

LGA

**Education and Children's Services
Funded Research Programme**

**Winter/Spring
2012**



Funded research programme

The Local Government Association (LGA) has, for many years, commissioned a programme of research and information from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) funded by the Revenue Support Grant top-slice from the Department for Communities and Local Government. This work offers a unique opportunity for the LGA to address policy development and improvement support issues of key interest to local government, which are unlikely to be prioritised by other national programmes.

The research programme is managed by LGA officers with its focus and outputs overseen by the LGA's Children and Young People Board. The work is carried out by researchers, information specialists and statisticians at the NFER.

Whilst the majority of projects are commissioned through the CYP Board, work is also commissioned across more than one LGA board and includes projects such as the Councillor Census and research exploring the

publicly reported one million young people believed to be not in education, employment or training. More recently the LGA has jointly funded work with the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) with projects exploring sector-led improvement.

Current research

Developing indicators for early identification of young people at risk of temporary disconnection from learning

This research will focus on ways to identify and support young people aged 14–19 who are at risk of disconnection from learning. Over recent years, public awareness of the plight of young people described as NEET (not in education, employment or training) has grown as the numbers of young people falling into this 'category' increase, and as youth unemployment figures climb. There is both public and political interest in identifying strategies that can help to tackle this persistent and growing societal problem.
Embargoed until June 2012

Council approaches to children's health and well-being

The purpose of the study is to investigate the ways in which LAs are fulfilling their duty to promote the health and well-being of children in their local area, in partnership with others including schools, health and other key agencies and third sector bodies. The report will provide an overview of partnership approaches including an assessment of the different approaches being undertaken. It will also support a greater insight into what mechanisms are working well and where issues and challenges have emerged and how these are being overcome.
www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/council-approaches-to-childrens-health

Hidden talents: a review of 16–24 year olds' skills needs and support

In recent years there has been increased interest in the skills needs of the English economy, and the extent to which young people are equipped to find work and contribute to economic growth. This literature review, supported by quantitative analysis of existing data will investigate current perceptions of the skills required to support the English economy over the next 10 to 15 years, identifying where there are gaps. Drawing on national- and local-level sources, the review will report on skills needs at national and regional levels.
Embargoed until June 2012

Changes to the funding of SEN provision: views of Lead Members

The purpose of the study is to consider the implications of proposed changes to the funding of SEN provision, from the perspective of LA Lead Members. In particular, the project will aim to explore how the proposed changes might work in practice, and the likely impacts of personal budgets. The research will also look at perceptions of challenges, barriers and benefits of personal budgets.
www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/changes-to-funding-sen/

The impact of safeguarding children peer reviews

This evaluation will aim to provide evidence of the impact of safeguarding peer reviews for LAs who are in intervention. In particular, the study will: gather reflections on the process and its impact from councils receiving a review, discover what has changed locally as a result of undergoing a review, and highlight the approach required for LAs in intervention. The report will be used to support revisions to the current methodology as delivered by the LGA.
www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/safeguarding-peer-reviews/

Hidden talents: a statistical overview of the participation patterns of young people aged 16–24

To determine the extent of young people who are categorised as not being in employment, education or training, use will be made of a number of data sources to try and get underneath the raw numbers recently quoted (1 million young people who are currently NEET). This is a fairly cold statistic and in exploring other data sources the study will look to obtain some deeper understanding of that figure. There are a number of reasons why a young person could be considered NEET, but not all will necessarily have a negative impact.
Embargoed until June 2012

Alternative provision for young people with special educational needs

This study aims to provide evidence of successful approaches to supporting young people with SEN in alternative provision. The study will explore how alternative provision is identified for pupils with SEN and how it is matched to individual pupils' needs. It will also look at the core elements of successful approaches to alternative provision for SEN pupils and if they differ from approaches to supporting pupils without SEN. The study will also aim to identify the lessons learnt in relation to supporting young people with SEN in alternative provision that can be shared across the sector.

www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/provision-for-young-people-with-sen

A best-practice review of the role of Schools Forums

The purpose of the study is to carry out a best practice review of the role of Schools Forums. Specifically, the research will provide an overview of the models of Schools Forums currently in existence across local authorities in England, including an assessment of the different approaches to Forums with regard to their nature, structure and decision-making powers. It will also suggest possible ways that Schools Forums might develop in the future including new practices which might improve them.

www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/best-practice-school-forums/

