Virtual School to understand how much consideration was being given to Children in our Care in Behaviour Policies
- The importance of influencing Academy Trusts and Central Government was highlighted. Officers advised that regular meetings were taking place with the DfE; these meetings provided an opportunity to share the ongoing success of the Appreciative Inquiry regionally and nationally
- Members requested details of the local retention of Stockton students in post 16 pathways compared to students educated out of Borough. Officers undertook to provide this to Committee Members and commented that the data had been a driver to convene a Stockton Post 16 Strategic Board made up of senior leaders from all Stockton Post 16 providers to collaboratively design a Stockton Post 16 Strategy

Further updates are scheduled into the Select Committee Work Programme.

Scrutiny Review – Holiday Activities and Food Programme known locally as Holidays Are Fun (HAF)

The Select Committee's current review is Holiday Activities and Food Programme known locally as Holidays Are Fun (HAF).

HAF is a DfE funded programme that provides activities and healthy meals to children and young people during holiday periods, predominantly for those on benefit related free school meals. It is delivered in partnership through SBC and Catalyst. It involves a range of providers, including schools, delivering a variety of activities.

The review will consider if HAF is inclusive of and attended by those families who most need it and the impact that the programme has had on family health and social and economic wellbeing.

At the February meeting the Committee were advised that confirmation had been received from the DfE that all local authorities would receive funding to continue to deliver the

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Holiday Activities and Food programme into 2025. The Council had received its allocation which was slightly less than the previous year.

The Committee received a presentation setting out feedback from the provider survey and also discussed and agreed questions for consultation and engagement with children and young people during the half term HAF provision.

Key improvements highlighted by providers included:

- Improving the booking system
- Reviewing costs per head (for example a tiered approach could be adopted)
- Ensuring that we are reaching those in most need
- Reducing none attendees
- Considering funding for children who are not eligible
- Creating opportunities to promote best practice
- Having one application form for all holiday periods
- Improved communication around SEND children so providers can better respond to an individual child's needs
- Increasing attendance

The next meeting of the Committee would be an informal session to review the summary of evidence and discuss draft recommendations. Further feedback would also be considered at that meeting from:

- Stockton Parent Carer Forum
- Northshore Careers Fair
- Engagement with Middlesbrough Council
- Feedback from Children and Young People from the February 2025 Half Term provision

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance

Key Issues / Problems or concerns	No reports since last update.
Problems or concerns	None
Requests for more information	None

Monitoring

Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>Outstanding monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships - A further progress update to be scheduled in due course • Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment - Ongoing
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Next Scrutiny Review
TBC

Remaining 2023-2024 Meetings (all 5.00pm unless stated)
12 March 2025 (informal)