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Other business report

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This section provides reports on other business relevant to the Board.

Recommendation

That the Board note the update.

Action

LG Group officers to action as necessary.

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NFER and NYA update

1. Over the last two months NYA and NFER have continued delivering activity to support the Board's priorities.
2. For NYA, the 'routes to success' package of work to support youth services commissioned by the LG Group is ongoing and the Supporting Services for Young People Community of Practice continues to grow in terms of numbers of members and resources and information held on it.
3. NYA held its first Hot Seat event, with CEO, Fiona Blacke responding to online questions from local authority children's services officers. There are commitments from Tony Gallagher, National Advisor (Youth) HMI OFSTED, and Peter Mucklow, Deputy Director, Young People, Department for Education to lead further hot seat events from July 2011 onwards.
4. NYA held the first of their Master Classes in London in late June focused on commissioning. The Education and Training Standards Committee (composed of academics, voluntary sector representatives, unions and the joint negotiating committee for youth and community work) met this month and approved 5 undergraduate and 5 postgraduate youth and community work programmes for professional validation.
5. NYA have selected the first round of local authorities that will benefit from the tailored support offer - West Berkshire; Surrey; Solihull; North Tyneside; Merton; Leeds; and Dorset. NYA will be providing free consultancy support to these authorities in areas including helping in redesign of services and workforce issues. They will also be providing consultancy on commissioning issues to Southwark; Tower Hamlets; Sefton and Nottinghamshire County Council. The tailored support programmes have been heavily oversubscribed and there will be two further opportunities to bid for support in August and October 2011.
6. All individual work areas within the 'Emerging Themes' strand have started and these include: Peer-to-Peer Assessment, Engagement of the Private Sector in resourcing services for young people; development of a scrutiny network; and commissioning services for young people. For more information on the LG Group commissioned NYA work programme please contact Alex Stutz, National Policy Manager, alexs@nya.org.uk.
7. For NFER, reporting activity has been a primary focus of the programme in May and June with ten projects all in the final stages of report writing or publication including Experiences of Young People with Special Educational Needs (SEN), Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) Transition to Adult Services; Local

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Authority Perceptions of how Parents of Children with SEN will be Affected by the Green paper; and Views of Young People and their Parents on Different Approaches to SEN/LDD Residential Care Provision. In addition, a short project was commissioned in June, mapping national information, advice and guidance sources for CYP professionals, local government officers and elected members. The aim of the work is to identify the national sources of CYP data and policy, practice and research knowledge available to the local government sector. NFER are pleased to be working with Councillor Paul Lakin, the interim CYP Programme Board Champion for NFER, on this piece of work. For more information on the NFER programme please contact Fiona Walker, Head of Centre for tailored projects and consultancy: f.walker@nfer.ac.uk.

Children's health

8. In January 2011 the Board made children's health a priority, agreeing to coordinate work with the Community Wellbeing Programme Board. As a result of the joint office holders meeting on 19 May which agreed to set lobbying positions and identify support opportunities for councils, a children's health roundtable has been organised for 25 July 2011.
9. The children's health roundtable will build on the one held on 21 December 2010, which identified the need to develop a programme of support for local authorities and their partners and to identify lobbying activities to influence NHS reform to ensure the needs of children are fully represented in the new health structure.
10. The roundtable on 25 July will bring together the chairs of the joint Children and Young People and Community Wellbeing Programme Board and senior officers from stakeholder organisations at the forefront of the health reforms and children and young people's agenda. The aim of the roundtable is to:
 - 10.2 Identify key Local Government Group lobbying activities on children's health;
 - 10.3 Develop a support offer and implementation plan to ensure local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and other key stakeholders in children's health and wellbeing are fully supported;
 - 10.4 Identify key partners and resources;
 - 10.5 Identify two or three specific work streams with partners to take the agenda forward;
 - 10.6 Produce a paper for the Children and Young People and Community Wellbeing Programme Boards to discuss proposed activity.
11. For further information please contact Samantha.Ramanah@local.gov.uk.