Evaluation of the National Youth Agency tailored support offer to local authorities

An evaluation of the NYA programme of tailored support to local authorities is underway and involves three strands: a desk review of the bids received for the tailored support programme and baseline telephone interviews, semi-structured case study interviews with stakeholders involved in the programme, and follow-up interviews with LA representatives to explore impact. The outputs from the research will include an interim report, 11 standalone case-studies and a thematic report, which will draw out the key messages for the LGA, NYA, and local authorities.

www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/evaluation-nya-support/

School place mapping study

By collecting and analysing the most recent local authority plans for school places, this study aims to collect local knowledge to produce a picture of where school places will need to be added or removed over the next five years. An interim report has identified many of the key issues based on a sample of local authority plans collected November 2011 to January 2012. A further request for information during February will enable a comprehensive picture to be developed.

www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/school-place-mapping

Soulbury Committee Workforce Survey 2010–11

The Soulbury Workforce Survey collects information on the numbers and characteristics of local authority staff in England and Wales whose pay and conditions are determined by the Soulbury Committee. It is conducted in order to inform the Committee's pay negotiations. This is a repeat of the 2007 survey. Local authorities will complete a set of data collection forms which will be hosted on the NFER schools portal and analysis of the collected data will be provided.

www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/soulbury-committee-workforce/

Publications available now

Evaluation of the early adopter sector-led improvement programme pilots

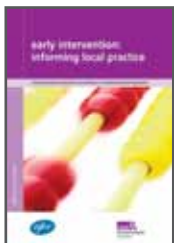


new

The CIB commissioned this evaluation of the 'early adopter' programme for sector-led improvement and support. The evaluation focused on examining the development of the programme and how effective the process is in its early stages providing a report to the CIB which helps inform the development and roll out of the programme. Findings indicated LAs are positive about the sector having ownership and responsibility for its own development and the opportunity to share best practice with others.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/SLIP01

Early intervention: informing local practice



new

Within the context of the Graham Allen Reviews and Professor Eileen Munro's Review of Child Protection, which argue the case for early help and early intervention, this report provides further evidence to show that investing in early intervention approaches improves outcomes and brings about cost savings. It offers recommendations for policy makers, local authority officers, front line practitioners and researchers.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGLC02

Targeting children's centre services on the most needy families



new

While continuing to acknowledge the value of 'universal' services, The Government has asked children's centres and local authorities to target services on the 'most needy' families. This research aimed to provide local authority early years' and children's services leaders and children's centre managers with evidence of how children's centre services are targeting the most disadvantaged families. The research found that it is difficult to achieve a precise definition of families in the greatest need of support.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGTC01

Developing a business case for early interventions and evaluating their value for money



new

In the context of increased debate about early interventions in the UK, this report provides guidance on what constitutes a good business case for early interventions and how it should be assessed. The guidance will be of use to local authorities and their partners in their decision-making and planning on early interventions. The guidance includes information on how to make or assess a business case for early interventions, how to make an economic case for early interventions and the key considerations in evaluating the value for money of early interventions.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/EITS01

National census of local authority councillors 2010



new

This sixth survey of local authority councillors in England collected data over November 2010 to February 2011 and updates the previous Censuses in 1997, 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2008. The findings are based on responses from 6,082 (33.4 per cent) councillors in office in England. The majority of councillors thought that listening to local views was the most important thing for councillors to do. Over 80 per cent of councillors would recommend taking on the role to others.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGUX03

Safeguarding: council developments



In the light of the independent reviews of safeguarding and child protection (Laming and Munro), this research captures LA approaches to developing safeguarding practices in a changing policy landscape. The report provides localised accounts of practice implementation and, where possible, evidence of outcomes. The main priority areas for improving safeguarding included: leadership and management; recruiting, maintaining and retaining a highly competent workforce; quality assurance and performance management; referral and assessment processes and procedures; and partnership working. A small number of barriers and challenges to improving safeguarding were identified, these centred on: process and systemic challenges, challenges to partnership working and external local contexts and circumstances.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LSGC01

Evaluation of the NYA Engagement Network

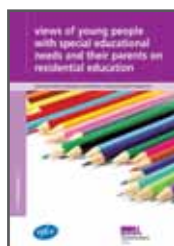


An evaluation of the National Youth Agency's Engagement Network, which aims to support young people who are NEET to have a voice and shape local provision for young people through local projects, explored how LAs had implemented activities and identified impact, outcomes, challenges and effective practice. Overall, the evaluation found that the NYA Engagement Network model, if given adequate levels of resourcing and buy-in from the elected member, provides LAs with a new way of engaging young people who are NEET.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PEEX01

