

Children and Young People Board

Agenda

Thursday 9 January 2014
11.00am

Westminster Suite (8th floor)
Local Government House
Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Children and Young People Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

This meeting is



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LGA Children and Young People Board

9 January 2014

There will be a meeting of the LGA Children and Young People Board at:

11.00am on Thursday 9 January in the Westminster Suite (8th floor), Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ. Lunch will be available at 1pm in the Westminster Suite.

Attendance Sheet

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Labour: Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Conservative: Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264 email: luke.taylor@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat: Group Office: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent: Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: independent.group@local.gov.uk

Location

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LGA Contact

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Children and Young People Board - Membership 2013/2014

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
David Simmonds [Chairman]	Hillingdon LB
Paul Carter	Kent CC
Patricia Bradwell	Lincolnshire CC
Roy Perry	Hampshire CC
Paul McLain	Gloucestershire CC
Liz Hackett Pain	Monmouthshire CC
John Osman	Somerset CC
Substitutes:	
Tony Hall	North Yorkshire CC
Peter Evans	West Sussex CC
Tom Garrod	Norfolk CC
Ivan Ould	Leicestershire CC
Labour (7)	
Nick Forbes [Vice Chair]	Newcastle City
Rita Krishna	Hackney LB
John Merry CBE	Salford City
Paul Lakin	Rotherham MBC
Nicky Williams	Plymouth City
Anne Western	Derbyshire CC
Richard Watts	Islington LB
Substitutes:	
Dora Dixon Fyle	Southwark LB
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Liz Green [Deputy Chair]	Kingston upon Thames RB
David Bellotti	Bath & NE Somerset Council
Substitutes:	
Peter Downes OBE	Cambridgeshire CC
Independent (2)	
Apu Bagchi [Deputy Chair]	Bedford BC
Helen Powell	Lincolnshire CC/South Kesteven DC
Substitutes	
Paul Cullen	Richmondshire DC
Neil Burden	Cornwall Council

Agenda

Children and Young People Board

9 January 2014

11.00am

Westminster Suite, Local Government House, London, SW1P 3HZ

Item	Page
1. Edward Timpson MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEN Reforms• Innovation programme	3
2. Education update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional schools commissioners• Academies programme• Place planning• Funding• Post 16 education	15
3. Improving Social Worker recruitment and retention	33
4. Other Business Report	39
5. Note of the last meeting	45
6. Next Meeting: 5 March 2014, Local Government House	
Close	1:00pm

Item 1

Special educational needs and disability reforms and the innovation programme

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

Edward Timpson MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Children and Families, will be attending the meeting to discuss:

1. implementing the reforms of the legal system for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from September 2014 and
2. the Department for Education's innovation programme for children's services.

This report summarises the key issues to be addressed.

Recommendation

Members are invited to discuss the issues raised in the report.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members of the Board.

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Item 1

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Background

1. Subject to Parliamentary approval, implementation of the new legal 0-25 system of support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), in the Children and Families Bill, will start from September 2014. This will place new statutory responsibilities on, and give new powers to, local authorities.
2. The Board has received regular updates on the proposed reforms. The LGA has been lobbying for changes to be made to the Bill, including the need to:
 - 2.1 clarify the circumstances in which provision that would otherwise be health or social care provision, such as speech and language therapy, should be treated as special educational provision;
 - 2.2 improving the complaints and appeals system so that parents and young people have a single point of access; and
 - 2.3 addressing provision for young offenders and for 19 – 24 year olds.
3. We have also submitted comments on the draft statutory SEN code of practice which will, for the first time, apply to the full 0-25 age range and to health and social care partners as well as schools and colleges.
4. The government has now extended the scope of the Bill to include all disabled children and young people and has amended the Bill to address our concerns about health and social care provision. Recent government amendments also address the special educational needs of young people in custody and clarify the position on young people's entitlement to education over the age of 18. House of Lords Report Stage resumes early in the New Year.
5. Children's Minister Edward Timpson MP will be attending the Board meeting to discuss what needs to be done to ensure successful implementation of the reforms. He has been holding a series of roundtable meetings and he has met Directors of Children's Services, local authority Chief Executives and Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards. On 9 December 2013, the Minister sent a joint letter with Health Minister Dr Dan Poulter MP to local authority and health leaders (**Appendix 1**) and announced that a £70 million SEN reform grant would be taken from the £150 million early intervention top-sliced grant next year. An implementation pack was also sent out with key questions for strategic leaders, and information about resources and support available. (**Appendix 2**).

Item 1

6. Since April 2013, pathfinder champions have provided support and advice in every region, and the champion programme is being extended to March 2015 to share learning and provide support. Non-pathfinder authorities received a total of £9million (£75K per authority) in October to assist with implementation.
7. Based on current data, DfE expect there to be more than 30,000 new entrants who will require an Education Health and Care (EHC) assessment in 2014. In addition, some 260,000 children and young people who already have a Statement, or a Learning Difficulty Assessment, will need to be transferred to the new system within three years. Transfer will involve a reassessment against the EHC plan criteria.

