

Children and Young People Board

Agenda

Wednesday 25 January 2012
11.00am

The Westminster Suite (8th floor)
Local Government House
Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Children and Young People Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

Guidance notes for visitors

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

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LGA Children and Young People Board
25 January 2012

There will be a meeting of the LGA Children and Young People Board at:

11.00am on Wednesday 25 January 2012 in the Westminster Suite (8th floor), Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

Attendance Sheet

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

Apologies

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

Labour: Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Conservative: Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264 email: luke.taylor@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat: Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent: Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: independent.group@local.gov.uk

Location

A map showing the location of Local Government House is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact

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Carers' Allowance

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Children and Young People Board

Date: 27.10.11

Children and Young People Board - Membership 2011/2012

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (6)	
David Simmonds JP [Chairman]	Hillingdon LB
Paul Carter	Kent CC
David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council
Baroness Shireen Ritchie	Kensington & Chelsea RB
Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
Robert Light	Kirklees MBC
Substitutes:	
Susie Charles	Lancashire CC
Roy Perry	Hampshire CC
John Osman	Somerset CC
Labour (5)	
Rita Krishna	Hackney LB
John Merry CBE [Vice Chair]	Salford City
Catharine Grundy	Birmingham City
Paul Lakin	Rotherham MBC
Anne Burns	Cumbria CC
Substitutes:	
Ebrahim Adia	Bolton MBC
Catherine McDonald	Southwark LB
Liberal Democrat (3)	
David Bellotti	Bath & NE Somerset Council
Liz Green [Deputy Chair]	Kingston upon Thames RB
Kath Pinnock	Kirklees MBC
Substitutes:	
Peter Downes	Huntingdonshire DC
Independent (1)	
Apu Bagchi [Deputy Chair]	Bedford BC
Substitutes	
Gillian Ford	Havering LB
Paul Cullen	Richmondshire DC

LGA Children and Young People Board Attendance 2011-2012

Councillors	6.9.11	20.10.11	25.01.12	28.03.12	21.05.12	16.07.12
Conservative Group						
David Simmonds	Yes	Yes				
Paul Carter	No	No				
David Pugh	Yes	Yes				
Baroness Shireen Ritchie	Yes	No				
Derrick Murphy	No	Yes				
Robert Light	Yes	No				
Labour Group						
Rita Krishna	Yes	No				
John Merry CBE	No	Yes				
Catharine Grundy	Yes	Yes				
Paul Lakin	Yes	Yes				
Anne Burns	No	Yes				
Lib Dem Group						
David Bellotti	Yes	Yes				
Liz Green	Yes	Yes				
Kath Pinnock	Yes	Yes				
Independent						
Apu Bagchi	Yes	Yes				
Substitutes						
Susie Charles	Yes	Yes				
Roy Perry	Yes	Yes				
Catherine McDonald	Yes	Yes				
John Osman		Yes				

Agenda

Children and Young People Board

25 January 2012

11.00am

Westminster Suite (8th Floor), Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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	Sue Rossiter, Chief Executive	
	To note:	
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Date of Next Meeting: 28 March 2012, Local Government House

Business Plan Priorities 2012/13

Purpose of report

For review and direction.

Summary

1. Work has begun on the LGA's Business Plan for 2012/13. As part of this, each of the Programme Boards is asked to identify the headline priorities for their areas of work for next year in the light of the LGA's overall direction of travel.
2. An outline business plan, attached as **Appendix A** to this paper, was presented for initial review at the January meeting of the Executive. This has been developed in discussions at Leadership Board and through the political group offices. This work has informed the statement of our vision for local government and, given this, initial proposals as to where the LGA can have most impact.
3. Through this work, six priorities have emerged as the focus for the LGA's work in 2012/13:
 - 3.1 public service reform;
 - 3.2 growth and prosperity;
 - 3.3 funding for local government;
 - 3.4 efficiency and productivity;
 - 3.5 sector-led improvement;
 - 3.6 the LGA's own effectiveness and efficiency.
4. Heads of Programmes have provided the known priorities for their area in the light of the Board issues identified by Members in September 2011. For the Children and Young People Board, these were:
 - 4.1 council role in education;
 - 4.2 children's health;
 - 4.3 implementation of the Munro review;
 - 4.4 sector led improvement;
 - 4.5 reducing youth offending;
5. At the time Members agreed that these were the biggest children and young people issues facing councils, but the Board continues to oversee work across

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slice funded programmes delivered through the National Youth Agency and the National Foundation for Educational research.

6. Boards are asked to review these business plan priorities for 2012/13. The draft business plan currently identifies the following priorities for children and young people:
 - 6.1. Supporting councils in their role in education with the expansion of academies and free schools to ensure councils can ensure a fair system for all. This could include:
 - 6.1.1. the DfE/LGA funded action research on the changing role of councils in education;
 - 6.1.2. LLDD/Special Educational Needs/Alternative Provision;
 - 6.1.3. education improvement support to councils;
 - 6.1.4. Raising the Participation Age/Careers guidance/employment.
 - 6.2. Lobbying for fair funding for all schools and arguing the case for councils to be the mediating layer between central government and schools. This could include:
 - 6.2.1. schools capital and the implementation of the James review;
 - 6.2.2. revenue funding and the new national funding formula for schools;
 - 6.2.3. pupil premium;
 - 6.2.4. Education Funding Agency.
 - 6.3. Responding positively to the anticipated White/Green paper on the care system, supporting councils to share best practice. This could include:
 - 6.3.1. implementation of the Munro review;
 - 6.3.2. implementation of the Family Justice review;
 - 6.3.3. identifying ways to reduce delays;
 - 6.3.4. the role of corporate parents.
 - 6.4. An improvement programme for children's services. This could include:
 - 6.4.1. the Children's Improvement Board programme;
 - 6.4.2. supporting councils with community budgets;
 - 6.4.3. safeguarding peer reviews;
 - 6.4.4. lead Member development.
 - 6.5. Supporting councils in the transfer of public health to local government. This would be led by the Community Wellbeing Board but would include

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children's health which is a shared priority with the Children and Young People Board.

Recommendation

To provide a steer on priorities for Children and Young People services for 2012/13 in the light of the direction of travel for local government and the LGA presented in the outline business plan.

Action

To feedback the Board discussion to Leadership Board, to inform the final business plan which is due to be signed off by the LGA Executive in March.

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Position: Head of Programmes
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E-mail: helen.johnston@local.gov.uk



DRAFT

BUSINESS PLAN
2012/13

A SHARED VISION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CHANGING LIVES

Local government has the potential to lead local communities, now more than ever before, and play a central role in growth and in changing people's lives.

In the current economic climate, it is down to local government and its leaders, to rise to the challenge. People rely on us to do so, not just as the trusted deliverers of local services, but as leaders and innovators, as councillors who really know and work hard for their communities, and as officers who get on with the job.

Local government leaders are demonstrating they are up to the task and driving their councils forward to ensure they fulfil this role. Their aim is to make places distinctive and attractive for people to live and work in and enjoy.

Part of that leadership role is to communicate powerfully, to connect with people, taking the argument, strongly and self-confidently to central government, the wider public, other partners and the media.

ACCOUNTABLE

Local government really can make a tangible, lasting difference to people. It has the ability to inspire and lead communities, and improve quality of life, by creating and contributing to a real sense of place, rooted in those local communities.

Unlike many other organisations, councils can make change happen instantly and with real authority, at a very local level – the opposite of the grand, empty gesture. It is sometimes the small things which have most impact and leave the biggest impression.

Key to this is localism, by definition not something which is set out at a national level – localism means central government letting go, putting more faith in local people, and being confident about local democracy. Councils are the enablers of localism, not the impediment to it. They are often the single most important source of practical advice to local communities who want to take on more responsibility.

This means collaboration, partnership, no silos, and working across boundaries. Local government must work like this both internally and externally, facing outwards towards those who use local services.

Councils and councillors get involved and involve others. They encourage by example and support others to develop – and this includes their own workforce as much as their communities and the partners they work with. Councils actively involve people in the design and delivery of their local services.

Councils work as enablers – supporting people to take more control over their lives and their localities, and encouraging growth, through influence over land use, education, training and local infrastructure. There is real impact to be made in helping local economies and local businesses prosper.

EFFICIENT

Local government remains the most efficient part of the public sector and rightly rests its reputation on this fact. People correctly expect it to deliver cost effectively and efficiently, with excellence being pursued in balance with the appropriate use of public money.

Councils are ambitious in finding ways to do the job within their means, so they are good spenders of public money and more effective than most other organisations in helping people and communities.

In this way local councils and those who run them lead by example and by supporting others – by being bold, innovating, and sharing best practice.

Councils are not afraid to cut costs and be innovative about ways of improving services, as well as being prepared to consider radical economies of scale where this helps delivery on the ground. This means councils focusing relentlessly on performance, eliminating cost. To achieve this councillors are having to make difficult and at times unpopular decisions, while earning a reputation for delivering value for money.

Councils know they can only achieve this by ensuring they have a workforce that is appropriately rewarded, flexible, skilled and engaged through this time of unprecedented change.

RELIABLE

Councils are the backbones of their communities, relied on day in day out, to deliver excellent services whatever the circumstances. They are the safety net, relied on to pick up where other services fail.

People and their local communities depend on this and place their trust in their council, their councillors and what they deliver. Councils must live up to people's expectations and make sure their trust is not misplaced.