Publications available now

Views of young people with special educational needs and their parents on residential education



Providing for children and young people with special educational needs or a disability was the subject of the 2011 DfE SEN Green Paper. The Green Paper sought to improve the support provided by the current education, health and social care systems for children and young people with additional needs. This report explores families' experiences of residential education for young people with SEN or a disability, and their views on the placement process. The research was commissioned as one of three projects looking at issues relating to young people with SEN or disabilities.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGRC01

Local authorities' perceptions of how parents and young people with special educational needs will be affected by the 2011 Green Paper



The 2011 DfE SEN Green Paper set out proposals with a strong emphasis on local decision making and autonomy and reflected the government's localism agenda. In the light of the ongoing developments and their implications for families, schools and LAs this research aimed to capture LA perspectives of how the parents of children and young people with SEN and of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will be affected by the Green Paper. The report identifies key implications for LAs in the light of the proposed changes.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/SENG01

Young people with special educational needs/learning difficulties and disabilities: research into planning for adult life and services



The process of transition to adulthood for young people with SEN and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities can be difficult and is not always entirely successful. The 2011 DfE SEN Green Paper made wide-ranging proposals to improve services and outcomes. This research aimed to shed light on how young people with SEN or LLDD have been prepared for adult life and adult services, and how planning for this transition might be improved. The research looked at policy and practice in six local authorities, through interviews with professionals, parents and young people.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/SENT01

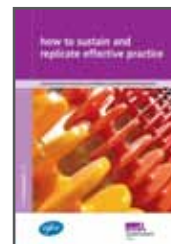
Information sources for the local children and young people's services sector: a mapping study



A mapping study to inform the development of the LGAs online information, advice, guidance and data offer to local authorities. The aims of the study were to identify the information needs of children and young people's services professionals, local government officers and elected members and to map the national data, research, policy and practice sources available to them. The study found the key features of a good information source to be accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, ease of use, ability to meet the needs of different types of users, data that can be manipulated and a one-stop shop.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/TPCS40

How to sustain and replicate effective practice



Innovations in practice in local authority children's services face a number of key questions in the current organisational and economic environment. Among these is whether the longer-term benefits in terms of impact can be proven to outweigh the costs of implementation of a programme or initiative. The challenge, while being mindful of cost-effectiveness, is to evidence how practice can be sustained and replicated. This report examines how identified effective practice examples have been, or could be, replicated and sustained, with a view to informing guidelines for future practice. Guidelines were also produced.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LRSV01

Young people's aspirations in rural areas



The economic downturn and subsequent substantial reduction in public spending has had a negative impact on young people in the labour market. In rural areas, young people face distinct issues that can have a negative impact on their employment. Youth unemployment in rural areas is often believed to be caused by the low aspirations of young people themselves, their families and local communities. These are also linked to low educational achievements and post-16 participation rates in education. The research explored young people's aspirations in three rural LAs: Suffolk, Lincolnshire and Cumbria. The report identifies the key influences and impacts of low aspirations.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LYPA01

Publications available now

Devon multi-agency safeguarding hub: case-study report



The range of agencies involved in safeguarding children in the county of Devon operate across local authority boundaries: the police and probation services' responsibilities cross both Devon and Cornwall. With families moving across LA boundaries and multiple agencies lacking a unified relationship, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) model was established. This case study covers the rationale of the MASH model, how it works, key challenges and components and how transferrable it is. It also looks at outcomes and impact of the MASH and future developments for the MASH.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGMX01

Devon multi-agency safeguarding hub: value for money report



This report examines the value for money of the Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the metrics that could be used for assessing its impact over the medium and longer term. At the time of reporting the MASH was midway through a phased roll-out and it was too early to make a definitive assessment as to whether it offered good value for money. Whilst some of its costs and benefits are immediate, others will take time to emerge as the system beds in and the intended benefits towards the safeguarding of children are realised. However, it was possible at this stage to provide a framework within which value for money can be monitored and assessed going forwards and to recommend measures to achieve this.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGMX02

