

## **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.

**Contact officer:** Verity Sinclair  
**Position:** Programme Officer  
**Phone no:** 020 7664 3173  
**E-mail:** [verity.sinclair@local.gov.uk](mailto:verity.sinclair@local.gov.uk)

## **Other Business Report**

### **Children and Families Bill**

1. The Government has conceded that the power given to the Secretary of State in the Bill to remove all local authorities from adopter recruitment should be curtailed. This is a significant achievement for LGA. It was confirmed in the debate that the implementation of the clause would be delayed until March 2015 and that the power would only be used following an active debate and vote in both Houses of Parliament. Local authorities can now feel reassured that this power is limited by a requirement on the Secretary of State to show Parliament that its use is appropriate, necessary and proportionate. The LGA briefed against this clause at all stages of the Bill and met with Department for Education officials and interested Peers to set out our concerns.

### **Local government finance settlement**

2. As already reported in the education paper, the Government has announced an additional £2.35 billion of basic needs funding for councils to plan and create new school places that will be needed by 2017. Provisional figures for Dedicated Schools Grant and pupil premium for 2014-15 have been published. This includes funding for 2 year old nursery education for 2014-15 – a total of £775m. The allocation to councils of Education Services Grant of £750 million has also been published.
3. The Government has announced that £70 million of the £150 million which was allocated for adoption in 2013-14 will be used for Special Educational Needs costs in 2014-15. There is as yet no news on how the £80 million balance will be used.
4. The LGA has been pressing the Government to make three year capital funding allocations to councils to allow them to plan properly for the sharply rising demand for primary school places and deliver the most cost-effective long term solutions. So the announcement of an additional two year allocation to give councils certainty over central funding between 2014 and 2017 is very welcome and something the LGA called for.
5. We are very concerned at the continuing delay to the announcements about the introduction of a new National Funding Formula for schools in April 2015 and the cuts to Education Services Grant in 2015/16, which is causing great uncertainty for councils and schools. The LGA's full on the day briefing can be found [http://www.local.gov.uk/web/quest/briefings-and-responses/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/5782720/ARTICLE](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/quest/briefings-and-responses/-/journal_content/56/10180/5782720/ARTICLE).

### **Sector-led improvement for children's services**

6. The programme of leadership academies for children's services has continued to be successful with excellent feedback from participants and high quality input from speakers. Cllrs David Simmonds and Rita Krishna have acted as facilitators. Academies have been held in September and November with the final event for 2013-14 taking place on 29 and 30 January. One new and successful addition to the programme has been a hands on

**Item 4**

session looking at data on children's services from LGInform and how lead members can question and challenge effectively on the basis of this publicly available data (<http://lginform.local.gov.uk/>).

7. A recurrent theme from the leadership academies and from the previous experience of the Children's Improvement Board is the need for productive relationships between lead members, DCSs and chief executives. In response to this, the LGA has been working with SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) and the Virtual Staff College (which runs leadership training for DCSs) to pilot leadership development which will bring these three key groups together. A number of previous attendees at leadership academies and other lead members will be attending a pilot event in February.
8. Arrangements for diagnostic tools in children's social care have been clarified. Councils can access a five day safeguarding peer review or two slightly shorter and more focused "diagnostics" for safeguarding practice and care practice. Priority for use of these tools is given to councils who have a particular need to address performance issues and councils should approach their principal adviser for advice in the first instance. Subsidy towards the cost is available in some cases.
9. A number of informative filmed presentations and interviews have been added to the Family Justice Review Toolkit which is available online. More resources from a training programme which was originally commissioned by the Children's Improvement Board from Research in Practice will be available shortly (<http://bit.ly/18Clqbl>).

**Children's Health**

10. A decision about the transfer of 0-5 commissioning to local government in 2015 is yet to be communicated. We are working collaboratively with the Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England to prepare for the transfer. The Children's Health and Wellbeing Board has reconvened the 0-5 task and finish group to oversee the transfer.
11. The Children's Health and Wellbeing Partnership has agreed to take forward a work stream on children's integration. A scoping meeting will take place in the New Year to discuss what the key issues are and how they will be tackled.
12. Under the remit of the Children's Health and Wellbeing Partnership we are working with NHS England, Department of Health and Public Health England to develop a communications strategy and briefings for local government to promote the roll out of the flu vaccination programme to secondary school children in September 2014.

**Children's mental health overview**

13. Lead members from the Community Wellbeing Board (CWB) requested an overview of children's public mental health issues. Lead members expressed their concern about the extent of poor mental health issues amongst children and young people. This is likely to impact on long term health, wellbeing and academic outcomes for children and young people, as well as on councils' wider services and resources.

**Item 4**

14. Statistics show that mental health problems affect about one in ten children and young people aged between five and 16 years with many continuing to have mental health problems into adulthood. It is suggested 60% of Looked After Young People have emotional and mental health problems. Problems can include depression, anxiety, conduct disorder and self-harming, these problems are often as a direct response to what is happening in a child or young person's life. Traditionally mental health has not been given the attention and funding it deserves.
15. Recently the Government published the mental health strategy 'No health Without Mental Health' (July 2011) and an implementation framework. The cross-government strategy aims to put mental health services on 'parity' with physical health services. It stresses the importance of a 'life course' approach to tackling mental health problems and recognises that the foundations for lifelong wellbeing are laid down before birth. It also recognises the importance of the combined efforts of government, employers, schools, local authorities and the voluntary and community sector.
16. Ultimately intervening early to improve the mental health and wellbeing of mothers, children and young people improves long term outcomes including improved physical health and life expectancy, better educational achievement, employment rates and reduced risky behaviours, such as smoking and alcohol misuse. It offers a good return on investment because it can reduce the burden on related health and social care services and helps to contribute to healthy and prosperous communities.
17. Local authorities are now responsible for improving the health of their population and delivering a range of public health services including public mental health services. This presents an opportunity for local authorities to work in partnership with the NHS, schools, voluntary and community sector to improve not only the physical health of children and young people but also their emotional well-being.
18. Nationally, organisations have come together to implement the recommendations made in the Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum Report (2012). The government is now looking at how it can further embed mental health into both the NHS and public health outcomes frameworks, particularly in regards to maternal and children and young people's health.
19. CWB lead members are keen to learn more about this issue and to have a full item at a future Joint CWB and CYP board meeting. The next Joint Board meeting will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

**Two year olds accessing free early education**

20. The Department for Education has announced that over 92,000 two-year-olds are now accessing a funded early learning place. This is a huge increase on the 20,000 children accessing free early education in 2010, and represents over 70% of those children that have been identified as being eligible under the scheme. Education and Childcare Minister, Elizabeth Truss MP, said this was "a tremendous achievement of the local authorities and childcare providers that have participated." For more information please

**Item 4**

see this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/92000-2-year-olds-already-receiving-free-childcare>

**Lessons from Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework Pilots**

21. Over the next three years all local authorities will be inspected under the single inspection framework. As these inspections are not risk based, any local authority could be chosen as one of the first to be inspected and it is therefore very important that all local authorities prepare for the inspection and are in a constant state of readiness
22. With this in mind ADCS, SOLACE and LGA have prepared a guide for local authorities. The guide as well as the framework and slides used by Ofsted can be found at: [www.adcs.org.uk/resources/sif.html](http://www.adcs.org.uk/resources/sif.html).