Local government can do this because it is one of the most open and accountable parts of the public sector. Voters expect it to deliver. It can be relied on to handle issues important to people's everyday lives and is a force for practical good.

Councillors themselves are trustworthy individuals and work hard in a transparent, highly accessible environment. They need to be supported and encouraged, as their talents, commitment and energy are a really important resource for the local communities they represent.

In return, councils connect to the daily lives of families and their communities. They do this by earning trust, being accountable and staying local. They put their faith in local people and are confident about local democracy.

Councils and their leaders provide the glue for local communities, ensuring social cohesion and successful diversity. Councils also have a key role in supporting the most vulnerable people in society.

THE LGA'S PRIORITIES

The LGA's mission is to support, promote and improve local government.

We work with councils to achieve our shared vision for local government by focusing our efforts where there is a need for us to get involved and where we can have real impact.

The LGA has a major role to play in upholding local government's reputation and supporting real leadership. We are politically led, but independently authoritative, holding unrivalled expertise and knowledge about local government and local government issues.

Leadership is about being bold and ambitious, supporting councils to make a difference, deliver and be trusted. The LGA is proactive and confident, unlocking the economic power and influence of local government and driving change. This is only possible if we work together as a single sector.

The LGA has a key role in driving the debate on public sector reform, to ensure that councils can bring together local services so they are better for the people who use them and better value for the taxpayer.

As the national organisation representing councils and councillors, we play a critical link between central and local government as the legitimate voice of our sector, making the case to ministers. Our policy work is based on objective, independent and credible analysis. It is driven by knowledge, not ideology, and by new thinking, not dogma.

The LGA also acts as the key conduit and promoter of the best that local government has to offer, by encouraging councils to develop and share best practice, through our improvement, innovation and productivity programmes.

As a politically-led membership organisation, we invest in support to the elected members who are directly involved in the LGA. We use our governance arrangements to build strong connections with councils and their sub-national partners to provide political direction for all our work.

This business plan focuses primarily on the services and support funded by subscriptions from LGA member authorities including fire and rescue authorities, and RSG top-slice. We seek additional funding for specific programmes where these fit with our priorities. We also provide services on a cost-recovery basis where councils are prepared to pay for them.

Our top priorities

To deliver our vision for local government, in 2012/13 we will focus on achieving the following outcomes:

Public Service Reform

Councils are at the centre - and are seen to be at the centre - of public sector reform and delivering more effective services for local people.

This includes:

- making the case for continued decentralisation of responsibilities and resources to councils
- making the case to government for community budgets and working with councils to develop and share good practice on community budgets for families with complex needs, and neighbourhood and area community budgets
- supporting councils with implementing the Localism Bill including the Power of General Competence and the Community Right to Bid and Challenge
- influencing the government's Open Public Services proposals and supporting councils in pursuing innovative public service reforms
- ensuring the negotiating machinery and national agreements for workforce are relevant and fit for purpose
- developing an affordable, sustainable and fair local government pension scheme that delivers value for money for the taxpayer
- supporting councils in the transfer of public health to local government
- supporting councils and community safety partnerships in preparing for police and crime commissioners, including setting up police and crime panels
- supporting councils in their role in education with the expansion of academies and free schools to ensure councils can ensure a fair system for all
- lobbying for fair funding for all schools and arguing the case for councils to be the mediating layer between central government and schools
- responding positively to the anticipated White/Green paper on the care system, supporting councils to share best practice
- articulating councils' role in the Big Society and supporting councils in commissioning from the voluntary and community sector
- helping councils share and develop good practice on payment by results
- lobbying in Brussels and Whitehall to ensure that future EU regulation minimises burdens and maximises opportunities.

Growth and Prosperity

Councils are recognised as central to economic growth.

This includes:

- leading a campaign to ensure that the local levers of growth are unfettered
- supporting the development of new planning powers, to achieve wellbeing and growth in local communities
- supporting councils to deliver the new housing strategy
- supporting councils in developing innovative funding for economic infrastructure
- representing councils' interests with reform of the EU structural funds
- lobbying to ensure councils are better able to influence local transport provision
- supporting councils in hosting and engaging communities in a safe and exciting 2012 Games, to deliver wider benefits for the whole country
- promoting and developing councils' role in the visitor economy
- supporting councils as they lead the national roll-out of superfast broadband
- working with government, industry and councils to ensure the Green Deal and new statutory responsibilities on home energy work for councils
- working with councils to strengthen community resilience, including understanding the underlying causes of the civil disturbances in the summer
- working to ensure regulatory services can remain flexible and accountable to the needs of local businesses and local communities
- supporting the development of members and officers in driving the economic potential of their areas.

Funding for local government

Reform of the public sector finance system so councils raise more funds locally, have confidence their financing is sustainable and greater ability to co-ordinate local public services.

This includes:

- the Resource Review, so that investment is focused more effectively on the local areas which most need it
- leading and shaping the debate on the Dilnot Commission's recommendations on the future funding of care and support
- lobbying for welfare reform, in the interests of improving services to local communities and to support local employment
- supporting the creation of a collective agency to help councils reduce their borrowing costs by using the bond markets
- working to achieve equitable needs-based funding arrangements that are fair to local government in all parts of the United Kingdom.

Efficiency and Productivity

Councils dramatically reduce costs in ways which minimise the impact on the quality of life for their residents.

This includes:

- helping councils save at least £150m over the next 3 years by supporting pathfinder programmes, productivity master classes and good practice
- roll-out of the capital assets programme with a particular emphasis on councils using their assets to generate economic growth
- lobbying and leading support for councils with waste and recycling including collection, infrastructure planning and delivery and waste minimisation
- providing free of charge tools such as LG Inform to allow councils to benchmark costs and performance information against other authorities
- continuing to support the Creative Councils programme to help councils turn their ideas into action and share the outcomes with the rest of the sector
- supporting councils to develop on the type of workforce they will need in five years' time helping them with reward, motivation and improved performance
- supporting councils and fire and rescue authorities to respond to civil emergencies

Sector-led improvement

Councils are the most improved part of the public sector.

Local politicians and senior managers lead the transformation of local places.

This includes:

- a programme of over 100 peer challenges in each of the next three years for councils and fire and rescue authorities
- maintaining an overview of the performance of local government and providing tailored support to councils that face significant challenges
- support to enhance councils' accountability to local people including support to strengthen scrutiny working with the Centre for Public Scrutiny
- an improvement programme for children's services
- working with councils to develop an improvement model for adult social care through Promoting Excellence in Adult Social Care
- support to councils to modernise and improve public libraries and programmes for culture, tourism and sport services
- ensuring that international practice is available to support service improvement in the UK and abroad
- providing a range of development programmes for elected members, and one free/subsidised place for every council for each of the next three years
- offering every council over the next three years a member development workshop to support councils to become "champions of their patch"
- working with the national parties and others to increase the diversity of people standing for public office through our "Be A Councillor" programme
- offering member mentoring free of charge for any council where there is a change of political leadership
- providing development programmes which bring together elected members and officers through programmes such as our Leeds Castle programme
- attracting new talent into the public sector through programmes such as the National Graduate Development programme.

Our own effectiveness and efficiency

The LGA is the single voice of local government, representing every local authority and locally democratically elected representatives across England and Wales.

This includes:

Membership

- increasing membership levels amongst local authorities in England and Wales and providing a membership body for Policy and Crime Commissioners
- improving engagement and building strong and productive relationships with councils and groupings of councils – this will be the focus of a member scrutiny review
- acting as conduit between local authorities and central government to ensure a local perspective to emerging policy debate
- securing amendments to emerging legislation and running effective campaigns that deliver real change and improvements for our membership
- developing our suite of communications to provide clear, relevant and up to the minute information that councils value and use
- enhancing benefits and reducing the cost of membership.

Business management

- reviewing our costs with a view to achieving a significant reduction in overheads – this is also the focus of a member scrutiny review
- focusing on value for money, transparency and accountability
- supporting our employees through regular appraisal and investment in their development.

Outline budget 2012/13

	Pay £m	Non-Pay £m	Total £m
Subscriptions			10.0
RSG England			25.5
RSG Wales			0.3
Specific grants and other ring-fenced funding			8.5
Other income (conferences, seminars, sponsorship)			2.0
Rental income			1.0
Other			1.0
Possible carry forward of prior year underspend			1.4
Total income			49.7
Political support and governance	1.7	1.4	3.1
Programme teams			
Leadership and Productivity			
Workforce			
Policy and Delivery	10.8	7.8	18.6
Strategy and Communications	2.2	2.5	4.7
Total operational costs	14.7	11.7	26.4
Specific grants and other ring-fenced funding	2.8	2.8	5.6
Strategic Management Board	0.7	0.1	0.8
Finance and Resources	1.0	-	1.0
Liberata shared service	-	6.8	6.8
Accommodation	-	2.8	2.8
Other overheads (audit, insurance etc)	-	1.7	1.7
Pensions - past employees	-	0.9	0.9
Pensions - additional contribution	-	3.7	3.7
Total overheads	1.7	16.0	17.7
Total expenditure	19.2	30.5	49.7

Our Corporate Indicators

	Target 2012/13 (TBC)	Baseline
Membership	September 2012	September 2011
Total membership	422	422
People Management		September 2011
Employees – total headcount	307 (269 estabd posts + posts for grant-funded programmes)	307
Average sick days per employee for 12 months	Maintain or improve (public sector av 9.6 days; local govt av 10.3 days)	4.5 days
Workforce profile		
BME employees % of the workforce		17%
BME - proportion of employees Grade 6 and above	Increase % of BME employees grade 6+ in line with workforce	5.9%
Employee engagement	Survey during 2012	Survey July 2009
Satisfied with their job	Maintain or improve	79%
Good place to work		66%
Kept well-informed		80%
Line manager helps them achieve their potential		61%
Organisation is committed to equality and diversity in its services		69%
Organisation is committed to equality and diversity in its employment practices		66%
Debtors	March 2013	March 2011
0 – 2 months	80%	56%
3-12 months	20%	10%
13-24 months	0%	14%
Over 24 months	0%	20%
	100%	100%
Liberata customer satisfaction	Survey Nov 2012	Survey Nov 2010
HR and Payroll	80%	66%
Finance and accounting	80%	72%
ICT	80%	58%
FM	80%	80%
Print and design	80%	68%
Overall	80%	61%
Carbon emissions	March 2013 reduce by 6% from 07/08 baseline of 1,450 CO2 tonnes	March 2011
	1,363	1,373

Item 2

Review of adoption and care systems

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The Government is reviewing both the adoption and care systems. The principal aims of any reform would be to achieve increased adoption levels, reduce the length of the adoption process and improve the experience of, and outcomes for, looked after children.

