

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Children and Young People
Date: Friday 18 October 2013
Venue: Harrogate International Centre, Harrogate

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council / Representing
Chairman	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
Vice-Chair	Nick Forbes	Newcastle City
Deputy-Chair	Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames RB
Deputy-Chair	Apu Bagchi	Bedford BC
Members	Paul McLain	Gloucestershire CC
	Patricia Bradwell	Lincolnshire CC
	John Osman	Somerset CC
	Rita Krishna	Hackney LB
	Nicky Williams	Plymouth City
	David Bellotti	Bath & NE Somerset Council
	Helen Powell	Lincolnshire CC/ South Kesteven DC
Substitutes	Tony Hall	North Yorkshire CC
Apologies	Liz Hacket Pain	Monmouthshire CC
	Ivan Ould	Leicestershire CC
	Roy Perry	Hampshire CC
	Richard Watts	Islington BC
	Neil Burden	Cornwall

Officers: Helen Johnston, Liz Green, Ian Keating, Cassi Harrison, Verity Sinclair

Guests: Lead members of Children's Services and Chief Executives from across the country, Edward Timpson MP Minister for Children, Andrew Webb (ADCS) and Martin Kimber (SOLACE)

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
-------------	------------------------------	------------------

The Chairman welcomed all those present which included (over 50?) lead members of children's services and he introduced the office holders and members of the Board.

1. Our Ambition for Children

The Chairman introduced item 1 outlining the financial challenges that councils were facing with their delivery of services for children. He then invited vice-chair Cllr Nick Forbes to speak on the item. Cllr Forbes spoke about the LGA's rewiring public services campaign and its key propositions for children's services. He discussed the importance of councils working together with partner organisations to prevent problems instead of picking up the pieces. He argued for councils to have the flexibility to provide services that work for their communities and meet the needs of children and families in the best way possible. The Chairman then welcomed Children's Minister Edward Timpson MP and invited to participate in an interactive voting session on key issues to inform the discussion that would follow. The Chairman asked all those in attendance to take part, using electronic voting pads, which would provide instant feedback on a set of questions. He explained that the feedback would also be used to inform the LGA's policy development.

QUESTIONS

Question 1

What type of authority are you from?

- 18 Two tier – including county/district
- 14 Metropolitan Borough
- 25 Unitary

Question 2

How long have you been a Lead Member?

- 8 Less than a year
- 28 1 – 4
- 4 5 – 9 years
- 6 10 years or more
- 14 I'm not a Lead Member

Question 3

From the following list of key priorities for local government, has your ability to tackle these got easier or harder in the last 12 months?

School places

Item 5

- 4 Easier
- 54 Harder

Safeguarding

- 10 Easier
- 46 Harder

Outcomes for children in care

- 13 Easier
- 42 Harder

Funding pressures on children's services

- 2 Easier
- 54 Harder

Children's Health

- 19 Easier
- 35 Harder

Question 4

What are you most looking to make progress with over the next year?

- 5 School Places
- 21 Safeguarding
- 17 Outcomes for children in care
- 12 Balancing the budget
- 0 Children's Health
- 5 Your Ofsted rating

Question 5

What would most help you to achieve this ambition?

- 37 Joint accountability with health, schools and police
- 4 More or better senior leadership
- 7 More or better front line staff
- 5 Less inspection
- 3 Closer working with other councils

Question 6

And whose support is most important to help you achieve this?

- 1 Chief executive and Director of children's services
- 6 Political colleagues

Item 5

- 1 Other councils
- 1 Ofsted
- 8 Department for Education
- 41 Local partners including schools/health/police

Question 7

Has your council's spending on children's social care

- 23 Reduced in line with government cuts
- 19 Been maintained
- 15 Increased to meet rising demand

Question 8

Which of the following school funding issues are causing you the most concern?

- 11 High Needs funding
- 9 The cut to the Education Services Grant in 2015
- 21 The new national funding formula in 2015
- 16 Capital for school places

Question 9

What is the biggest challenge you face in supporting young people to find a job?

- 9 Careers advice service changes
- 4 Engaging local employers
- 28 Local job market opportunities
- 16 Your ability to influence national skills and re-engagement programmes

Question 10

What is the biggest challenge your council faces in adoption services?

- 20 Insufficient numbers of adopters
- 4 Lack of appropriate adopters
- 11 Excessive bureaucratic delays
- 19 Court delays

Question 11

How many referrals have you have from the national adoption service?

- 1 10 or more
- 2 5 or less

Item 5

11 None
41 Don't know

After the questions the Chairman invited Edward Timpson MP to speak and to comment on the responses to the questions. The Minister spoke about his family background and his parents' commitment to fostering and adoption. He discussed his recent visits to councils and highlighted the good relationship he currently had with the LGA. He praised the Rewiring report for its very helpful contribution to the current discussions being held on Children's Services.

The Minister discussed the challenges facing Children's Services across the country and expressed the need for councils and national government to focus on where they were falling short, especially looking at innovative and creative practice as well as sharing ideas and services across councils .

Commenting on the responses to the electronic voting session, the Minister told the board he was struck that even with the reductions to funding over the last few years, the majority of responses had said their Children's Services funding had remained consistent or had increased. He praised councils saying it was a testament to their commitment to children and young people.

The Minister also discussed the high number of people who said that joint accountability with police, health and schools would best help them achieve their goals. He stressed the importance of multi-agency safeguarding hubs where services are work together to share information.

He ended his speech by emphasising that councils had the support of national government in improving Children's Services and they had a shared passion and determination to deliver the best for children.

A detailed discussion followed, prompted by questions and comments from Members attending , to which the Minister responded, relating to issues including:

- Early years provision, where members discussed how an increase in early year's education and intervention funding could lead to less safeguarding problems and a lower need for adopters in later life. The Minister agreed that early year's intervention was important and that people needed to piece the evidence of neglect together.
- Children with complex needs being placed far away from their communities due to lack of resources in certain areas. The Minister suggested that commissioning decisions can play an important part in ensuring the right mix of provision locally so that children can be placed near to their communities where appropriate.
- Troubled families and helping those leaving care. Edward Timpson acknowledged that it was a false economy not to help children

Item 5

coming out of care, but said that councils should maximise the opportunities offered by the troubled families programmes to ensure that co-ordinated services improved the life chances of children and young people.

- Adoption not always being the right move for a child. The Minister agreed that it was about finding the right placement for the right child whether this be adoption, long term fostering, family placement or a different option. He highlighted recent data published by the Department which showed a high rate of re-entry to care after returning home. **Decision**

Members noted the report

Action

Officers to take forward this work in light of Members' comments.

LGA
Officers

2. Overview and progress of the LGA's Children and Young People Board's work programme

The Chairman moved the report without further comment

Decision

That the Board noted the report.

3. Notes of the last meeting and actions arising

The Board agreed the note of the last meeting