Appendix A – Consultation responses

Comments from the Local Government Association

1.   The legacy programme from CIB needs to be complementary to other sector led improvement offers co-ordinated by the Local Government Association in order to achieve the greatest level of improvement across the sector and local government more widely.

2.   The LGA has in place a national system for selecting and placing peers that has operated successfully over a number of years. We would strongly support the continuation of such an approach as it has been demonstrated as an effective mechanism to achieve that achieves robust and credible results and an efficient way of achieving this.

3.   The Safeguarding and Care Practice Diagnostics are widely seen as very effective tools that quickly enable local authorities to get to the heart of these issues. As initially agreed by CIB at its meeting on 18 April, these should be provided with funds from CIB money and provided free of charge to authorities who are in most need of this work. Such an approach would complement the LGA existing free corporate peer challenge offer and that in health and fire. Such an approach, working with regions and Principal Advisers, would ensure that the limited resources could be directed to those most in need on an annual basis.

4.   Brokerage and targeted sector support has also been seen to be an effective activity. We would support the continuation of this work, linked to the work of Principal Advisers and nationally co-ordinated, to ensure effective use of resources.

Comments from lead members for children

5.   Reponses from lead members expressed to the LGA include concerns about:

   5.1 the potential withdrawal of direct CIB support to councils in difficulty
   5.2 what will happen to the development demonstrator programme which was about to start its first full year
   5.3 the continuation of support for lead members including the leadership academy
   5.4 the continuation of safeguarding peer reviews
   5.5 the implications for councils of inadequate Ofsted judgements

Comments from 8 May 2013 meeting with regional leads

6.   Peer challenge

6.1 There was strong support for continuing peer challenge.
6.2 Regions were aiming to make peer challenge more systematic and to take more of a collective approach for example through peer challenge summits.
6.3 They were also looking for opportunities to draw in people from outside the region and to share learning between regions.
6.4 While the commitment to peer challenge remained regardless of funding, programme management capacity in regions to support peer challenge would be extremely helpful.
6.5 Regions were committed to various different ways of offering support to councils at risk.

7.   Development demonstrators

7.1 Development demonstrators had different levels of visibility in different regions with some being very prominent features of regional programmes and others less so.
7.2 The label of development demonstrator was not felt to be helpful.
7.3 The important outcomes of the programme were opportunities to share both practice and innovation.
7.4 The work of the development demonstrators needed to be better integrated with regional programmes.
7.5 Leadership which explicitly supported and allowed time for sharing learning was critical.

8.   Leadership

8.1 There was a feeling that the current leadership offers were disparate and fragmented.
8.2 Leadership programmes (particularly LGA, SOLACE and the Virtual Staff College) should be better coordinated, perhaps with some joint elements, and could take a modular approach. Some of this coordination was already happening regionally.
8.3 There should be a "common language" used through leadership programmes (the development of a common language is a key feature of DCS leadership programmes and is valued by participants).
8.4 The lead member offer needs to continue and should link to peer mentoring, coaching, and regional networks for learning and development. The offer should be flexible and led by participants.
8.5 There were some arguments for mandatory training for lead members.
8.6 Leadership programmes needed to get the right balance between theory and practice; programmes for DCSs were felt to put too much emphasis on the theoretical.

9.   Diagnostic tools

9.1 There was a consensus that the variety of diagnostic tools proposed was helpful.

9.2 Some products – notably the safeguarding and care practice diagnostics - are new and councils are just beginning to think about which ones might be most useful to them.

9.3 Tools should be flexible and responsive.

9.4 There was not a clear consensus about who should pay for diagnostics, but the view tended towards a combination of individual councils and regions paying, rather than holding funding nationally (and offering the diagnostics free to councils).

9.5 At the moment regions took the view that a national resource for recruiting and training peers was necessary but that this could potentially move, in due course, to regions.

9.6 Some regions were developing their own diagnostic models and would want to continue this.