This paper outlines some of the key issues specific to adoption and to the care system and some that are common to both, along with emerging Government thinking. Members are invited to discuss the issues and provide direction to officers on a programme of work to develop LGA policy and positively influence the Government's development of proposals for reform.

Recommendation

That Members discuss the issues outlined in the paper and provide direction to officers.

Action

LGA officers to action as directed, particularly in relation to the LGA business plan priorities for 2012/13.

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Item 2

Review of adoption and care systems

Summary

1. The Government has made adoption and the care systems a priority and is reviewing both. Work on speeding up the assessment of adopters is the most developed and an action plan on this is expected in March. A combined publication on the wider adoption and care systems is anticipated before the summer, reflecting that the systems are related and that there are some issues common to both, in addition to some that are specific to the individual systems.
2. Key issues regarding **adoption** include:
 - 2.1. number of adoptions and the length of the process;
 - 2.2. accountability, the variation in councils' performance and the Government's approach to addressing this;
 - 2.3. the process of matching children with adoptive families, in particular ethnicity matching; and
 - 2.4. post-adoption support and adoption breakdown.
3. Areas for reform for **looked after children** are less clear, but those being investigated further include:
 - 3.1. recruitment and retention of foster carers;
 - 3.2. skills and qualifications of foster carers;
 - 3.3. delegated authority.
4. Issues common across **both systems**:
 - 4.1. thresholds for taking children into care and placing them for adoption;
 - 4.2. workforce;
 - 4.3. the court system and the Family Justice Review; and
 - 4.4. commissioning.
5. **Members are asked to:**
 - 5.1. discuss the direction of LGA policy, including consideration of whether any issues should be prioritised;
 - 5.2. provide a steer on what activities should be undertaken to further develop the LGA position and influence Government's emerging policy.

Item 2

The adoption and care systems

Background

6. The Government has made addressing the fall in numbers of adoptions and the delays in the system a priority, with the Prime Minister, Education Secretary Michael Gove and Children and Families Minister Tim Loughton all backing a drive for improvement.
7. The Department for Education (DfE) is reviewing several elements of the adoption system, both in terms of the process (recruitment and assessment, matching, post-adoption support) and strategic issues (commissioning, performance and accountability, and workforce). Martin Narey, former Chief Executive of Barnado's and previous head of the prison service is acting as the Government's adviser.
8. Improving the care system is also an aim of the Department for Education; however, plans for reform are less developed than those for adoption.
9. It is anticipated that the Government will publish an action plan aimed at reforming some elements of the adoption system in March. This is likely to focus on speeding up the recruitment and assessment of adopters, proposals for which are starting to be developed by a group of practitioners. A further publication, potentially a Green Paper, on wider adoption issues and the care system is expected before the summer parliamentary recess.

Adoption – Key Issues

10. The numbers of adoptions rose between 1999 and 2004, remained fairly static until 2006 and then began to fall. Figures published on 28 September 2011 show that 3,050 looked after children were adopted during the year ending 31 March 2011, a decrease of 5 per cent from 2010 and a decrease of 8 per cent since 2007. Only 60 of those adopted in the year to 31 March were aged under one year old. There has also been a decrease in the number of looked after children placed for adoption.
11. The average time between a child being taken into care and being adopted is 2 years and 7 months. Delays have been attributed to both councils and the court system and probably account for the small numbers of babies under the age of one being adopted.

Council performance

12. On the 31 October the Government published league tables of council performance against 15 indicators for children in care, including in relation to

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adoption, which received considerable media attention. DfE officials have suggested that these services are different from others as the council is both provider and user as a corporate parent and that this may warrant a different – more centralist - approach to local performance and accountability.

13. Tim Loughton MP has stated that he wishes to shine a light on good practice, but also that “...local authorities should be in no doubt that we expect to see improvements in the coming months. We simply will not tolerate continued failure when that failure means a child’s future is put at risk”. The idea of a National Adoption Agency has been rejected by the Secretary of State, but the Prime Minister has suggested that poorly performing councils could be stripped of their responsibilities.
14. The metrics used for the league tables have been criticised for not providing a meaningful or fair picture of performance. For example, they do not take into account that adoption is not possible or appropriate for some looked after children, such as those who are still subject to care proceedings or are accommodated at the request of their parents. Alternatives such as Special Guardianship Orders or long-term foster care may be a better option for some. The metrics do not consider success rates and the use of a three year average does not enable improvements in that period to be reflected. The Government has recognised the flaws and is keen to work with the sector to understand what transparent data measures would better drive improvement.
15. The tables indicate significant variations in the levels of adoption between local areas. Figures show that the proportion of looked after children adopted ranged from 2 per cent to 26 per cent, based on a three year average (2009, 2010, 2011). Reasons that have been suggested for variation in adoption rates include local policies and practice; the stability and experience of adoption teams; misinterpretation of legislation; and attitudes towards foster care and adoption versus supporting birth parents (see section on thresholds below). However, there appears to be no robust, conclusive evidence that explains the variation.

Matching and ethnicity

16. The Government will be looking at the process of matching children with adoptive families and how it could be improved. Specific concern has been raised by Ministers and Martin Narey that ethnicity matching prevents or holds up adoptions for black and minority ethnic children. White children in care are three times more likely to be adopted than black children and it takes on average more than fifty per cent longer for black children to be placed for adoption than children from other ethnic groups. It is not clear if ethnicity matching is the reason for this, or if other factors, for example numbers of black and minority ethnic prospective adopters, also contribute.

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17. The law states that due consideration should be given to a child's cultural and ethnic background, but also that the impact of delay on a child should also be taken into account. There are differing views on the importance of ethnicity matching to the success of an adoption and Martin Narey has argued that the cultural and ethnicity elements of legislation are too rigidly interpreted by social workers.
18. Statutory guidance was re-issued by the Government in February 2011 with a strong message from Ministers that it is not enough to deny a child a loving home with adoptive parents only on the basis that they don't share the same ethnicity. The impact of this change on practice is not yet known.

Other issues

19. The Government has commissioned research into adoption breakdown and post-adoption support will be considered as part of the review. Post-adoption services provided by councils for both adopters and adoptees might include, for example support groups, advice, signposting other services or counselling. These issues are linked to earlier stages of the process: effective recruitment of adopters and matching should reduce breakdowns.

Children in Care – Key Issues

20. There were 65,520 looked after children at 31 March 2011, an increase of 2 per cent from 2010 and an increase of 9 per cent since 2007. 74 per cent of children who were looked after at 31 March 2011 were in a foster placement. The percentage of looked after children at 31 March placed outside the local authority boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live ranged from 3 per cent to 29 per cent.
21. DfE is arranging a number of visits to councils across the country in order to better understand the challenges and potential improvements that could be made to the system, which LGA officers have been invited to participate in. The issues outlined below will be further explored as part of these visits or through research.

Foster carers

22. The increased number of looked after children in recent years has an impact on the level of foster carers needed. The Fostering Network recently estimated that 7,100 foster families need to be found in England in the next twelve months. Around 14 per cent of foster carers leave or retire every year.
23. To better understand recruitment and retention, DfE is collating a statistical picture of the demographics of foster carers across the country and also carrying out research on the motivations for people to become foster parents.

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24. Thought is being given to whether Government should seek to proactively shape the skills of foster carers, either through recruitment practices or professional development. The question of what type of skills or qualifications are desirable underpin this, for example should basic numeracy and literacy skills to read a child a story, ability to help them with homework be necessary? A balance may need to be struck between the desire to have sufficiently skilled foster carers and not deterring people from joining the profession at a time when there is shortage.
25. The question of whether it would be beneficial to target particular groups of people for recruitment, such as teachers or social workers, is also under consideration.

Delegated authority

26. The Government is seeking to better understand the question of whether foster carers have sufficient delegated authority i.e. are they able to make decisions for children they foster that they would for their own children. A typical example is whether a foster carer could make a decision to allow a foster child to stay overnight at a friend's house. It is unclear whether concerns about this are due to legislation, policy or perceptions.

