

Item 2

Children's Improvement Board Update

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the work of the Children's Improvement Board.

Recommendation(s)

That Members note the report.

Action

LG Group officers to action as necessary.

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1. The grant letter from the Department for Education setting out the grant funding offered for the period July 2011 to March 2012 has now been signed. LGID is administering the grant on behalf of the Children's Improvement Board (CIB). At the last meeting of the Board, members asked to be provided with more information about the CIB's work programme. A copy of the draft work programme is attached (**at Appendix C**), which is subject to further discussion at the meeting of the CIB on 14 September.
2. At the July meeting the Board also discussed the governance arrangements for the CIB. A report on governance has since been commissioned from Dr Clive Grace who will be making recommendations to the CIB at its meeting on 14 September. The CIB is aware of the need to establish strong governance for the programme and the work in progress will provide options for consideration.
3. Work has also been underway to set up a framework contract through which the CIB can tender for specific services as and when they are required. This framework will be used to secure a number of services that are currently being provided in the short term through a single tender arrangement with C4EO and with Serco. CIB has agreed that this arrangement will cease at the end of October by which time a framework contract will be in place and services will have been secured through a competitive process.
4. The services to which this are expected to apply are:
 - 4.1. Provision and development of data profiles and knowledge and intelligence to support the self assessment, improvement planning and peer challenge work in which all councils will engage.
 - 4.2. Expansion of the supply of sector data specialists to support self assessment work.
 - 4.3. Recruitment and supply of sector specialists to contribute to support packages for individual councils, to peer reviews, and to policy implementation work.

Policy implementation

5. Nine local authorities have been selected as pathfinders for payment by results from a large group of over forty applicants. The pathfinders will focus on the core purpose of children's centres: to improve child development and school readiness among young children and to reduce inequalities. The scheme will explore the potential to join up with other payment by results schemes being developed across Government. Pilots are due to be launched in up to 21 more local authorities in the autumn, with a view to rolling out the system nationally by 2013.

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6. Discussion is also underway on how the planned DfE support offer on Families with Multiple Problems (in the context of Community Budget initiatives) can be fully integrated within the sector support model. Further discussions are taking place on how a number of other policy implementation issues, including productivity work and a youth offer and the implementation of the Munro recommendations, can be delivered through the sector led work. This is likely to drive further requirements for support products and services.

Inspection

7. As indicated in **Item 3**, "Arrangements for the inspection of Local Authority Children's Services" the CIB is meeting Ofsted on 8 September to discuss their how inspection can add value to and draw on the sector led approach to improvement.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications from this report.