

## Note of decisions taken and actions required

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<b>Title:</b>	Children and Young People Board
<b>Date and time:</b>	28 March 2012, 11.00am
<b>Venue:</b>	Local Government House

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### 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
	Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
	Robert Light	Kirklees MBC
	Paul Lakin	Rotherham MBC
	Anne Burns	Cumbria CC
	David Bellotti	Bath & NE Somerset Council
	Rita Krishna	Hackney LB
Substitutes	Catherine McDonald	Southwark LB
	Peter Downes OBE	Huntingdonshire DC
In attendance	Cllr Toni Coombs	SW regional network Chair
	Cllr Linda Burgess	Y & H regional network Chair
	Cllr Patricia Bradwell	East Midlands network Vice Chair
Apologies	Catharine Grundy	Birmingham City
	Kath Pinnock	Kirklees MBC
	Baroness Shireen Ritchie	Kensington & Chelsea RB

**Officers:** Helen Johnston, Ian Keating, Cassandra Harrison, Colin Hilton, David Pye, Lucy Ellender

**1/6 The Council Role in Education**

**Schools and Children's Services Finance update**

Cllr David Simmonds set out the three main areas for discussion as schools revenue and funding, schools capital and finally the council role in education. Mike Heiser, Senior Adviser for Finance, introduced the report setting out the changes the Government had announced around the schools funding formula. The Government's aim was to move towards a national funding formula, however this would now not be in place until the next Spending Review in 2015. They would instead be concentrating on simplifying local funding formulae. The changes meant that LACSEG, in its current form, would disappear and be replaced with 3 blocks of funding divided between schools, special educational needs and early years. The amounts schools received would be calculated using an October Pupil count. There had been no further statements from the Government on capital.

It was noted that School Forums were being reviewed and the 15 member minimum requirement would no longer apply, there would also be restrictions on the number of council officers who could sit on the Forums.

Members were concerned about the possible restrictiveness of the new local funding factors and were worried that the inconsistencies in the current national formula would persist. Members raised particular concerns for small rural schools, which receive higher levels of funding but which provide pupils with a local school, therefore cutting down on school transport times. Members identified that school transport was a major issue for parliamentarians and ministers.

Members raised concerns about the new regulations for School Forums, saying that there would be difficulties in gaining equal representation for schools on school forums, and that the presence of council officers was needed to maintain parity. Members felt there was a lot of differences between School Forums throughout the country.

***Decision***

*Members agreed that a strong response to the consultation would be advisable and that the whole Board should have sight of it prior to its return.*

*Members agreed to write to authorities to get local case studies the effect of the proposed simplification of local formulae to inform the response.*

**Action**

Officers to collate case studies.

Helen Johnston

Officers to share response to consultation with the Board.

Mike Heiser

Officers to send out write up from Council role in Education event, held on 21 March.

Lucy Ellender

**2 Reform of adoption and care systems**

Cllr Liz Green introduced this item highlighting some of the LGA's key concerns around the introduction of scorecards as a method of evaluating council adoption services. It was noted that the LGA had been successful in gaining some concessions from the Government and that the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was currently undertaking several pieces of research in this area.

Some members raised issues about the processes that potential adopters had to undergo before being allowed to adopt. The onerous nature of the process was particularly criticised.

Members agreed that the guidance issued to social workers should be shorter, but still robust, and an important part of improving the service was to ensure that all social workers received quality training.

Members felt that the use of special guardianships was still not fully understood, and that more needed to be made of the fact that these were permanent placements. Another key aspect that needed further consideration by the Government in the use of scorecards was the demographic context the council was working within and the impact that this could have on adoption rates.

**Decision**

*Members noted the report and the LGA's media response to the proposals.*

### **3 Member engagement and the NFER research programme**

Cllr Paul Lakin, NFER Champion on the Board, introduced this item setting out the options for increased member engagement with the NFER Research programme and Cllr David Bellotti informed the group about his own involvement in NFER research on School Forums.

Members agreed that members of the Board should be given greater oversight into the research projects to ensure that the research was focussed on the issues of greatest importance and use to the sector.

#### ***Decision***

*Members agreed:*

- 1. to use members as champions for Children and Young People Board commissioned research;*
- 2. to have further discussions around the subjects that should be researched by the NFER.*

#### **Action**

Officers to put this on a future agenda of the CYP Board

Lucy Ellender

### **4 Children's Improvement Board (CIB) Update on Activity - March 2012**

Colin Hilton, the new Director for Children's Services Self-Improvement, attended the meeting and outlined the four key areas of work for the CIB in the coming months:

1. working with councils on intervention;
2. embedding peer challenge;
3. engaging members;
4. fostering wider understanding of the work of the CIB.

Members agreed that the CIB needed to be seen as a sector-led initiative and not a Government one, with implications for the whole council rather than just children's services departments.

Members raised concerns around the differences between peer challenge and peer review and whether these were being communicated effectively. Colin said that peer challenge was a more general improvement tool focussed on mutual support, whereas peer review was focussed on safeguarding

***Decision***

*Members noted the report and thanked Colin for his attendance.*

**Action**

Officers to proceed as directed.

Colin Hilton

**5 Hidden Talents: supporting the most disengaged young people**

Members supported the proposals contained in the report and the work that the LGA was doing on this issue, but raised some detailed concerns about the consistent use of terminology within the report.

***Decision***

*Members noted the report and agreed the proposed Next Steps.*

**Action**

Officers to proceed as directed.

Jasbir Jhas

**7 Other Business Report**

***Decision***

*Members noted the report.*

**Action**

No actions arising.

**8 Note of the last meeting – 25 January 2012**

Members **agreed** the note of the meeting held on 25 January 2012.