Issues common to adoption and care

Thresholds and workforce

27. There are differing views regarding the extent to which birth parents should be supported in improving their parenting and the point at which children should be taken into care and then potentially placed for adoption.
28. Ministers have voiced the opinion that children are being left in neglectful and abusive situations for too long before being taken into care and that unnecessary delays are then caused by councils failing to initially pursue adoption. It is suggested that social workers can place too high a priority on the rights of the parent/s, sometimes to the detriment of the best interests of the child and that the system can be too optimistic about the capacity for neglectful parents to improve. Narey also argues that there are strongly held views at practitioner, manager and political level about the negative consequences of taking a child into care, as opposed to keeping them within the parental home.
29. However, professionals such as Directors of Children's Services and social workers have presented an alternative view: that some families can and do improve with professional support and that social workers are not 'anti-adoption' but weigh such important decisions carefully, including the alternatives to adoption, such as Special Guardianship by family or friends. The Association of

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Directors of Children's Services has also sought to distinguish between improving adoption rates within the current framework of legislation, guidance and practice and the wider debate about whether more children should be taken into care and adopted as the best means to improve their life chances.

30. As has been noted in the past, social workers can be criticised for either, stepping in too early and breaking up families, or for leaving children too long in unacceptable situations. There is a balance to be struck between reducing delay in the system, whilst also allowing for quality decision making by professionals on what is in the best interests of a particular child. The Munro review of the child protection system called for much greater freedom for social work professionals to be able to use their judgment.
31. DfE will be considering workforce issues such as education, training and development in relation to both adoption and care. The Social Work Reform Board and new College of Social Work play key roles in the improvement of this arena.

The court system

32. As described above, councils have been criticised for delays in taking children into care and in pursuing adoption. However, significant delays occur in the court system.
33. The Family Justice Review was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education. The final report published in November identified that the system, which deals with care and adoption proceedings amongst other public and private law, is under huge strain. An average case in the county court takes 60 weeks and many take much longer. It acknowledges that these delays contribute to the length of time that it takes for a child to be adopted. The report also highlights that with 20,000 children waiting for a decision in the courts, delay is likely to rise further.
34. Numbers of cases have risen in recent years, as have referrals to children's social care, but this is not the sole reason for delays. The way the system operates also has an impact and the report makes a number of recommendations designed to address this. This includes a challenge to councils to ensure that cases are properly prepared for court. The LGA welcomed both the interim and final reports, which focus on the needs of children in the family justice system and make recommendations to reduce delays and their associated harm.
35. The Government's response to the review is expected in January. The extent to which it decides to implement the recommendations will be pivotal to whether delays in both care and adoption proceedings can be significantly reduced.

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Commissioning

36. DfE is interested in gaining a better understanding of councils' commissioning of adoption and fostering services, in particular with the voluntary and community sector.

Conclusion and next steps

37. Adoption and children in care are complex and emotive issues, with elements both within and without local government's control. They are now a priority for central Government and, as with other aspects of child protection, there are implications for local government's reputation and ability to drive improvement in the sector.
38. Members are asked to provide a steer to officers on the direction of LGA policy, identifying any issues that should be prioritised and on elements of a work programme to positively influence the Government's emerging policy. Activities that members may wish to consider could include:
- 38.1. research into the reasons for the variation in adoption rates;
 - 38.2. research into ethnicity matching and its problem;
 - 38.3. a series of stakeholder roundtables or events to explore issues and potential solutions;
 - 38.4. collation and dissemination of good practice;
 - 38.5. a publication setting out local government's vision for adoption and/or care and proposals that would help achieve it;
 - 38.6. lobbying on the implementation of the Family Justice Review.
39. The Children's Improvement Board has identified adoption and children in care as one of its priorities for policy implementation through the sector-led improvement programme for children's services. The form of this support is in the process of being scoped out.

Financial Implications

40. The LGA's work on this issue falls within the budgeted resource for the Children and Young People programme.

Local authorities and the future of careers national policy

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

Significant changes are being made to national careers policy which will impact on local authorities' existing statutory duties and their new duty to support the Raising of the Participation Age, which is now one year off. This paper captures the main issues for Members to discuss and agree further steps for LGA action. This work forms a key strand of the LGA's Hidden Talents campaign, which is jointly developed by the Children and Young People and Economy and Transport Boards.

Recommendations

Members are asked to discuss the developments highlighted in the paper, and agree recommendations to highlight local authority work to help schools take on their new careers duty (**paragraph 4**), influence the National Careers Service (**paragraph 7**), and work with our member authorities in the lead up to their new duty to Raise the Participation Age (**paragraph 9**).

Action

Officers to take forward members' recommendations, and keep Board members updated on developments.

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Local authorities and the future of careers national policy

Schools duty to provide Careers Guidance

1. The Department for Education (DfE) is finalising statutory guidance for schools on their new duty to secure Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) for Year 9-11 pupils, effective from September 2012. It will be published by the end of January, but reviewed in May to consider consultation outcomes to extend the age range of the duty from Years 8-13. This is an important new feature in the future direction of careers policy. There has been anxiety across the education sector about how this will work in practice. The guidance is therefore crucial in helping schools secure sufficient, independent, and expert provision.
2. Local authorities continue to have a legal obligation to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people in education or training (s.68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008), and to young adults assessed as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, up to the age of 25 (s.139a of the Learning and Skills Act 2000) and those not in education, employment or training (through the Early Intervention Grant).
3. The LGA responded to DfE's draft guidance sent to CYP lead members. The main points are:
 - 3.1. We welcome the fact that DfE has listened to concerns that 'most, if not all, young people', should benefit from individual, face-to-face careers guidance, not just those who are disadvantaged, or those with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities, as previously proposed.
 - 3.2. Reference is strengthened so that schools must [rather than should] work with local authorities to support them recording young people's post 16 plans i.e. intended destinations, offer status, and also at an early stage to identify pupils at risk of NEET. Effective partnership is imperative if schools and local authorities are to fulfil current and new duties.
 - 3.3. Access to IAG for pupils with SEN requires expert advice on process and availability of provision, and is dependent on additional support or equipment within an education/training establishment or workplace.
 - 3.4. Local authorities, in their role to work with a broad range of providers on the local learning offer, and their role on Local Enterprise Partnerships

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should be considered in the section on schools' relationship with learning providers.

- 3.5. It is useful that a revised Matrix kite mark will assure quality of external providers of careers guidance deployed in schools.
4. The Association of School and College Leaders and Association of Colleges are developing a 'how to guide' on the duty. The LGA intends to source examples capturing local authorities' work to support schools in their new duty by offering careers guidance services for schools to purchase, supporting them in the commissioning process to quality assure potential providers, or providing them with list of potential providers. This will build on the examples from the LGA/DfE careers transition summit in 2011. **Members will be updated on progress.**

National Careers Service

5. The National Careers Service (NCS), fully operational by April 2012, will replace the Next Steps service, and provide face to face guidance for adults. Local authorities will be responsible for young people not in education since they will not receive CEIAG in schools, but may arrive at the NCS seeking support. The Skills Funding Agency assures us that NCS contractors have effective links with local authorities to signpost young people to them, however the LGA is seeking more detail on how this will operate and how referral numbers will be recorded.
6. To oversee the NCS, a high level National Council for Careers (NCC) is being established by April 2012. It will meet four times a year, and advise Ministers on overall national careers policy – young people and adults. **If Members agree, officers can pursue discussions regarding LGA representation on the NCC and suggest a sub group on signposting, given the importance to local authorities' RPA duty.**

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) regulations

7. The Education and Skills Act 2008 raises the participation age to 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015 for young people to continue in education or training either through full-time education (school, college or home education); work-based learning (Apprenticeship) or part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week. The Act specifies that local authorities must promote the fulfilment of that duty. This is in addition to local authorities existing duties to:
 - 7.1. encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training;

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- 7.2. track young people's learning paths, and secure a suitable offer of education or training for 16 and 17 year olds;
 - 7.3. assist the most vulnerable young people, and those at risk of becoming not engaged in education, employment and training (NEET).
8. On 20 January, DfE will issue a three month consultation on how RPA will work in practice. It is expected to cover definitions of: residency; full-time education; and work, which once combined with part-time study, can be considered as participation. Legislation allows for local authorities to fine employers for not fulfilling their obligations, so DfE will consult on the amount and use of any revenue. Post consultation, DfE will publish a consultation response (end July), publish guidance (September) and put in place regulations in the latter half of 2012, to be laid before Parliament in early 2013. **Officers will summarise the consultation, seek views and respond.**
 9. Local authorities must provide for sufficient places for 16-19 year olds. The Young Peoples Learning Agency recognises that lagged learner funding model may result in 2012/2013 gaps, so requested in November that local authorities apply to YPLA for additional placements to be funded. It will be responding to local authority requests in January.
 10. A DfE organised **RPA - Are you Ready?** event on 7 February will launch the consultation and bring together organisations involved in RPA delivery including councils, schools, colleges, other providers, employers, and the voluntary and community sectors. Speakers include Tim Loughton MP, Matt Dunkley (DCS of East Sussex) and Cllr John Merry.
 11. DfE has issued a call for expressions of interest (Eoi) for its **fourth, and final phase of RPA trials** to go live on 1 April. Open to local authorities or organisations working in partnership with them, the pilots will develop and test local RPA arrangements, build on existing planning and good practice, align with area-wide RPA plans, and share learning across a wide range of other areas. 40 projects will be funded each receiving around £75,000. Areas are invited to take part in one of three categories:
 - 11.1. new areas that have not yet delivered an RPA project;
 - 11.2. existing areas to 'buddy' each other to offer challenge and support;
 - 11.3. existing areas to lead programmes of support to new areas.
 12. The Board Chair has written to DfE Ministers responsible for RPA, careers, and the recently announced £150 million available to help young people who are NEET to seek a discussion on ways to develop a joint approach during 2013.

