

Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Title: Children & Young People Board
Date: Wednesday 10 January 2018
Venue: Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note.

Item Decisions and actions

1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the apologies listed at [Appendix A](#).

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Children's services spending research

The Chair introduced the report, which presented the interim findings from Newton Europe on a research project to better understand what drove variation in spend on Children's Services between local authorities. Newton had completed the first on-site diagnostic with Cornwall Council, and were in attendance to present to the Board on the analysis of the nationally available data, the preliminary outputs from the Cornwall diagnostic, and the plan for the remainder of the project.

Luke Tregidgo, Programme Lead, and Rich Lum, Associate Director, from Newton Europe attended the meeting to present on their work to date. It was explained that initial analysis had shown that there was a variation of around 100% across authorities to achieve the same outcomes. Research so far had focussed on national data sets, but the next step was to work on the ground in local authorities. The first piece of work with Cornwall Council had been completed, which would be followed by work with Hillingdon and Wakefield, and then a further 5 councils. Authorities with similar outcomes had been identified, with objective measures of good performance.

Work in councils comprised of interviews and discussions with elected Members and officers, an analysis of the strategy employed in running services and the data in a national and local context. The impact of deprivation on children had been plotted against the gross spend reported by the council, which was highlighted as a main factor in variation of spend. Members noted that there was much greater variation in spend in smaller authorities, which was as yet unexplained.

Members received a detailed confidential briefing on the analysis of Cornwall Council's children's services spending, and how this would be used as a comparison

against other authorities.

In the discussion which followed, the following points were raised by Members:

- In response to a question on the impact of neighbouring authorities, it was explained that this could impact on the cost of co-commissioning (if this was an option), but this was not being considered directly as a factor.
- The impact of local authority education provision would be considered, as some authorities had a large number of academies whereas others did not.
- Consideration should be given to how factors such as the cost of placing children (including out of area placements), the social worker market, and the number of children in care (and how they are accommodated). It would be useful to determine what each authority spent per child, and break down figures by placement and what influenced decision making.
- Regarding the percentage of controllable spend on children's services, it was highlighted that spend on care leavers could be looked at as a percentage of the council's overall budget, as the budget for care leavers was part of the looked-after children budget.
- It was noted that the project was at the midway point, but there was clear evidence so far that deprivation had a strong correlation with spend. Geographical size would require further study, but there were definite opportunities to reduce spend. A further report would be considered at the next Board meeting in March.

Decision

The Board **noted** the work undertaken by Newton Europe to date.

Action

Newton Europe to attend the next Board on 13 March to provide further update on work.

3 Sector led improvement in Children's Services and Early Years

Ian Keating, Principal Policy Adviser, provided a short update on the LGA's work on sector-led improvement in Children's Services and early years. Regional sector-led improvement was being developed, and further details on the outcome of trails would be available for consideration at a future meeting. The project was still in the early stages, and more work would be undertaken to identify needs.

Decision

The Board **noted** the update.

4 Education

The Chair reported to the Board that discussions had taken place with senior civil servants at the Department for Education on the education reset, local authorities' legal duties in the education system, and the schools White Paper.

The Chair had met the previous Secretary of State for Education in November 2017, and subsequently a new Secretary of State had been appointed. Representations would be made and a meeting between the Chair and the Secretary of State would

be sought at the earliest opportunity.

Decision

The Board **noted** the update.

5 Reducing Family Violence

Nasima Patel, National Children's Services Adviser, updated the Board on the LGA's work on reducing family violence. Domestic abuse was one of the greatest demands for local authorities, and the LGA was aware of research that found that young people at risk were part of families which had a history of abuse. Further research would be undertaken to identify if there was a link between family violence and youth offending.

Stephen Boxford from Cordis Bright highlighted that they, alongside the LG, the Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Early Intervention Foundation, had looked at public health approaches to family violence in partnership. This included looking at a variety of assessment and intervention methods to see what was most effective. It was also recommended that authorities share information, which as injuries, location, and what time they occurred in order to enable agencies to improve prevention work.

