

## **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**

LGA officers to action as necessary.

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## **Other business report**

### **Alternative Provision and Pupil Referral Unit Consultation**

1. The LGA has submitted comments to the Department of Education consultation on improving Alternative Provision (AP) and Pupil Referral Units, (PRUs) which proposes taking forward recommendations in a recent report by Charlie Taylor, the Government's expert advisor on behaviour. The LGA's response strongly supports the proposals to place the responsibility for excluded pupils with schools in order to improve the incentives for schools to make sure the provision is of a high standard.
2. However, we do not accept the argument that PRU provision will automatically be improved by moving all providers to academy status and we cannot see any evidence in Charlie Taylor's report to support that assertion. Local authorities will retain the duty to ensure full time education for all young people in their area, including those excluded from school. To meet that duty they must retain the powers to carry it out, including establishing a local authority PRU.
3. We also disagree strongly with the proposal to ban local authority staff from the management committees of PRUs. This would prevent the majority of local authority employees who have no role in education from contributing to their local community and we argue that it is draconian and should be either be withdrawn or re-drafted in a much more focused manner. Charlie Taylor's report recommended that local school representation should be 'in the majority', not that there should be a ban on local authority representation.

### **Ofsted consultation on the Regulation of Providers on the Early Years Register**

4. The LGA submitted our response to the Ofsted consultation on a revised framework for the regulation of registered early years provision. Their main outcomes were to:
  - 4.1. keep children safe through a robust registration process and taking appropriate and proportionate enforcement action;
  - 4.2. allow more autonomy for registered providers in managing their own services; and
  - 4.3. raise the bar in inspection and reporting by focusing inspection on children's personal and emotional development and the progress that children make in their learning.
5. The consultation put forward numerous proposals to achieve this, the two key ones of interest to the LGA were that the providers themselves would look into

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minor matters that do not suggest any risks to children and that a short inspection summary is all that is needed for small scale providers.

6. After seeking the views of local authorities the LGA's response stated that although we support less top down regulation and self-improvement, children's safety is paramount and we have always acknowledged the need for external inspection when dealing with people in vulnerable situations. Therefore we think that providers do need to be adequately overseen and supported with local government being fully consulted in the details of how any change in inspecting minor matters by providers themselves may work.
7. We also explained the LGA feel it is crucial that Ofsted and local authorities work in better partnership to drive up quality of provision of early education providers. Ofsted must maintain a consistent, efficient and ongoing dialogue with councils, who best understand their local areas' needs and existing provision.

**Child Sexual Exploitation**

8. Following the Government's launch in November 2011 of a National Action Plan to tackle child sexual exploitation, the LGA and Barnardo's have jointly produced a practice briefing entitled "Tackling child sexual exploitation: Helping local authorities to develop effective responses". This guidance consolidates guidance, legislation and good practice to show the key elements of a comprehensive local response and suggest how local authorities and other stakeholders can tackle this abuse, and the advantages of partnership working and information sharing. This briefing will be launched in May. In addition we will be holding a launch event for Lead Members for children's services and professionals from the police and Directors of children's services to explore these issues further and share good practice from local authorities across the country. The Government's interim report on the National Action Plan to be released in May will mention this joint briefing as useful progress and a helpful tool to help councils develop their own locally appropriate responses.

**Corporate Parenting Week**

9. Looking after other people's children is one of the most important things councils do. However outcomes for children and young people that are in, or have left, care remain stubbornly worse than for other children. For these reasons the LGA is holding the first annual corporate parenting week from 25 June to 1 July 2012. It will be a week of local and national activities highlighting the importance of corporate parenting and an opportunity to promote local action.
10. Corporate parenting week will be predominately aimed at elected members and provide opportunities for:

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- 10.1. highlighting to all councillors that corporate parenting is their responsibility and to find out more about their role in corporate parenting;
  - 10.2. sharing ideas and good practice across the country;
  - 10.3. showcasing the achievements of looked after children and young people in local areas;
  - 10.4. talking to children and young people about their views on local services and how they could be improved; and
  - 10.5. recruiting people to come forward and foster or adopt in local areas.
11. This year's corporate parenting week will take place during the LGA Annual Conference and there will be numerous activities at the conference promoting the week, including a session by the Children's Minister, Tim Loughton MP who will be talking about planned reforms to the care and adoption systems.
12. To encourage councils to take part in corporate parenting week in their local areas the LGA has produced an accompanying corporate parenting pack, which has been sent to all councils this month. The pack contains a myriad of ideas on how local councils and their members can get involved in the week and promoting corporate parenting.