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Destination Measures

13. DfE is developing two learner destinations measures at the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE or equivalent) and Key Stage 5 (two years of post- compulsory education for students aged 16-18, or at sixth form) for 17 and 18 year olds, to show the destinations of all young people the year after they leave school or their post-16 provider. They are designed to publish information as part of Performance Tables in May, ensure pupils in school are receiving CEIAG, help raise post-16 participation and reduce NEETs.
14. KS4 and KS5 destination measure data is being tested in two local areas (Kingston upon Thames and Gateshead) to check if findings from national data check out at the local level. The destination measures will be developed in two phases. Phase one, published in May 2012, will track education destinations into further and higher education or work based learning. Phase two, published in spring 2013, will include more complex employment destinations. DfE will delay KS5 until employment destinations are available.
15. DfE will publish annual data on the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds receiving a suitable learning offer under the September Guarantee in 2011 by local authority. In March, it will publish annual data on the proportion of young people who were not in education, employment or training by local authority including more detailed data than in previous years (reakdown by age at 16, 17 and 18).

Hidden Talents Campaign

16. Against a background of high youth unemployment and changes to funding and institutional landscape affecting young people, lead members of this Board and the Economy and Transport Board agreed to a joint Hidden Talents campaign. It will focus on councils' role in improving services to young people from early years to young adulthood and emphasise the importance of place.
17. Officers are taking forward actions to get the campaign underway which includes NFER commissioned work on breaking down youth participation statistics and the variation between places; events including a Youth Summit in February, and an LGA event on the future role of councils in pre and post 16 education on 20 March; and a publication launched at LGA Annual Conference in June setting out our recommended solution to improve the current system.
Members will be updated on progress.

Item 4

**National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Work
Programme**

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report provides members with an update on the work of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Sue Rossiter, Chief Executive of the NFER will be attending the meeting to discuss their work.

Recommendation

That members comment on the report.

Action

LGA Officers to action as necessary.

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National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Work Programme

Introduction

1. Following agreement of funding from a topslice of revenue support grant for 2011/12 of up to £650,000 and 2012/13 of around £500,000, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has continued to develop its research, analysis and information offer to support the work of the LGA, the Children's Improvement Board (CIB), and the children and young people's sector and local government more widely.
2. This short paper provides an overview of key programme activity in 2011/12 and prompts Board members to consider priority areas in which they would like to see research and analytical work over the coming financial year.

Activity to date

3. Working with the NFER Board champion (Cllr Paul Lakin), other Board members and LGA officers, the programme this year has addressed key issues and themes in the children and young people context including work around:
 - 3.1. Young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs), in support of the LGA Hidden Talents campaign that is being launched at the 2012 LGA Annual Conference.
 - 3.2. Sector led improvement, including evaluation of the CIB-funded early adopters programme and the LGA-funded safeguarding peer reviews.
 - 3.3. The local authority role in developing world-class services for young people, including work focusing on school place planning and the role and future development of school forums.
 - 3.4. The impact of the 2011 SEN Green Paper for elected members, young people, service provision and providers.
 - 3.5. Workforce issues such as the Soulbury workforce project.

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- 3.6. Early intervention and prevention, including work on targeting Children's Centre support and developing a business case for early interventions and evaluating their value for money.
- 3.7. Youth - focusing on an evaluation of the NYA engagement network and of the NYA tailored support offer to councils (as part of the Routes to Success programme).
- 3.8. Health and wellbeing, including an investigation into the ways in which councils are fulfilling their duty to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people in their local area in partnership with others, including schools, health and other key agencies and third sector bodies.
4. The NFER information and intelligence offer to LGA and the sector has also evolved during 2011/12. Following the withdrawal of the grant for the EMIE service, NFER continues to provide a pared down information and intelligence service in support of the children and young people sector. This involves close liaison with colleagues' work on LGA Inform and the Knowledge Hub and includes the ongoing hosting, monitoring and facilitating of the eddie network – an email discussion forum for staff working in local authority education and children's services departments, along with the production of Local Notes - a summary of news and documents from local authority children's services departments and their partners.
5. In addition to the work delivered directly as part of the children and young people programme, NFER's children and young people-funded work has also provided support to other areas of focus for the LGA. This has included the delivery of the Councillor Census, the Sixth Form Colleges' salaries and numbers survey, and a number of projects aimed at feeding into the LGA Hidden Talents campaign.
6. The work programme has also responded to approaches from individual councils to the LGA requesting research and evaluation on local programmes of work. The most recent of these approaches was from Devon County Council; the ensuing project involved a case study of their Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) model, which works across a range of agencies involved in safeguarding children. The report generated considerable national interest and the model was recently cited in two ministerial documents - one on gangs; the other on missing children. NFER also worked with Devon to examine the Value for Money (VfM) of MASH and to identify the metrics that could be used for assessing its impact over the medium and longer term.
7. Interest in the research published to date this year has included keen interest from DfE in the work on school place planning, and from Ministers in relation to the best practice review of the role of School Forums. Work from the 2010/11

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financial year on child poverty; governance in schools; information, advice and guidance for young people; and sustaining and replicating good practice, in particular, continue to generate interest, with requests to present at a number of conferences this year.

Development of the research programme and plans for the future

8. In 2011/12 to date, the LGA has approved funding for 15 new studies, and provided additional funding for a further four existing projects and for some additional strands of work delivered through the information and intelligence strand of the programme (such as hosting the eddie service, and producing a summary analysis of the children's services inspection reports for 100 councils for internal LGA use).
9. The most significant change in delivery this year has been around the turnaround required for delivery of project outputs. Looking back over previous years, projects would generally cover a six- to eight-month period. In this financial year, they are more likely to be turned around in three or four months. To respond to this demand, NFER has adapted its approach, using smaller research teams, and in some cases a single researcher, which offers some efficiency savings.
10. As an organisation, NFER works with and for a range of clients, from national Government to local authorities, charities and private sector companies. Research areas include assessment, statistical analysis, international comparisons, information and reviews, evaluations and consultancy work. NFER also runs data collection, test trialling and survey administration services, and a range of omnibus and panel surveys. In addition to contract research, evaluation and assessment work, the Foundation:
 - 10.1. Identifies and tackles the important research questions of the future, funding this work through its own funds or seeking specially targeted funds.
 - 10.2. Develops new products and services to make it easy for others to gather and use evidence to help them improve education, children's services and classroom learning.
 - 10.3. Works closely with clients and partners to ensure maximum impact of its wide range of projects.
11. NFER's internal programme of research includes a focus on the theme 'Education to Employment'. Work in this area has included a review of careers professionals' involvement in schools; an international review of employers' involvement in schools; and a review of approaches to supporting NEETs.

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Since the completion of these reviews, NFER has also developed research proposals for a project on the development of indicators for 'open to learning' and 'undecided' NEET, for which funding has now been approved by LGA and CIB, and for a project on evidence of the benefits of employer involvement in schools. This whole strand of NFER's internal research programme is complementary to the current LGA programme focus on youth unemployment and could feed into the LGA campaign launching in June 2012.

12. NFER has also recently merged with Futurelab Education; the two charities share complementary objectives and missions with an emphasis on using research to improve the quality of teaching and learning and, as a consequence, the lives and opportunities of young people.
13. This range of work, combined with NFER's understanding of the children and young people and local government sectors, means that the Foundation is in a strong position to offer a wide body of knowledge from across the sector, which can help to steer and drive the future LGA education and children's services research and evidence programme.

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Item 5

Schools funding update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates members on recent developments in schools funding issues, notably the Academies' topslice

Recommendation

That members note the report.

Action

LGA Officers to proceed as necessary.

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Item 5

Schools funding update

Academies topslice

1. As reported previously £148 million in 2011-12 and £265 million in 2012-13 is being removed from formula grant to pay for central education functions for academies. Following their July 2011 consultation, to which the LGA and around three quarters of affected authorities responded, the Department for Education (DfE) issued a further consultation in December 2011 which closed on 12 January 2012.
2. In brief this proposes no change to the topslice for 2011-12. For 2012-13 authorities which continue to have low numbers of academies in January 2013 may get a grant based on the DfE's assessment of the difference. But their methodology continues to use the section 251 return which the LGA has said is not adequate for New Burdens Purposes. The DfE are not now proposing to increase the topslice for either 2011-12 or for 2012-13, as suggested in the July consultation
3. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the LGA's response to the consultation, signed off by the office holders of the Children and Young People Board and the LGA Leadership Board, says that although the proposed way forward is an improvement on the July 2011 proposals, the methodology the Government proposes is not yet a basis for fairness and is not in accordance with the Government's own New Burdens Doctrine. We propose that the Government, in consultation with the LGA, commission an independent exercise to assess the savings that authorities can reasonably be expected to make when schools convert to academy status and the time period over which those savings can be realised. This should be applied for grant 2012-13, 2011-12 and to inform any long-term adjustments for 2013-14 and later.
4. Sir Merrick Cockell and Cllr Simmonds met with Lord Hill to discuss this issue on 18 January and any updates will be reported to the Board.