Local authority progress in tackling child poverty



The research assessed local authorities' progress in meeting the duties placed on them by the 2010 Child Poverty Act, specifically the requirement to complete a local needs assessment and a joint local child poverty strategy. The study found that the eradication of child poverty was considered to be a high priority. Concern was however expressed about the lack of statutory and prescriptive guidance from government and about the potential effects of the current public-sector budget reductions. Most partnerships were well developed, and were reported as having the key ingredients for successful collaboration.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGCP01

Governance models in schools



This study reviewed the current model of accountabilities in school governance and considered alternative models that may be appropriate for the schools of the future. Key principles and components of effective governance are more significant to the governance of schools than the type of model followed. The evidence indicates that an effective governing body can have a valuable impact on school improvement. The majority of governors felt that their governing bodies were effective and coordinators were also positive about the overall effectiveness of governing bodies.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGMS01

Safeguarding children peer review programme: learning and recommendations



This research aimed to draw out key messages and learning from the safeguarding children peer review programme. The study found that the process can be highly valuable to local authorities, supporting their upwards performance trajectory of safeguarding practice. Benefits of an effective review included increased commitment to improving practice, development of ideas, plans and actions, promotion of learning and reflective practice, revision of policies and processes, improvement of staff morale and enhancement of partnership working. However, there is also some capacity for future development and expansion of the programme as it becomes further embedded and refined.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LSGP01

Hidden talents: exploiting the link between engagement of young people and the economy



This research was undertaken to support local authorities by identifying a range of opportunities for LAs and businesses to work together for mutual benefit. The research also aimed to identify and provide case studies of how LAs have and can create linkages between their work to engage young people, economic development and business support to achieve improved outcomes for young people and employers. A number of themes emerged including the need to simplify opportunities for the business community to work with young people not in education, employment or training.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/HITA01

Back catalogue

The reports listed below are available as free pdf downloads at www.nfer.ac.uk

Safeguarding Children: a literature review

December 2010

Information, advice and guidance for young people

September 2010

Implementing outcomes based accountability in children's services: an overview of the process and impact

July 2010

Local authority approaches to the school admissions process

July 2010

Mapping the terrain: 16–19 funding transfer

July 2010

The impact of the Baby Peter case on applications for care orders

June 2010

Local authorities' experiences of improving parental confidence in the special educational needs process

June 2010

An analysis of youth offending teams' inspection reports

June 2010

Intergenerational practice: outcomes and effectiveness

June 2010

Children and young people's views on web 2.0 technologies

June 2010

Evaluation of the Children in Trouble Programme

March 2010

Scoping review on safeguarding

March 2010

Supporting local authorities to develop their research capacity

March 2010

Teacher resignation and recruitment survey 2008

February 2010

Collaborative good practice between local authorities and the further education sector

September 2009

Narrowing the gap in outcomes: governance

June 2009

Narrowing the gap in outcomes: leadership

June 2009

Using non-formal learning to re-engage young people who are NEET

May 2009

Local authorities and school improvement: the use of statutory powers

April 2009

Mental health services for care leavers

March 2009

Consultation practices used in planning Children's Services

March 2009

National census of local authority councillors in England 2008

January 2009

Narrowing the gap in outcomes: early years (0–5)

November 2008

Consultation practices used in planning children's services

September 2008

Supporting the development of Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPS): the case-study data

May 2008

Evaluating the early impact of integrated children's services: round 1 final report

May 2008

Analysis of Children and Young People's Plans 2007

May 2008

Narrowing the Gap in Outcomes: Further Overview of Data and Evidence on the ECM Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups. Progress Report and Update

March 2008

Teacher resignation and recruitment Survey

March 2008

Intergenerational practice: a review of the literature

March 2008

The role of the lead member for children's services. Final report

March 2008

Narrowing the Gap in outcomes for vulnerable groups: overview and analysis of available datasets on vulnerable groups and the five ECM outcomes

November 2007

Annual survey of trends in education 2007: schools' concerns and their implications for local authorities

November 2007

The impact of school fires: a study of the wider economic and social impacts on schools and the local community

October 2007

Perceptions of the LGE: research summary

May 2007

Guidelines for official publications in local authorities

March 2007

CAMHS funding and priorities

December 2006

Delivering the ten-year childcare strategy: a survey of current plans (research summary)

November 2006

Schools' concerns and their implications for local authorities: annual survey of trends in education 2006

October 2006

Annual survey of trends in education 2006

October 2006

The role of the lead member for children's services: final report

September 2006

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