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Family Justice Review

12. The interim report of the Family Justice Review, chaired by David Norgrove, was published for consultation on 31 March, with the final report due in the autumn. Baroness Ritchie is a member of the Review panel, alongside John Coughlan CBE from ADCS and other stakeholders.
13. The interim report identified that the system is under huge strain; the average case took 53 weeks in 2010 and this is likely to rise significantly. Such lengthy delays are not only financially costly, but also extremely detrimental to the well-being of children and young people. The number of cases has risen in recent years, but this is not the sole reason for delays. The way the system operates also has an impact and the interim report makes a series of recommendations designed to address this. They include, amongst others: the creation of a new Family Justice Service and Local Family Justice Boards; specialist judges to hear cases from start to finish; reducing the courts' focus on care plans; less reliance on unnecessary expert reports; a timetable for the child with a maximum allowed time limit for all cases; and measures to simplify processes and help manage cases better.
14. Baroness Ritchie wrote to David Norgrove on behalf of the Board to endorse the consultation response submitted by ADCS. The letter specifically welcomed the focus on the needs of children in the system and proposals to reduce delays and their associated harm. It highlighted that the courts have an essential role to play in safeguarding children and that it is vital to get reform right for children, young people and families.

Tough times, good decisions - The National Children and Adult Services Conference

15. The National Children and Adult Services Conference and exhibition will take place at the International Convention Centre (ICC) London ExCel on 19 to 21 October 2011. The title this year is 'Tough times, good decisions'.
16. The conference has been organised by the LG Group, Association of Directors of Social Services and ADCS and is this year titled and is very important opportunity for Councillors, directors, senior officers, policymakers and service managers with responsibilities for education, children's services and adult care in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to learn, network and hear from a wide range of speakers.
17. The Board has a session to meet with portfolio holders for Children and Young People which the Secretary of State for Education has been invited to attend. The rest of the programme will give attendees the opportunity to hear keynote

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ministerial addresses and take part in plenary sessions. There will be a variety of participatory breakouts and networking sessions.

Munro Review Implementation

18. Baroness Ritchie wrote to Tim Loughton MP in June to welcome the Munro Review's emphasis on increasing the scope for professional judgment and reducing overly burdensome central prescription and bureaucracy. The letter also reinforced a message the Board had made to Professor Munro at a previous meeting: that ensuring that reforms to the health system maximise opportunities to strengthen links with children's health and social care is vital. The letter went on to state that the Board is keen to continue its engagement through implementation of the recommendations and requested that the Minister consider a member sitting on the Implementation Panel. The Government is expected to publish its response to the Review by the summer.

Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill

19. The Bill was published on the 21 June and covers a wide range of reforms to the justice system, some of which have received considerable media attention. The Bill includes several elements relevant to youth justice, including paving the way for transfer of funding responsibility for all young people held on remand to be transferred to local authorities. In response to the Breaking the Cycle Green Paper, the LG Group supported the devolution of youth custody budgets in order that local authorities have an incentive to reduce numbers in custody and invest in prevention. It will be essential, however, to ensure that the full, true costs are transferred to local authority budgets and we will be liaising with the Youth Justice Board and the ADCS on financial modelling. Related provisions in the Bill are aimed at reducing the number of young people remanded to custody, for example where there is no real prospect that a custodial sentence would be given on conviction.

20. The Bill also gives young people remanded in youth detention accommodation 'looked after' status. This would have resource implications for local authorities that need to be fully explored and understood, including in relation to leaving care entitlements. There are also processes associated with looked after status, which may not always be proportionate, for example if a child is remanded for one week.

21. Other changes include:

- 21.1 Removing the limit on number of referral orders;
- 21.2 Unlimited number of further supervision periods for breach of Detention and Training Orders;

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21.3 Court power to impose conditions on a child remanded to a local authority accommodation and to impose requirements on a local authority to secure compliance with those conditions.

22. The Bill had its second reading on 29 June. It is now at committee stage.

LG Group Annual Conference

23. The LG Group Annual Conference, "Localism works", took place in Birmingham on the 28 – 30 June. The Board had three sessions at the conference covering children's services improvement and self-regulation activities and the Children's Improvement Board; the Family Justice Review and the Schools White Paper.

24. The workshop exploring self regulation and improvement and the support the LG Group has made available to councils, looked at the overall approach to these issues with a particular focus on the practicalities and benefits to be gained from sharing and comparing key performance data, how the approach is being applied in children's services and the contribution peer challenge and support can make to improvement. It gave delegates the opportunity to explore this new approach in more detail and to delve deeper into the practicalities of two key elements on offer from the LG Group – comparative performance data and peer challenge, as exemplified in children's services.

25. The final report of the Family Justice Review, chaired by David Norgrove, is due to be published in Autumn 2011. The panel session at the conference provided a chance for the delegates to discuss the Review's emerging recommendations, particularly those that will have an impact on the work of family justice workers at the frontline.

26. In the Schools White paper session speakers representing governors, head teachers and councils gave their view about what the new council role in the future of education will involve. Delegates had the opportunity to debate the key issues in this area and explain how things were developing on the ground in their areas.