Schools' Funding

5. DfE have not yet issued their reply to the July 2011 consultation on schools' funding although aspects have been discussed in both the Capital and Revenue Task and Finish Group of the Ministerial Advisory Group, chaired by Cllr Simmonds, and the officer and official School Funding Implementation Group. A further DfE consultation with more detailed proposals is expected in Spring 2012.

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6. Meanwhile the 2012-13 provisional Dedicated Schools Grant and Pupil Premium were announced in December 2011. The per pupil DSG remains cash flat for 2012-13. However the amount allocated for the Pupil Premium has risen from £625 million in 2011-12 to a total £1.25 billion in 2012-13. This will mainly be passed onto schools although the DfE has kept back £50 million for summer activities between years 6 and 7 targetted at disadvantaged pupils.
7. Also announced was the Early Intervention Grant for 2012-13. This has risen by 6 per cent; to reflect the incorporation of £68 million additional money for two year olds.

Capital

8. There has also been no Government response to the consultation on the James Review although one is promised in late January or early February. Allocations for the Priority Schools Building programme have also not yet been announced. Other 2012-13 allocations have been announced on the lines of the existing system, with separate pots for academies and free schools as opposed to a single capital pot. Local authorities have been allocated £800 million for basic needs funding and £686 million for maintenance capital.

Financial Implications

9. None specific to this report.

Lead Member for Children's Services Regional Network Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report provides an update on the key areas of discussion at the Lead Member Regional Networks and the support LGA is providing for those networks that have identified support needs.

Recommendation

That members note the report

Action

LGA Officers to action as necessary

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Lead Member for Children's Services Regional Network Update

Background

1. The Board agreed to strengthen its links with the regional lead member networks and create a two way conversation with them. This included both an opportunity for Board members to attend the regional networks and for the chairs of regional networks to have a standing invitation to attend and observe Board meetings.
2. The Children and Young People programme team have assigned a lead officer to link into each regional network in order to;
 - 2.1. provide an update on key policy issues, LGA activity and positioning relation to these and also to highlight support available to lead members;
 - 2.2. listen to the regions key issues and to communicate these to the Board and help progress through the LGA improvement offer and the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) programme.
3. The table at **Appendix A** lists the lead member for each network, date of when they last met, future meeting dates if known, support arrangements and discussion topics. Board members can then contact the regional lead member direct if they wish to attend a network meeting.

Support to regional lead member networks

4. The North East and South West networks have been identified as networks that would benefit from, and who have welcomed, LGA direct support. Consultation has started with lead members in these regions, working closely with the chair and other key partners to develop a forward programme for these networks and to suggest a sustainable operating model for the future.

Key issues for regional lead member networks

5. Since the last Board meeting officers have attended network meetings in Yorkshire and Humber and East of England. The key issues for members were:
 - 5.1. academies, education reform and the strategic role for councils;
 - 5.2. health reforms and Health and Wellbeing Boards;
 - 5.3. sector-led improvement and the engagement of members in the developing regional plans and the CIB programme.

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Conclusions and next steps

6. A free LGA event for lead members has been organised for 21 March to hear about the initial findings of the DfE/LGA Local Authority Action Research on the Council Role in Education. This event has been organised in response to issues raised by lead members both at regional network meetings and at the September induction event.
7. Lead members have been invited to a session following the next Board meeting on 28 March together with member peers who have delivered Safeguarding Children peer reviews to reflect on their experiences. There will be an opportunity to discuss how members can engage in the CIB programme.
8. Early preparations are in place for a new lead member induction session following the May 2012 elections led by Board members and the potential for a targeted Children's Services Leadership Academy aimed at lead members supported by the CIB programme. These events will be promoted through the regional networks.
9. The 'Must Know' resource for lead members is in final stages of revision and will be launched on the new LGA website in the next few weeks and hard copies will be available for the regional networks.
10. Officers are planning to attend the next cycle of network meetings in East Midlands, South West, North West and Yorkshire and Humber regions.

Financial Implications

11. Activities are funded through the CIB programme or the existing Children and Young People programme budget.

Children and Young People's Services – Regional Member Network Chairs and Meeting Dates

Region	Network Chair		Last Network Meeting	Next Network Meeting/s
North West	Cllr John Lamb (Trafford MBC) John.Lamb@trafford.gov.uk		7 October 2011 Support from NW employers	17 February 2012
North East	Cllr Patricia Smith (Sunderland City Council) cllr.patricia.smith@sunderland.gov.uk		Did not meet LGA support to revive the network	tbc
Yorkshire and the Humber	Cllr Linda Burgess (Barnsley MBC) CllrLindaBurgess@barnsley.gov.uk		4 November 2011 Regional Development Manager funded through RIEP provides support. 8 members and 2 officers attended Topics discussed: 1. Health reform and Health and Wellbeing Boards 2. Education reform and new relationship with schools.	13 January 2012 23 March 2012
West Midlands	Cllr Les Lawrence (Birmingham City Council) les.lawrence@birmingham.gov.uk		10 January 2012	27 March 2012
East Midlands	Cllr Ivan Ould (Leicestershire CC) ivan.ould@leics.gov.uk		14 September 2011. Support from E. Midlands RIEP.7 members attended. Topics discussed: 1.Sector led improvement	

		2. Future role of councils in education	
East of England	Cllr David Brown (Cambridgeshire CC) david.brown@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	8 December 2011 Support from regional LGA and Improvement East. 8 members and 2 officers attended. Topics discussed: 1. Sector led improvement 2. Academies	7 March 2012
South West	Cllr Toni Coombs (Dorset CC) T.B.Coombs@dorsetcc.gov.uk	19 September 2011 South West Councils support coming to an end. Some LGA support in place 5 members and 1 officer attended. Topics discussed: 1. Multi-agency safeguarding hub 2. Council role in education 3. Sector led improvement 4. Future sustainability of the network and links to DCS network.	Seeking a joint meeting date with DCSS
London	Cllr Steve Reed (Lambeth) - sreed@lambeth.gov.uk	Thematic joint officer/member meetings supported by London Councils	
South East	Cllr Roy Perry (Hampshire CC) roy.perry@hants.gov.uk	6 September 2011 Support from RIEP and Reading Borough Council	30 March 2012 20 July 2012 23 November 2012

Children's Improvement Board update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates the Children and Young People's Board on recent developments on the activities led by the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) and invites feedback.

Recommendations

That the Board consider and comment on the current and planned activities of the CIB.

Action

Officers from the CIB team and the LGA to take forward the CIB's work programme in the light of the Board's comments

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Children's Improvement Board update

Background

1. The Children's Improvement Board (CIB) work programme is a major part of local government's push for greater self improvement and self regulation. It is delivered through a partnership between the LGA, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives), supported by the Department for Education (DfE).
2. Because of the significance of the programme to children's services and to local government, an update on CIB is a standing item on Children and Young People Board agendas. The last report was made to the Children and Young People Board at its meeting on 20 October and a further report was presented to the LGA Executive on 8 December 2011.
3. The first year of operation for the CIB has necessarily involved attention to setting up and support arrangements. However, the programme is now moving into a phase of substantial delivery, much of it through regional working, to lead into the first full year of operations in 2012-13. This report gives highlights of current and planned activity.

Key areas of activity

Engaging all councils in a sustainable system and peer challenge

4. At the heart of the work of the CIB is a commitment to engage all councils in self improvement in a way that will be sustainable. Building on their normal processes of self-assessment and review, councils are asked to open this up to external challenge by their peers and, in turn to offer senior officer time to peer challenge others. It is important both that self improvement does not depend on continued national funding and that it creates a culture where councils are more willing to share difficulties with their peers and be ready to ask for help when needed.
5. For this reason, a significant part of this year's and forward work programmes will be work led by councils in regions. In this financial year a total of £1.3 million is being devolved to councils working together in regions. Top priorities for this work are establishing a coordinated approach to peer challenge which engages all councils, and being able both to identify early warning signs of failure and facilitate appropriate support. Following discussions with CIB, all nine regions now have plans in place for local programmes of peer challenge,

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including in some cases training for peer challengers. In some regions challenges are underway and all regions have been asked to aim for 50 per cent of councils to be actively engaged by the end of March in terms of either receiving or offering a challenge. In addition, by the end of March, 26 councils will have used the national programme of specialist children's safeguarding peer reviews. These reviews have been developed and delivered by LGA (formerly LGID) and are now funded and being further developed by CIB.

6. There are a number of councils that are subject to improvement notices from DfE who are receiving support which has been facilitated and part funded by CIB in order to strengthen the delivery of their improvement plans. This has been a priority for CIB but regions are now being asked to develop their local capacity to identify risk earlier, based partly on the outcomes of peer challenge, so that increasingly signs of a decline in performance will be tackled by councils working to support each other.