**Social Work Reform Board**

13. The Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) is reaching a stage where it is beginning to wind down in its current form and think about ensuring an appropriate legacy of implementation and development of its main products. The College of Social Work will be responsible for many of the elements relating to professional development for social workers, including the professional capabilities framework, which describes the necessary attributes of social workers at different stages of their careers.
14. The LGA is now hosting the employer standards framework, which identifies good practice in supervision and the national model careers framework, which describes the key stages of a career that need to be overseen and encouraged by employers. The initial development of newly qualified social workers will be encouraged by the introduction of the new assessed and supported year in employment. The SWRB is anxious to ensure that it is succeeded by some appropriate monitoring and advisory body to work with the new Chief Social Worker. The LGA will continue to be closely involved representing employer interests and those of the Children and Young People Board through Councillor Susie Charles and supporting officers.

**National Youth Agency (NYA)**

15. Following agreement from the Children and Young People Board Office Holders, the NYA has agreed its work plan for the next financial year. Developments to date include:

*Universal Strand*

16. Current membership of the Supporting Services for Young People knowledge hub is at over 300, a significant increase in membership since the re-launch. NYA has worked with DfE and other partners to provide joined up support and promotion of relevant developments.
17. Discussion is taking place about the content of the September Conference, with a provisional theme of 'troubled families' and final arrangements will be made shortly. The proposed date is within week of 10 September.
18. The latest version of The Edge, the NYA's quarterly magazine for councillors, has been published and promoted.

*Tailored Support strand*

19. Of the 40 councils NYA is intending to work with as a part of the tailored support strand, 16 councils started in April 2012 – Wolverhampton; Walsall; Reading; Herefordshire; Ealing; Manchester; Ipswich; Derbyshire; East Cheshire; Luton; Central Bedfordshire; Hillingdon; Norfolk; Sheffield; Rotherham and Salford. There are a further 6 councils with no confirmed start date as yet: Lancashire; Hounslow; Bristol; North East Lincs; Kirklees; Nottingham City and two councils have a September start date: Camden and Telford.
20. Twenty of the twenty-one councils the NYA provided tailored support packages to during 2011-12 have been completed, with 17 case studies written up and available on the Knowledge Hub. The remaining case studies are awaiting sign off from the councils involved.

*Emerging Themes strand*

21. NYA is focusing on two areas of work this year – troubled families, and the role of youth work within this area, and piloting the role of business brokerage in Manchester with the British Chambers of Commerce.

*Policy and advocacy*

22. NYA continue to provide policy support to the LGA.

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

23. Reporting activity in April has included the submission of reports on Alternative Provision for Young People with SEN; Developing Indicators for Early Identification of Young People at Risk of Temporary Disconnection from

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Learning; Children and Young People's Experiences of Fostering and Adoption Processes; a Best Practice review of the Role of School Forums; and a School Place Mapping Study. On the latter, a seminar was held at the LGA offices on 1 May with around 100 local authorities represented, primarily by school place planning officers. The event, led by John Freeman and supported by officers representing the LGA, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and NFER, fed back findings from the NFER report and facilitated discussion around the current and future issues relating to school place planning and admissions. John Freeman and NFER are currently writing a report which summarises the discussions and proposes a possible programme of support for local authorities.

24. The NFER are looking forward to working more closely on individual project delivery with Lead Members in the new financial year. We also look forward to hearing any feedback on a possible programme of research on the back of the earlier discussions and suggestions made by the Board and the circulated paper which captured the Board suggestions, alongside the individual feedback gathered across projects recently delivered.