In the discussion which followed, the following points were raised by Members:

- There were various intervention methods which could be explored, including the family nurse partnership, the sexual abuse programme, the big brothers / big sisters mentoring programme, and functional family therapy.
- The public health approach was important to understand the causes of family violence. Evidence-based research should be funded and commissioned, and a model to implement interventions should be piloted and rolled out, with time for interventions to embed in the system. The LGA was looking to trial intervention with some local authorities.
- There was concern that funding pressures and wide-spread changes in women's refuges should be factored in, as there were less safe places for women who had experienced domestic violence to go.
- It was highlighted that many gang members had experienced family violence, and in some areas there were projects where ex-gang members spoke to their peers about violence and used intervention methods. There was also a strong link between substance abuse and domestic violence.
- There were a number of community approaches to reducing family violence, including peer mentoring and involvement of the voluntary sector.
- The report on family violence should focus on funding pressures, and where money would be best spent to inform councils' decision making and make the biggest difference.

Decision

The Board **noted** the report.

6 Update on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

Samantha Ramanah, Adviser, introduced the report which set out the proposals

included in the CYP Mental Health Green Paper, and the proposed LGA response to the Government for discussion.

The proposals included: every school and college to appoint a designated lead for mental health; all CYP mental health services to identify a link for schools and colleges; funding for mental health workforce of community-based mental health support teams to provide extra capacity for early intervention and ongoing help; a new 4 week waiting time for NHS CYP mental health services to be piloted; a national leadership board for children and young people with high needs; and a new national strategic partnership with key stakeholders focussed on improving the mental health of 16-25 year olds by encouraging more coordinated action, experimentation and robust evaluation.

Members noted that the LGA had identified concerns that the designated lead for mental health in CYP mental health services would add complexity to the system and had the potential to undermine existing work. Also concern was raised that the additional funding for the mental health workforce would go to the NHS, but could potentially be diverted to local authorities and schools instead.

In the discussion which followed the following points were raised by Members:

- It was agreed that local authorities should have involvement in the use of additional funding for CYP mental health services. There was a lack of detail in the Green Paper on accountability and outcomes, which should be highlighted.
- It was important that both primary and secondary schools should have a designated lead for mental health, in order to identify behaviour as early as possible.
- Every member of staff at relevant levels should be appropriately trained in mental health first aid and resilience.
- There should be a strong case made for more ambitious proposals to improve CYP mental health support.

Decision

The Board **noted** the report, and provided comments on the LGA's draft response to the draft CYP Mental Health Green Paper to inform the final response.

Action

Members comments to be included in the final response to the Green Paper.

7 The future of children's social care improvement task and finish group

Members noted the work which had been undertaken by the Task and Finish Group on Children's Social Care Improvement over the past year, and that the proposals in the Bright Futures report would continue to be monitored.

The Board thanked the Members of the Task and Finish Group for their work, the officers who had supported the work, and in particular Cllr Dick Madden who had chaired the Group.

The Board supported the establishment of a new Task and Finish Group on SEND in

order to gain a clear understanding of the challenges facing councils to deliver SEND support.

Decision

The Board:

- **Noted** the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group on Children's Social Care Improvement;
- **Agreed** that the Task and Finish Group on Children's Social Care Improvement be disbanded, and thanked Members of the Group for their work; and
- **Agreed** that a new Task and Finish Group on SEND be established, with full membership to be confirmed in due course.

Action

Members to be nominated to form the Task and Finish Group on SEND by the political group offices.

8 Vision for Youth Services

Louise Smith, Adviser, introduced the report which set out the LGA's Vision for Youth Services which had been launched at the Youth Services Conference on 6 December 2017.

Members welcomed the Vision document, which highlighted the current level of funding for services and would support the LGA's lobbying activities and future work in this area. The idea of a Youth Champion for all local authorities was supported.

Decision

The Board **noted** the report.

9 Note of the Previous Meeting

Decision

The note of the previous meeting was **agreed**.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Gillian Ford	Havering London Borough Council
Members	Cllr Natasha Airey	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
	Cllr Ryan Brent	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Susie Charles	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Matthew Golby	Northamptonshire County Council
	Cllr Dick Madden	Essex County Council
	Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
	Cllr John Kent	Thurrock Council
	Cllr Bob Cook	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr Andy Moorhead	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr David Mellen	Nottingham City Council
Apologies	Cllr Laura Mayes	Wiltshire Council
	Cllr Megan Swift	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Carl Cashman	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council