Political leadership

7. A key part of self improvement is leadership from councillors particularly lead members for children but also council leaders and backbench councillors. This is important both to ensure the quality of the programme and its credibility. The strength of political leadership and the engagement of councillors in improvement activity are both seen as critical by ministers.
8. Particularly critical to this, is mentoring provided by councillors for councillors. At present there are not sufficient member peers in the "bank" to meet actual and potential need for this hands on support, and too much burden is being placed on a small number of councillors. A process is now underway with the LGA's political group offices to recruit more member peers, accredited on the basis of their experience, who will be ready to help where councils and councillors need it. The CIB team also now has additional capacity to support this recruitment process and to support rapid matching of member peers to areas of need.
9. The peer challenge model for children's services being developed in regions, as described above, will be more light touch and it is expected that all councils will get involved. At present most of this activity has been officer led, but councillor involvement is encouraged. Councillors involved in this less formal and lighter touch peer challenge would not need to be accredited nationally or to be drawn from the national bank of member peers; however if a council was felt to be in particular need of support, mentoring might be arranged following the peer challenge.
10. In addition the following activities are planned to support lead members for children:

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- 10.1. continuing support to regional networks of lead members and input from the CIB team to provide updates and seek input to the CIB's work (linked to the LGA's ongoing commitment to provide input and dialogue on policy issues – see the separate Regional Network Update);
- 10.2. an induction event for new lead members in July. It is likely that Children and Young People Board members will be asked to be involved in leading parts of the agenda;
- 10.3. potential funding of free places at the Leadership Academy for lead members for children. This funded approach was trialled in the area of "Aging Well" where 100 places were taken up, indicating the level of demand for this sort of development opportunity. The leadership academy can support members who take on their portfolio mid-year and therefore miss out on induction.

Implementing policy on the ground

11. As part of the CIB's work programme it supports councils in the delivery of major policy change. Councils have already being supported on children's centre services and twenty seven councils are trialling payment by results. Four councils have been funded to develop and share innovative approaches to youth services (Hammersmith and Fulham, Devon leading a consortium of 16 councils, Knowsley and Haringey) and more funding will be available to a larger number of councils for youth service innovation next financial year. A programme on commissioning and productivity in children's services is being led by the LGA's productivity team on behalf of CIB.
12. For the remainder of this year, and continuing into next, dependent on funding, the CIB has agreed that policy priorities should be:
 - 12.1. key aspects of the Munro Review of Child Protection - developing performance data and wider performance information (linked to development of local authority data profiles and knowledge hub); supporting effective social work practice and ensuring that the sector learns from serious case reviews and the evidence base of what works;
 - 12.2. early Intervention – developing a local 'Early Help' offer; the availability of early support for individual children is likely to form part of the new Ofsted inspection methodology;
 - 12.3. youth Services Improvement (as above);
 - 12.4. commissioning and Productivity in children's services including a specific focus on developing new and innovative services for young people;

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12.5. improving Adoption and Support for Children in Care.

13. A discussion and scoping event is being held with local authorities on 9 February to shape the CIB's work in commissioning sector support for policy implementation in relation to the Munro Review of Child Protection and early intervention and prevention with vulnerable children and families. Plans for sector-led support in regions show that these are local policy implementation priorities. This scoping event will ensure that CIB develops the right balance between support for regional and local work and support that can and should be offered nationally.

Financial Implications

14. Funding for the programme is provided by DfE. The programme is being hosted by the LGA which claims part of this funding as payment for services provided by the organisation. In addition to this, the LGA provides staff time to contribute to the CIB's work, in support of the LGA's business plan priority to deliver an effective approach to sector-based support in children's services.

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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Position: Programme Officer
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E-mail: lucy.ellender@local.gov.uk

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.

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	Children and Young People Programme Board
Date and time:	Thursday 20 October 2011 – 2.15pm
Venue:	ICC London ExCel, National Children and Adults Services Conference

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
Vice chair	John Merry CBE	Salford City
Deputy chair	Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames RB
Deputy chair	Apu Bagchi	Bedford BC
Members	David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council
	Catherine Grundy	Birmingham City
	Paul Lakin	Rotherham MBC
	David Belotti	Bath and NE Somerset
	Kath Pinnock	Kirklees MBC
	Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
	Anne Burns	Cumbria CC
Substitutes	Susie Childs	Lancashire CC
	Catherine McDonald	Southwark LB
	Roy Perry	Hampshire CC
	John Osman	Somerset CC
In attendance	Rt Hon Michael Gove MP	
	Lead Members for Children's Services	
Apologies	Baroness Shireen Ritchie	Kensington and Chelsea RB
	Paul Carter	Kent CC
	Robert Light	Kirklees MBC
	Rita Krishna	Hackney LB

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	<p>Welcome and introduction to the Board</p> <p>Cllr David Simmonds, welcomed the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP and the Lead Members for children’s services to the Board meeting. The Board members introduced themselves to those attending the meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Education reform and schools funding: discussion with Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education</p> <p>Rt Hon Michael Gove MP addressed the members, saying that the meeting was an opportunity for him to hear their concerns and he invited questions from the floor.</p> <p>During the question and answer session a number of issues were discussed. Member sought assurances from the Secretary of State that the diversity of councils and their particular circumstances were being fully factored into in the Government’s reforms. The Secretary of State replied that the Department did appreciate the differences in authorities and were seeking to gather evidence in order to establish general principles for reform which could be applied across all local authorities.</p> <p>Several issues were raised in relation to academies. Members asked for clarification around their powers to intervene in academies that were either failing or likely to do so. Members also raised the issue of school transport to and from academies, the responsibility for which rested still rested with councils. Members suggested that it would be more appropriate for this responsibility to reside with the academies themselves especially as academies have control over the school day’s start and finish time and their numbers are increasing; the Secretary of State agreed to look into the issue of transport for academies. The Secretary of State replied that councils still had a range of powers to intervene in academies where they foresaw difficulties There was also discussion around the issue of changing primary schools to academies, including the potential barriers and how they could be overcome.</p> <p>Population growth and its relation to pupil place planning, was</p>	

raised as a particular issue for large urban areas. The Secretary of State was aware of these problems, and he said he believed local authorities were best placed to lead on pupil place planning in their areas, though their funding needed to be used flexibly to meet demand.

Several Members expressed concern at the creation of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) replacing the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). The Secretary of State said that the new Agency had been set up with the aim of simplifying schools funding. It would create a formula that could be applied across all schools to produce a per pupil amount. This funding would then go directly to local authorities for the schools that they maintain to distribute to schools in their areas.

The use of PFI to finance schools building projects, was a matter of concern for several Members. The Secretary of State outlined the potential benefits of PFI for capital projects, whilst agreeing that there were drawbacks to such a system.

Members wanted to see further work done on adoption, including maintaining support for people post-adoption. The Secretary of State said councils could contact him with details of reforms they felt were needed and agreed that the current guidance was too long and too bureaucratic.

In response to a question, the Secretary of State said that the DfE is ready to talk again to the LGA again about the deduction from Revenue Support Grant to fund the central costs of academies. He indicated that he now accepted the case for making the deduction on the basis of the number of pupils in a council area being educated in academies, rather than top slicing all councils on the basis of a national formula. He said he hoped that agreement could be reached on the appropriate 'per pupil' amount that should form the basis of the calculation.

Action:

LGA officers are producing an estimate of what the per pupil amount should be, building on the work carried out over the summer to respond to the government consultation on the issue.

3 Children's Improvement Board update

The Board **noted** the report.

4 What does the LG Group do for councils?

The Board **noted** the report.

Date of the Next Meeting: 25 January 2012, 11.00am, Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Children and Young People Programme Board
Date and time: 6 September 2011, 11.00am
Venue: Mary Sumner House, Westminster

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
Deputy chair	Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames RB
Deputy chair	Apu Bagchi	Bedford BC
Members	David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council
	Baroness Shireen Ritchie	Kensington and Chelsea RB
	Robert Light	Kirklees MBC
	Rita Krishna	Hackney LB
	Catherine Grundy	Birmingham City
	Paul Lakin	Rotherham MBC
	David Belotti	Bath and NE Somerset
	Kath Pinnock	Kirklees MBC
Substitutes	Susie Childs	Lancashire CC
	Catherine McDonald	Southwark LB
	Roy Perry	Hampshire CC
In attendance	Fiona Blacke	NYA
	Miriam Rosen	HMCI
	David Goldup	Ofsted
	Matt Dunkley	ADCS
Apologies	John Merry CBE	Salford City
	Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
	Paul Carter	Kent CC
	Anne Burns	Cumbria CC

Officers: Helen Johnston, Ian Keating, Cassandra Harrison, Samantha Ramanah, Craig Titterton, Caroline Bosdet, Lucy Ellender (LG Group)

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Cllr David Simmonds welcomed the new and returning members to the first meeting of the new Board. He suggested that Board members should become more involved in suggesting issues for debate and discussion at meetings and proposed that members themselves should make presentations to the Board, rather than always inviting outside speakers.</p>	
2	<p>Youth Policy and NYA Improvement Support</p> <p>Fiona Blacke, Chief Executive of NYA, attended the meeting to give Members an introduction to their work and discuss the issues currently facing young people. The key issue that Fiona identified was a lack of funding, and the impact that this was having on youth service provision. She also described the NYA's Routes to Success programme, funded by LG Group from a topslice of revenue support grant, which offered tools to local authorities and showed what interventions produced the most effective outcomes.</p> <p>Members discussed the issues on which there could be greater joint working between the LG Group and the NYA, including issues around public transport in both rural and urban areas and social care workforce issues.</p> <p>Members also discussed the riots that had taken place across England in early August and their responses. It was noted that the majority of those involved in the riots had been young adults, so it was important to rebut the media portrayal of the disturbances as a young person's issue.</p>	
	<p>Action</p> <p>Fiona Blacke to be invited to a future meeting to give an update on the NYA's progress.</p>	Lucy Ellender
3	<p>Arrangements for the inspection of Local Authority Children's Services: Ofsted Consultation</p> <p>Miriam Rosen, HMCI and John Goldup, National Director,</p>	

Development and Strategy at Ofsted gave the Members an overview of the new schools inspection consultation, saying that its main focus would be to have a stronger impact on improvement. They felt that the new framework would represent a proportionate system of inspection, which would enable a focus on schools that were judged inadequate or satisfactory or where standards were slipping. Ofsted had undertaken 150 pilots during the summer term to test out the new approach. They would be launching a Parent View website in the Autumn, where parents would be able to express their view on their local schools.

