

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

Child Poverty

1. Officers understand that as part of the reorganisation at the Department for Education we might expect to see a significant change in the Child Poverty Unit's (CPU) remit to support councils. While changes have not yet been formally agreed, it is likely that we will see a reduced support offer to councils, with the CPU pulling back to focus on the provision of data via the basket of local indicators. If the decision is made for the CPU to no longer act as a convenor for local child poverty support, this could change the debate about the LGA's future role in supporting councils in this area. Confirmation of the changes is expected next month.
2. As teams develop their business plans for 2013/14, officers are working to identify appropriate lobbying and support offers that can be drawn together to form a cross-organisational LGA narrative on child poverty. This is likely to include content from work on welfare reform, housing, local growth and fuel poverty as well as other CYP and CWB work areas.

Political Leadership in Children's Services – Leadership Academy Programme 2012/13

3. Sixty five lead members from across the country attended the four residential sessions of the 2012/13 Children's Services focussed Leadership Academy. The programme aimed to support lead members in exploring the key challenges they face, develop personal leadership capacity and to share learning from the sector. The programme was funded by the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) and was facilitated by Cllr. David Simmonds, Claire Burgess CIB and Caroline Bosdet. There were also a number of other speakers and contributors to the programme from councils, the LGA, the Department for Education and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).
 - 3.1. The evaluation of the programme has been extremely positive with the following key results:
 - 3.1.1. The Leadership Academy module has provided me with a basis for further improvement – 100%
 - 3.1.2. Would you recommend LGA services to other councils – 100%
 - 3.2. The following feedback gives the Board a flavour of the learning, Lead Members took away with them from the events:
 - 3.2.1. "There is a learning curve – this was informative and challenging"
 - 3.2.2. "Very, very useful 2 days- great to be reminded of my core purpose and that I am not alone in the challenges I face in my council"
 - 3.2.3. "Really helped to identify areas I need to look at in more detail"

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- 3.3. CIB have agreed to fund another programme of four events in 2013/14.
The dates for the programme will now be advertised and are:

3.3.1. 5th & 6th September 2013, 23rd & 24th November 2013, 11th & 12th
December 2013, 29th & 30th January 2014

3.3.2. For further information contact Caroline Bosdet
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National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

4. In the reporting period January to beginning March 2013, NFER completed and published the interim report on the longer term impact of safeguarding children peer reviews. The second phase of the research is now underway with a second report due in early summer. In addition they submitted the third quarterly report on the analysis of academy schools by local authority and the 2012 report on GCSE analysis of academy and other school types. The first draft report on the evaluation of sector-led improvement and support peer challenge was submitted at the end of February and NFER will receive comments in order to revise and finalise in March. The research team reported on the case studies on local authority support to care leavers, which fed into LGAs work around care leaver's week. The new year was a busy period for proposal development with proposals submitted and approved for some additional analysis of academy schools by local authority for inclusion in the fourth and final report due in March; a review of the longer-term impact on life chances for looked after children; the Councillor Census Survey 2013; a study exploring the local impact and current effectiveness of Education Funding Agency (EFA) 16-19 commissioning.

Local Government Association Research Framework Update

5. The Children and Young People (CYP) Board has benefitted from a designated topslice resource that has historically funded a programme of research completed by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). In February 2011, the CYP Board reviewed topslice funding arrangements and it was agreed that topslice budgets would reduce from £1.3m to £650,000 in 2011/12. This figure was further reduced to £500,000 in the 2012/13 financial year.
6. The funding arrangements were for a period of 24 months and the CYP Board has agreed that a new fully commissioned model for topslice funded research would be developed to be in place by the start of the 2013/14 financial year, to ensure that the LGA and the sector got maximum benefit from the resources available and specifically that the new approach would provide:
- 6.1. Flexibility to meet the emerging needs of the sector and the LGA;
 - 6.2. Access to the best research resources available across a range of specialisms and expertise;
 - 6.3. Linkage to other programmes within the LGA (specifically the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) programme); and

6.4. Value for money.

7. Following this decision, LGA Officers developed a research framework and the tender documentation was published in mid-December 2012. 84 organisations submitted an application and these bids are currently being assessed. All successful organisations will be notified in time for the framework to go live on 1 April 2013.
8. The LGA Resources Panel has agreed a budget of £800,000 for CYP research and support for 2013/14. Funds are therefore available for CYP Board Members to commission research and provide a steer to officers on potential areas for research commissions. Officers will then draw up a long list that can be considered by Members at future boards. The approach for commissioning will be the same as when NFER was sole provider with the only difference being that LGA Officers will now be able to select the most suitable provider from the framework partners. A list of framework partners will be provided to CYP Board Members for information, at the next board meeting.

