

Other business report

Purpose of report

For information.

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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Other business report

LGA/DfE action research on the council role in education

1. Nine authorities have been selected to take part in the action learning research on the council role in education which is being jointly funded by the DfE and LGA:
 - 1.1. Bolton;
 - 1.2. Bristol;
 - 1.3. Gloucestershire;
 - 1.4. Hertfordshire;
 - 1.5. Middlesbrough;
 - 1.6. Oxfordshire;
 - 1.7. Thurrock;
 - 1.8. Warwickshire;
 - 1.9. Westminster.
2. The research is being overseen by a steering group and Cllr Stephen Castle is the LGA representative on the group. The authorities were chosen on the basis that have agreed to commit the resources necessary to participate in the research and that they fit into one of 4 categories, with either: a high proportion of established academies; a high proportion of recent academy conversions; a diverse mix of school types; or a high proportion of community and faith schools.
3. The ISOS partnership was chosen to undertake the research and will produce an interim report at the end of January. This will set out the key issues that the research will focus on, following discussion with the participating councils and a wider group of stakeholders, including the local authority representatives on the Ministerial Advisory Group on the council role in education. The LGA has organised a session for Lead Members for Children's Services on 21 March 2012 to discuss the interim report and give Lead Members an opportunity to contribute to the research. The final report is due in June and it will be launched at the LGA Annual Conference at the end of June.

NFER and NYA update

4. Reporting activity for the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in the September to December 2011 period has included the publication of reports on Approaches to Assess the Economic Benefits of Early Intervention, the National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England 2010 and Targeting Children's Centre Services on the Most Needy Families. Newly

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commissioned projects include two SEN projects looking at Alternative Provision and Lead Members Views on Personalised Budgets, a suite of three projects looking at the recent 1 million NEET figure reported with focus on exploring the participation patterns of young people and a review of the skills' needs for 16-24 year olds. In addition, projects on the Impact of LGA Safeguarding Peer Reviews, a Best Practice Review on School Forums (with valuable support from Cllr Bellotti on this project as it develops), a School Place Planning Mapping Study and the evaluation of the NYA Tailored Support Offer have all been approved and work has started on these.

5. The NYA/LGA annual conference "The Youth Offer: The future role of councils in supporting young people" took place on 17 January at LG House. There were keynote sessions from Children and Families Minister Tim Loughton, Fiona Blacke, Chief Executive of the NYA, and the conference was chaired by Cllr David Bellotti. The NYA launched a series of documents at the January conference including research into business engagement with services for young people and a suite of 8 documents providing tools and guidance on commissioning. These have been informed by pilot work with two councils. A further 2 documents will be launched in March - these will include a commissioning briefing for Lead Members.
6. The NYA will shortly be holding discussions with the DfE to open up access to the 'Supporting Services for Young People' Community of Practice. The intention is for the CoP to serve as the legacy site for the Government's Positive for Youth strategy.
7. The NYA is currently working with 21 councils delivering packages of tailored support. These will be completed by the end of March 2012 and a case study produced for each. LGA has commissioned NFER to evaluate the first year of the programme and the learning will be used to inform the roll out of the programme to 50 councils in 2012/13.
8. In addition, four councils have been approached to work with the NYA/Young Foundation to deliver the second stage of 'informing investment in youth work' project. This work will develop practical approaches that support investment in youth work. The aim is to get a real sense of the short and medium term implications of decisions on youth work investment for local authorities and their partners. This work will be completed by the end of March.
9. Working with the DfE and LGA, NYA have identified five practice examples that will be used to illustrate innovate and replicable practice in leveraging and securing funding in local areas for services to young people. This work will assist local commissioners to make better decisions on the deployment of direct funding and improve understanding of, and synergies with, non-statutory funding provision.

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10. A peer challenge programme for youth services is being developed and the Agency is working with four councils to develop free web-based learning resources.
11. The Support and Challenge group continues to review the Routes to Success programme and LGA/NYA are in the early stages of producing an overall work programme for 2012/13, for agreement by the Board's Office Holders.

Children's health

12. On 23 November Cllr Simmonds co-chaired a meeting with the office holders of the Community Wellbeing Board and the Children and Young People Board to discuss the support offer to councils on children's health. We agreed the importance of looking at children's safeguarding within a wider context, with the full range of agencies involved. The two Boards will continue to work together on this issue.
13. A joint conference between the Children and Young People Board and the Community Wellbeing Board on Children's health issues will take place on the 22 March. It will examine the key challenges and issues facing local authorities and their partners and explore how they can address the needs of children and young people and ensure their voice is being heard in the new systems. Issues such as safeguarding, JSNA and JHWS and health and wellbeing boards will be addressed. The conference will also look at how a cross sector approach can drive health improvement and reduce health inequalities for children and young people.
14. Confirmed speakers include Anne Milton, Public Health Minister, Elaine McHale, Director of Children's Services at Wakefield Council and Jo Butcher, Programme Director – Health and Wellbeing at National Children's Bureau and will be chaired by Cllr David Rogers OBE, Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board at the LGA. Further speakers will be announced shortly.
15. For further information please contact Samantha.Ramanah@local.gov.uk.

Children's Development Workforce Council – Members Group – Cllr Rita Krishna

16. The main item under discussion at the Children's Development Workforce Council (CWDC) Members Group meeting in October, was the legacy of CWDC, including in particular the matter of maintaining a focus under any new arrangements, on integrated working as being fundamental to securing meaningful future improvement in the wellbeing of children and families. The principle of integrated working is enshrined in the Children Act legislation, about building services around the needs of the child, rather than privileging professional elites and silos. After much discussion, the Members agreed with

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the Board that the CIB could be entrusted with being the guardian of integrated working, subject to greater consideration of membership of the CIB, and in particular the need to secure a meaningful voice for children themselves and parents.

17. Since the October meeting we looked at the final work plan for our CIB contract and reviewed the progress of discussions with the CIB and LGA. We are on track to sign the contract in the next couple of weeks.

Cutting children free from sexual exploitation: Helping local authorities to develop effective responses and services

18. The Government published its child sexual exploitation National Plan in November 2011. The LGA is working in partnership with Barnardo's and London Safeguarding Children Board on a practice briefing that will provide information and best practice in order to help local authorities address child sexual exploitation in their areas. The practice briefing will be published in March or April and the LGA will continue to keep members informed as this work develops.

Supporting Families in the Foundation Years Consultation: Proposed Changes to the Entitlement to Free Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency

19. The LGA will be responding to the Department for Education's consultation on their proposed new entitlement for free education for disadvantaged two year olds from September 2013, including which children will be eligible. It also includes proposals on the quality and flexibility of the entitlement for two, three and four year olds. It seeks views on proposals to:
 - 19.1. streamline statutory guidance to local authorities on the delivery of free early education and securing sufficient childcare;
 - 19.2. set eligibility criteria for the new entitlement to free early education for two year olds;
 - 19.3. increase flexibility on when free entitlement hours can be taken; and
 - 19.4. clarify eligibility requirements that providers need to meet to deliver free early education places.
20. LGA have sought views from local authorities in drafting our response. A copy of the final draft response will be sent to office holders for approval by the end of January.