The Consultation on Children's Services inspection would be closing on 27 July. This would build on the strength of the existing inspection framework and take account of the recommendations coming out of the Munro Review. This would mean that inspections would be unannounced; there would be a focus on the Child's journey; and the inspection would look at the contribution of all the agencies involved. Multi-agency inspection was a complicated issue, but all the inspectorates were keen to enable this.

Members raised concerns that the new inspection framework's focus could mean that judgements were made with hindsight rather than based on the facts available at the time decisions were made. John Goldup was keen to say that this would not be the case, rather they would be looking at the reactions of the agencies involved and see what consideration was given to actions when a case first arose.

Members asked how this new framework would provide a link between peer reviews and the new inspections.. Ofsted replied that there would be a potential for considering peer reviews in inspection, however there were key differences between inspections and peer reviews that could make this difficult.

4 What should the Board's focus be for 2011/12?

Cllr David Simmonds introduced this item, telling members he wanted to allow members to have a chance to raise issues that they felt strongly about a take a lead on those issues in the future.

Members identified the key issues as:

- Finance and resourcing.
- Children's health especially children on the autistic spectrum and the role of Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- Transport affecting young people's access to youth

services.

- Education and the future commissioning role of local authorities with academies and free schools.

Members also felt there was a greater need focus on issues around the education bodies financed by the top slice and CIB Governance at future meetings.

Action

Update the programme plan following discussions. Helen Johnston

Members to be provided with a diagram showing the working groups of the Ministerial Advisory Group and how they work with the LG Group. Lucy Ellender

5 Children and Young People Programme Plan 2011/12

The Board discussed how they would work to engage with the regions to promote the work of the LG Group, but also to allow a two-way dialogue with their colleagues in the regions to ensure that their key concerns were known. It was noted that the Children and Young People officers had been assigned a region that they looked after. Members felt that better representation within the regions was essential to showing member councils the value of LGA membership.

Members considered the use of task and finish groups for specific issues.

Decision

*Members **agreed** that further work should be done to strengthen contact between the boards and regional groups of Lead Members for Children's Services.*

Action

Send round Executive paper on Education reform and Schools funding Lucy Ellender

Extend invitation to the regional chairs to attend a future Board meeting Lucy Ellender

6 The Challenges for the next year - ADCS

Matt Dunkley, the President of ADCS, attended the meeting and gave the members and introduction to his priorities for the

coming year and the key issues facing the sector from the ADCS perspective. He talked about the future role of local authorities in education; sector-led improvement; local authority statutory intervention powers; and the Munro Review recommendations on Serious Case Reviews and Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Members asked what role ADCS saw for lead members for Children’s Services and more specifically about how ADCS felt members should be involved in the Children’s Improvement Board and the split between Member’s and officer’s roles.

Matt acknowledged that there had been differences of opinion on this in the past but he agreed that both Members and officers had a responsibility to work closely together to ensure that both political and professional accountability was in place.

Decision

ADCS and the Office Holders of the Children and Young People Programme Board will continue to meet to ensure joined up working.

BOARD BUSINESS AGENDA

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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1 Finance update

Members discussed procurement, saying that a centralised system of procurement for schools would not lead to efficiencies and it was more important to have local solutions to procurement. They also raised the issue of PFI funding.

The Chair confirmed that these points would be taken forward to the Task and Finish Group of the Ministerial Advisory Group.

2 Children’s Improvement Board update

Members asked about the governance arrangements in place for the CIB. They were told that Dr Clive Grace had been commissioned to look into the governance issue and the Chair had been interviewed for this report. He had made it clear that the Children and Young People Programme Board saw a strong role for Members in any future governance arrangements. Dr Clive Grace would be interviewing other stakeholders in the CIB before drafting his final report.

Members **agreed** to keep this on the agenda for future meetings.

3 NFER Update

Members noted the update.

Following comments from members Cllr Paul Lakin, the Board's current champion for NFER, informed the group that they were keen to receive ideas from Board members about ideas about future work areas

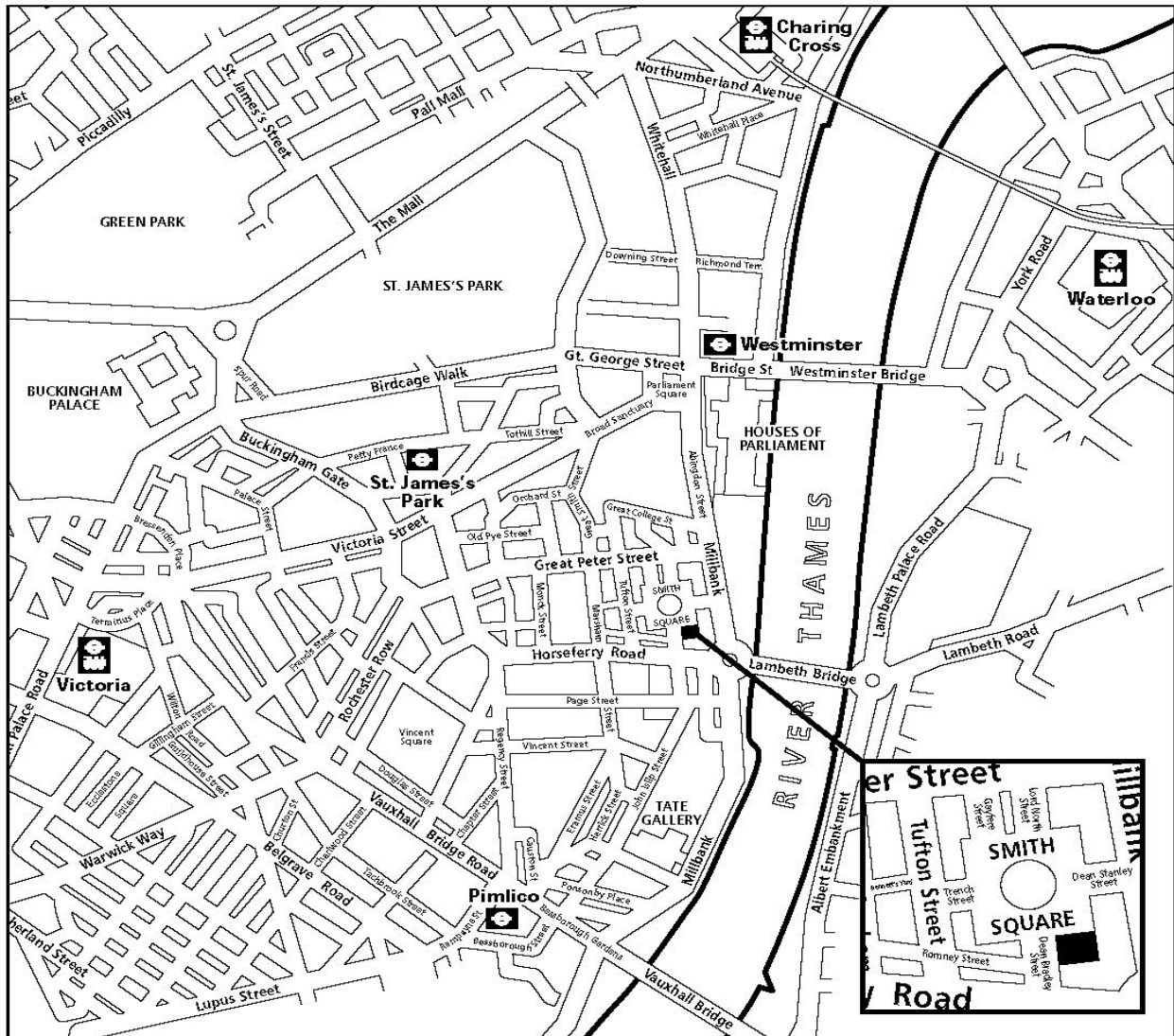
Action

Members to suggest further ideas for NFER future working. Members

4 Notes of the last meeting: 12 July 2011

Agreed.

LGA Location Map



Local Government Association

Local Government House
 Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
 Tel: 020 7664 3131
 Fax: 020 7664 3030
 Email: info@local.gov.uk
 Website: www.local.gov.uk

Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are;

Victoria

and **Waterloo**; the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (District and Circle Lines); **Westminster** (District, Circle and Jubilee Lines); and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line), all about 10 minutes walk away. Buses **3** and **87** travel along **Millbank**, and the **507** between Victoria and Waterloo goes close by at the end of **Dean Bradley Street**.

Bus routes - Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych **N87**
3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

Bus routes - Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria
C10 Elephant and Castle - Pimlico - Victoria
88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Cycling Facilities

Cycle racks are available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

Local Government House is located within the congestion charging zone. For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car Parks

Abingdon Street Car Park
 Great College Street
Horseferry Road Car Park
 Horseferry Road/Arneway Street