

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee



TOWER HAMLETS

Tuesday, 9 February 2021 at 5.30 p.m.

Online 'Virtual' Meeting - <https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Supplemental Agenda 2

PRESENTATION SLIDES

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

Further Information

For further information including Membership of this body and public information see the main agenda.

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A presentation will be made at the meeting.

Next Meeting of the Committee:

Tuesday, 6 April 2021 at 5.30 p.m. to be held in the Online 'Virtual' Meeting -
<https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Two year old provision in Tower Hamlets

Overview & Scrutiny

9th February 2021

Pauline Hoare

Head of the Integrated Early Years' Service



Early learning for two year olds (EL2) and the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)



See CSA Snapshot 2021

- The CSA indicates the pandemic is having a significant negative impact on childcare take up locally.
- This fall in take up is particularly evident for eligible two year olds where take up has fallen from 64% to 42% of the total.



Eligibility for EL2

- Early learning for two year olds is a free early education entitlement funded by the government;
- It is aimed at families on the lowest income nationally;
- Such families are usually not working;
- Eligibility is decided by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) on the basis of national criteria;
- The eligibility for this entitlement is based on the income of **everyone in the household who works**;
- Where a parent has no recourse to public funds, they may qualify;
- Hourly rates are set nationally. Locally we pay the highest possible hourly rate.



White working class families and EL2 eligibility

- At appropriate time points, the DFE shares a list of families whose children were eligible at birth for EL2. No information on the ethnicity of these families is provided;
- The final list is updated by the DWP with the addition of current UC eligibility. No ethnicity information is added by the DWP;
- The IEYS asks parents to supply ethnicity information. Most parents decline to provide this information;
- The eligibility criterion is low income (i.e. if you and family members are working, you are unlikely to be eligible).



Issues during Covid and mitigation

- Existing challenges are worsening during Covid:
 - Impact of living in disadvantage;
 - Mental health and emotional wellbeing;
 - Low levels of early language acquisition;
 - Healthy weight and physical activity.
- Mitigation through early years provision:
 - Via early education and childcare provision;
 - Via children's centres.

The challenges apply to all under fives locally but are particularly serious for EL2 eligible children.



Barriers to attending an EL2 place

- During Covid:
 - Overcrowded accommodation;
 - Crowded accommodation shared with elders;
 - Parental nervousness due to Covid;
 - School closures can prevent the youngest children attending childcare, as parents may choose that the whole family stays home;
 - Childcare infection control reduces available places locally;
 - Local availability of places may as a result not meet local demand as settings close and open places and sites in response to Covid infections.
- Post Covid:
 - National funding issues will reduce the availability of childcare;
 - Settings may choose to accommodate three and four year olds, rather than two year olds, as the hourly rate is higher;
 - End of furlough tips families into unemployment and removes need for childcare;
 - Hourly rate is uneconomic for EL2 providers.



The picture from childcare providers

- Kim Arrowsmith, Matchbox Day Nursery
- Toni Evans, Lincoln Hall Preschool
- Gill Oliver, Winterton House



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Forthcoming Inspection Activity

James Thomas, Corporate Director,
Children and Culture



Inspections for Children and Culture



- There are three separate inspection regimes that directly inspect the services within the Children and Culture Directorate.
 - Inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND Inspection)
 - Youth Offending Services Inspection
 - Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)



SEND Inspection



- This inspection is a Local Area Inspection conducted jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- This inspection examines services provided by both the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Takes place over a week and involves meeting with representatives from various services provided by the LA and CCG. Inspectors also meet with parents and service users.
- Schools will be visited as part of the inspection, although they are not inspected themselves.



SEND Inspection

- Inspections currently on hold but will resume shortly. We are amongst the last cohort who have not yet been inspected and as such expect this to take place imminently.
- If significant concerns are identified, the local area will be asked to produce a written statement of action. This will be monitored and a follow up inspection will be undertaken. Over 50% of Local Areas are required to produce a WSOA.
- We have been planning for this inspection for a long time, with regular meetings taking place chaired by senior officers. Improvement plans and performance have been impacted by the pandemic and urgent work is underway to recover ground.



Youth Justice Inspection



- Inspection undertaken by Her Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).
- Most inspections are single inspections but a small amount are joint and include inspectors from other inspectorates and look at the wider youth justice system.
- Inspections take place over a week (or longer for a joint inspection). Inspectors will sample a number of cases and meet with case managers and others involved in process.
- Tower Hamlets manages Youth Justice for the City of London and as such, any inspection will also include young people from the City.



Youth Justice Inspection



- Face to face inspections are currently suspended. A number of smaller YOT's were inspected remotely but Tower Hamlets and the City YJS does not qualify as a "small YOT".
- Inspections result in a graded judgment - Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate and an inspection report will be published.
- Planning for this inspection has been taking place for a long time. There are monthly planning meetings which are chaired by the Divisional Director for Children's Social Care and attended by key stakeholders



ILACS



- We are 18 months post our last inspection when we were rated as Good. We are not due another inspection just yet but are expecting a focused visit.
- These are due to resume imminently within an amended framework to provided assurance in respect to our response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- If we do not receive such an assurance visit soon, we will still receive at least one focused visit or Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) before our next inspection. A focused visit will look in detail at one particular area of the service for example the front door, or looked after children.



ILACS



- Due to the pandemic, we did not receive a focused visit or JTAI during 2020, although we did have our annual engagement visit and remained in regular contact with our link inspection from Ofsted.
- Planning for a focused visit and our next inspection is ongoing.
- The TH Safeguarding Children's Partnership is undertaking the planning for a potential JTAI which would be a thematic inspection of all partners by multiple inspectorates