National Youth Agency (NYA)

9. As the current funding regime draws to a close the Agency is clear about the importance of retaining a strategic relationship with the LGA. The membership of LGA CYP Board Members on the NYA Trustee Board, the annual conference and the Knowledge Hub would, in the Agency's view, create a stable platform to maintain clear links.

Universal Strand

10. Current membership of the Supporting Services for Young People knowledge hub is over 500. NYA continue to provide resources and materials from the sector free to download for all members.
11. The third annual NYA/LGA free conference took place in January. Chaired by Councillor David Bellotti, it included key note sessions from Edward Timpson, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families and, Karen Buck MP, Shadow Children and Families minister. The conference was well attended and the event venue (LG House) was full.

Tailored Support strand

12. Of the 40 councils NYA are working with this year, 23 have now completed (with case studies), a further five are awaiting case study sign off. The remaining packages of support are on schedule and will be completed and case studies added to the knowledge hub by the end of March.

Emerging Themes strand

13. NYA work this year has focused on three areas: Troubled families; Business engagement; and evidencing the value of youth work.
14. The Agency has produced a report into the role of youth work in the Troubled Families agenda. Based on a combination of learning from our troubled families conference, the survey of heads of service and illustrated with detailed case studies.

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The report, available on the Supporting Services for Young People knowledge hub, highlights the ways in which youth services are playing a role in this environment.

15. Working with Manchester council, the North West Regional Youth Work Unit and the British Chambers of Commerce, NYA have run a pilot programme designed to produce a strategy for councils for brokering support from businesses into the youth sector. This report will be available in March. NYA have also completed their work into evidencing the value of youth work. The work with the Young Foundation to test their calculator within Norfolk and Staffordshire councils is now complete. Through our tailored support programme we have worked with three councils to test practical tools for measuring the impact of their services. A report with case studies is available on the Supporting services for Young People knowledge hub.

Policy and advocacy

16. The Agency continues to provide policy support and connection with the LGA.

Children's Improvement Board (CIB)

17. The last meeting of the Board received a report on the CIB work programme for 2013-14. Work is now underway to prepare both for continuing and new work streams on 2013-14. Highlights of progress at this point are:
 - 17.1. A review of the children's services peer challenge being carried out in regions (currently in draft) confirms that the involvement of councils in peer challenge is creating a culture of increased openness and trust and willingness to take a collective approach to improvement.
 - 17.2. The development demonstrators programme of learning events on Munro and early years is very active – more details of upcoming events are available on the CIB website: www.local.gov.uk/cib .
 - 17.3. From April an increased number of data reports, data sources and indicators will be available for children's services on LGINform.
 - 17.4. Events will be run in regions, in response to demand, to share learning from the support CIB has given councils on adoption and permanency.
 - 17.5. Regions are on track to spend their funding allocation for 2012-13 and the latest reports on their work programmes show a substantial increase, over the last year, in the amount of sector led improvement activity being delivered at regional level and in the impact this is having particularly on working relationships.

Commissioning of Children's Residential Homes

18. .The LGA has commissioned the office of Public Management (OPM) to work with a select group of local authorities to look into how to better support councils in the effective commissioning of residential children's homes. An advisory group has been

established chaired by Cllr Robert Light from the Children and Young Peoples Board. It also includes representation from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Department for Education, the Children's Improvement Board and the Who Cares Trust.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Starting a National Conversation

19. The LGA held a successful, over-subscribed conference on tackling child sexual exploitation on 13 February, which brought together representatives from across different local agencies. At the event, the LGA launched its 'National Conversation' campaign, aimed at breaking down the taboo of CSE. Raising awareness of CSE, how to spot it and how to respond, not just among childcare professionals but among the wider public is crucial to tackling this crime. Councils – through their staff, councillors, partnerships and links with communities - can play a key role in this.

