

Item 3

Children and Young People Research and Support Commissioning

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report updates the Board on the agreement by the LGA Leadership Board to replacement the grants previously funded from a top slice of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to the National Youth Agency (NYA) and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NfER) with an integrated and commissioned 'CYP research and support commissioning budget'. The Board is asked to indicate its high-level priorities for the work to be commissioned from this £800,000 budget.

Recommendations

That the Board gives a steer on its high-level priorities for the work to be commissioned from the Children and Young People (CYP) research and support commissioning budget' and agree that decisions about commissioning should be delegated to the CYP Office Holders and reported to the Board on a regular basis.

Action

Officers to take any action arising out of the discussion, as directed by members.

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Children and Young People Research and Support Commissioning

Background

1. Following the expiry of a two-year funding arrangement this financial year, the 'top-slice' of Revenue Support Grant given to NYA and NfER under a longstanding grant arrangement has been the subject of discussion recently by the Board's Office Holders and at the last meeting of the Board. In the last financial year £900,000 was given in grant to NYA and 'up to £500,000' was available for commissioning work from NfER.

The recommendation by CYP Board Office Holders to the LGA Resources Panel and Leadership Board

2. CYP Office Holders have had detailed oversight of the work delivered through the top slice arrangements with NYA and NfER in previous years and have made recommendations to the LGA Resources Panel on the size of the grants made available to the two organisations. These were reduced from nearly £2.8 million in 2010/11 to 'up to' £1.4 million in 2011/12, in line with overall reductions in RSG.
3. For the next financial year, Office Holders recommended that the grant arrangements for both organisations should be ended and that in future work should be commissioned in line with the LGA CYP Board priorities on a fully commissioned arrangement which is open to any supplier on the Children's Improvement Board framework or the new research framework. They also recommended the merging of the two 'budgets' into a single 'CYP research and support' budget which would support a wider range of CYP priorities than have until now been funded by the NYA grant (which focuses on youth work) to include priorities such as the LGA's Hidden Talents campaign and the Raising of the Participation Age. They proposed a combined budget of £800,000 for this purpose and this proposal was agreed by the Resources Panel and endorsed by the LGA Leadership Board on 13 March 2013.
4. However, in recognition of the substantial reduction of funding to NYA, Office Holders recommended a transitional arrangement which allows the LGA to commission the NYA to provide a £100,000 programme of youth work support to 8-10 councils over a 3-month period from April 2013 without the need to procure the work through competitive tendering. This recommendation has been agreed and will be funded from within the £800,000 CYP research and support budget.

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Priorities for the commissioning of the CYP research and commissioning budget for 2013/14

5. The Board is asked to indicate its high-level priorities for the work to be commissioned from this £800,000 budget in the coming year and to agree that decisions about commissioning should be delegated to the CYP Office Holders and reported to the Board on a regular basis.
6. Providing tailored support to councils to reconfigure services for young people in the light of budget cuts has been a central part of the improvement offer funded by the top slice to NYA. It has also funded work on developing outcome measures for youth work and improving commissioning. The transitional arrangement with NYA will provide support to a further 8-10 councils over a 3-month period from April 2013. **Does the Board wish to commission further packages of tailored improvement support, assuming that there is continuing demand for such support?**
7. NYA has underlined the importance it places on continuing a close partnership with the LGA, including the arrangement through which the LGA nominates two members to sit on the NYA Board of Trustees (currently Cllr Apu Bagchi and Cllr Ken Meson). They have proposed a continuing strategic partnership, which would support elements of the work programme currently funded by the grant arrangement, including an annual LGA/NYA conference, the 'Supporting Services for Young People knowledge hub' which currently has over 500 members, and the work they do on the youth services workforce. This would be jointly funded through a partnership agreement between LGA and NYA. **Would the Board wish officers to explore the proposal for a jointly funded partnership arrangement with NYA?**
8. An explicit aim of the merging of the two top slice 'budgets' into a single 'CYP research and support' budget is to support a wider range of CYP priorities than are currently funded by the current grant arrangements. Other CYP Board and LGA priorities that could be funded under this budget could include:
 - 8.1. the LGA's Hidden Talents campaign;
 - 8.2. Support to councils around the Raising of the Participation Age;
 - 8.3. Evidence for the LGA's children's services submission to the Spending Review;
 - 8.4. Research on effective integration of children's and adult's services;
 - 8.5. Research into reducing demand and costs in children's services through service transformation;
 - 8.6. Older children: building resilience/child sexual exploitation;
 - 8.7. Neglect evidence review;
 - 8.8. CAMHS good practice research;
 - 8.9. Research into the targeting of the support provided by Children's Centres on the children and families with highest needs;
 - 8.10. Monitoring the impact of the health reforms on children's health services;
 - 8.11. Child poverty good practice research (possible update to 2011 NFER report);
 - 8.12. Youth justice – possibly linked to building resilience for older children and/or implementing 'looked after' status for young people in custody;

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- 8.13. School Exclusions/Alternative provision (possible update of 2012 NFER report);
and
 - 8.14. Working with the FE sector (including on age 14 admissions and place planning
and council funding for 16-plus SEN learners).
9. **The Board is asked for a steer on which of these, or other research or
improvement priorities, should be supported by the CYP research and support
budget.**

Financial Implications

- 10. This budget has been agreed by the LGA Resources Panel and the LGA Leadership
Board for the financial year 2013/14.