Children and Young People Board – report from Cllr Richard Watts (Chair)

Conferences, Meetings and Public Events

1. On Monday 24 October Cllr Gillian Ford (Vice Chair of CYP) gave oral evidence to an All Party Parliamentary Group for Children inquiry into children’s social care. She specifically spoke on inspection and accountability.
2. I met with the Children’s Commissioner on 1 November, along with Cllr David Simmonds, to discuss the Stability Index that is to be introduced this year to drive improvement in the stability of children in care, including in relation to education and residence. The LGA and ADCS will continue to engage with the Children’s Commissioner on the project to make sure that it proves to be a useful tool for councils to make a real difference to children.
3. Cllr Gillian Ford took part in a roundtable discussion on 10 November regarding the future of Family Drug and Alcohol Courts. The meeting was convened by the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families, Isabelle Trowler, and considered the benefits of the FDAC approach along with local authority experience of it. The Chief Social Worker will provide further information in due course as to whether, and how, the programme will be rolled out nationally.
4. On 17 November, I met with representatives from the Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, including Dr Carol Homden, CEO of foundation, Dr John Simmonds, Director of Coram BAAF and Alan Read, Coram’s Whitehall liaison. We discussed their views on ongoing changes in adoption and foster care, especially in regard to unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
5. On 24 November, I met with the National Citizen Service Trust. The National Citizen Service (NCS) Bill currently going through Parliament will expand the service further, and this meeting was a positive opportunity to consider how the NCS offer could be adapted to the needs of young people in different areas.
6. On 1 December, Cllr Roy Perry took part in a panel session at the Public Policy Exchange event *Putting Children First: Improving Outcomes for Looked-After Children and Young People*. Cllr Perry contributed to the discussion on a range of topics, including;
   1. The role of local authorities in promoting the education of looked-after children, including the role of the Virtual School Head.
   2. The importance of placement stability.
   3. The need for powers to direct academies and free schools to accept children where this is in their best interests.
   4. Issues around mental health services for children and young people.

**Publications on Children’s Health**

1. In December 2016 Cllr Izzi Seccombe (Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board) and I jointly launched two publications on children’s health; [Healthy futures: supporting and promoting the health needs of looked after children](http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/8099050/) and [Working to support positive parenting and relationships. What can councils do?](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/8090061/PUBLICATION)

**National Children’s and Adult Services Conference 2016**

1. The LGA Children and Young People Board led a number of successful sessions at this year’s NCAS conference which took place at the start of November. Topics covered included emerging research on the effectiveness of different models in driving children’s services improvement, life chances and family stability, what works in preventing child abuse and neglect and tackling radicalisation in schools. We also held a lively Education Question Time debate, met with the Children’s Minister, Edward Timpson MP and met with the National Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter.

**Isos action research workshops**

1. We have held four regional workshops during the last month, focussing on sharing the learning from LGA-commissioned research undertaken by the Isos partnership into improvement in local children’s services. These workshops took place in London, Taunton, Manchester and Birmingham and were attended by over 85 members and senior officers.

**Children and Social Work Bill**

1. The Bill has now reached the [Committee Stage](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbXNpZD0mYXVpZD0mbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTYxMjIyLjY3OTk2MDAxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE2MTIyMi42Nzk5NjAwMSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE2ODgyODc1JmVtYWlsaWQ9am9zZXBoLmxpbmdAbG9jYWwuZ292LnVrJnVzZXJpZD1qb3NlcGgubGluZ0Bsb2NhbC5nb3YudWsmdGFyZ2V0aWQ9JmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&124&&&http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmpublic/ChildrenSocialWork/PBC_Children%201-2nd%20sits%2013.12.16.pdf) in the House of Commons. The Board has consulted a wide array of stake holder and [briefed ahead of this stage](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbXNpZD0mYXVpZD0mbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTYxMjIyLjY3OTk2MDAxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE2MTIyMi42Nzk5NjAwMSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE2ODgyODc1JmVtYWlsaWQ9am9zZXBoLmxpbmdAbG9jYWwuZ292LnVrJnVzZXJpZD1qb3NlcGgubGluZ0Bsb2NhbC5nb3YudWsmdGFyZ2V0aWQ9JmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&125&&&http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/5533246/2016+12+13+-+Children+and+Social+Work+Bill+-+Commons+-+Committee+Stage.pdf/c267f0cc-73ab-4f2c-93ed-b3d97515e854). The LGA welcomed the Bill’s focus on support for children in care and clarification that proposed freedoms to innovate must only be used where proposals are clearly in the best interests of children. However we also highlighted that new burdens must be fully funded and reflect existing local government expertise.

**Early Years National Funding Formula**

1. The Board responded to the Government’s recent announcement on 1 December regarding EYNFF, highlighting the possible costs of new burdens which are unmet by current increases in funding.

**Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

1. The LGA Asylum, Migration and Refugee Task Group reports to the Children and Young People’s and Community Wellbeing Board. The Government has [confirmed](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-12-13/debates/A31C78E6-1A3C-4B87-BC30-E39BA6737A47/CalaisChildRefugees) that since 10 October more than 750 children from the Calais camp have come to the UK, including approximately 200 children under the ‘Dubs Amendment’. There has been tremendous local and regional as well as national leadership shown in building capacity for this group of children at pace and at scale. We continue to push for full recovery of costs and for better, more transparent and real time information.

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| **Contact officer:** | Ian Keating |
| **Position:** | Principal Policy Adviser |
| **Phone no:** | 020 7664 3032 |
| **E-mail:** | [Ian.keating@local.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.keating@local.gov.uk) |