The LGA wants to support councils to develop this role and is running an eight week consultation exercise, which is encouraging councillors, officers, voluntary and community organisations, partner organisations such as police and health, and groups representing young people and victims to feed in views, suggestions, expertise and to share existing good practice. This will inform a set of resources to support councils, to be published in the summer.

The LGA's campaign is being supported by organisations including the NSPCC, Barnado's, the Children's Society and the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

Transforming Youth Custody

20. The Ministry of Justice has issued a consultation paper: '*Transforming Youth Custody: Putting Education at the Heart of Detention*'. It seeks views and proposals from a broad range of stakeholders and providers, including education providers with experience in the academies and free schools sectors, on how youth custody can deliver improved education and reoffending outcomes while driving down costs. The paper proposes a youth estate of 'Secure Colleges' which would provide intensive education combined with a period of detention with a clear focus on employment and educational goals. The consultation includes a question on how a payment by results or incentive approach might apply to a Secure College and what outcomes it should focus on. Currently, 73% of young offenders who are released from custody reoffend within 12 months. The vast majority of young people in custody have been excluded from school at some point and about half entering youth offending institutions have literacy or numeracy levels well below the expected standard for their age. Half of all young people in custody in 2011/12 were 17 year olds and 96% were aged 15 – 17. Boys comprised 94% of all young people in custody. The deadline for response to the consultation is 30 April 2013.

LGA and Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) support to improve councils post 16 tracking and recording

21. From April, the LGA and ADCS will be offering a short piece of sector led support to councils who wish to improve the way they track and record young people's progress, and reduce their 'not known' rates. It has been developed with London Councils. Councils have a range of statutory duties to support young people into post 16 education, employment and training. The most fundamental of these is to track and record young peoples' progress locally into a local CCIS – Client Caseload Information System – database. Effective recording and tracking is crucial to establishing where young people are at any given time in the system, and underpins all subsequent support a young person receives. However the job is complex and time consuming, requiring timely and accurate data from a range of local learning providers. Councils' ability to fulfil this duty is significantly affected by reductions in resources. Open to all councils, it has capacity to support a maximum of 24. It will comprise of peer to peer action learning sets, plus material which will be available to all councils. This piece of work will conclude by September.

National Children's Bureau (NCB) Corporate Parenting Advisory Group - Supporting local authorities' corporate parenting role

22. The LGA has been represented on the NCB's Corporate Parenting Advisory Group by Cllr. Andrew Harper of London Borough of Barnet. This advisory group has been overseeing the Department for Education funded project; "Supporting local authorities' corporate parenting role". The project aims were to support councillors to fulfil their role as corporate parents and to champion children in their care. The LGA was able to input priorities for elected members that shaped the project. These included: tools that would support members in their ability to challenge; suggestions about working with children in care councils and involving children generally; and ideas about models of governance.
23. It was agreed that the materials needed to help corporate parents focus on children's outcomes and perspectives rather than processes. There was recognition of the need for councillors to interrogate information in a meaningful way, for example, how far children's educational attainment has travelled since coming into care rather than just exam results and outcomes of children placed out of authority.

The outputs of this 18 month project include:

- 23.1. Delivery of six regional events for those with leadership responsibility for corporate parenting within local authorities – Cambridge, Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and London, one hosted at LGA.
- 23.2. Two national events bringing together corporate parents and children in care councils run on NCB's behalf by Voice.
- 23.3. 27 councils were approached with the offer of tailored support following the identification of weaknesses in corporate parenting by Ofsted. A further three councils also requested support independently. By the end of the project, 11 councils will have received one or more sessions to assist them with their local arrangements.

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- 23.4. A website offering a range of free resources, including training materials, established and promoted.
 - 23.5. A handbook for individual local councillors distributed free to every local authority, with the option of further copies for sale.
24. The resources are freely available to download from the end of March at;
<http://www.ncb.org.uk/corporateparenting>