Issues for discussion

8. The LGA held a well-attended conference on preparing for implementing the SEN reforms on 10 December 2013 at which the Minister gave the keynote address. Local authority officers and Members at the conference discussed a number of issues about the implementation of the reforms and some of these issues were also raised at the ADCS and SOLACE round table discussions.

8.1 Transition from Statements to EHC Plans within three years: the scale of the task will be very challenging without additional resources, particularly in those council areas that maintain large numbers of statements. For example, over sixty councils maintain between 1,000 and 2,000 statements. Councils also expect an increase in parents and young people requesting EHC plans when the new system starts. We will be seeking reassurance on additional resources being available to meet these new duties.

8.2 The role of Health and Wellbeing Boards, and the engagement of health partners, particularly Clinical Commissioning Groups in preparing for the implementation of the reforms. The Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Health need to ensure that it is clear how the responsibilities of health bodies for the SEN reforms fit with their wider responsibilities for the local population.

8.3 The role of schools, colleges and other education settings in providing support for children and young people without EHC Plans and ensuring schools and colleges are as well-prepared as possible for the changes and to share the best approaches. With the removal of the 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' SEN categories, there needs to be a clear message in the new code of practice about good teaching for every pupil, on early and effective intervention and tracking its effect.

8.4 Challenges around engaging with children and young people in their own right, as well as making sure that parent carer voices are heard, as their participation in decision-making is one of the key principles set out in the Bill. Pathfinders have

Item 1

been working to involve children and young people and promoting their participation but it has also been identified as an issue which needs to be clearly articulated in the new code of practice and on which some councils would welcome further support to prepare for implementation

Innovation Programme for Children’s Services

9. In his speech to the National Children and Adults Conference in October 2013, Edward Timpson said that he wanted to drive innovation and fundamentally rethink the approach to children’s social care. He cited a number of examples where innovative approaches were being pursued in local areas and he mentioned the LGA’s report on better commissioning which argued for more work on hybrid models of care such as ‘foster care plus respite’ and services that enable families to access flexible ‘step down’ support. The DfE is inviting the public, private and voluntary sectors to come forward with innovative ideas for changing services for vulnerable children. The parameters are broad but proposals should identify barriers to innovation, such as regulation, and the most promising ideas will be tested later in the year
10. The programme will be ‘championed’ by Clive Cowdery, a businessman and founder of think tank the Resolution Foundation. A key theme in the Minister’s speech was making services more flexible, with the Minister referencing the LGA’s call for services to be rewired around families’ needs.

Financial Implications

11. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

9 December 2013

Dear Colleague

Support and aspiration: implementing the new 0-25 special needs system

We are writing to you to request that you give personal attention to ensuring that the new special educational needs (SEN) system is implemented from September 2014 in a way that will deliver maximum benefits for your local area, and with information to support you to do this.

As you are aware, too many children and young people who are identified as having SEN have poor outcomes in life, and they and their families can struggle to get the help and support they need. From September 2014, all local authorities, the NHS and their partners will begin to provide a new system of support to children and young people with SEN up to age 25 and their parents. Implemented well, this new system should not only result in improved outcomes for children and young people with SEN, but also has the potential to lead to efficiencies in service delivery.

Our vision for children and young people with special needs is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college; lead happy and fulfilled lives; and have choice and control.

The SEN reforms will implement a new approach which seeks to join up help across education, health and care, from birth to 25. Help will be offered at the earliest possible point, with children and young people with SEN and their parents or carers fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve. This will help lead to better outcomes and more efficient ways of working.

What is already happening?

We have built into the reforms significant freedoms for areas to implement change in the way that makes sense locally. We know from a recent survey the Department for Education organised that a number of local authorities have made an excellent start to planning for implementation and are prioritising it locally. For example, many already have a designated person to promote and lead implementation; are engaging their local parent carer forums; and have secured senior level engagement. The survey showed appetite for further information and examples of good practice, especially on personal budgets, co-ordinated assessment, disagreement resolution, and preparation for adulthood. The Department for Education is contacting local authorities who self-assessed themselves as in the early stages of implementation, and also those who did not respond to the survey.

Some local authorities and their partners are already implementing the new system.

These pathfinder areas have highlighted the critical importance of making early progress on culture change: breaking silos and getting different services to work together in a way which puts the child, young person and family at the heart of everything they do. Since April 2013, pathfinder champions have provided support and advice to every area in every region, including workshops and tailored 1-1 support. **Today we are announcing the extension of the pathfinder champion programme until March 2015.** This will ensure support is available for all local areas during the critical period running up to September 2014, and beyond. Further details will be provided early in the New Year.

How can we support you?

To support you in ensuring that your plans are robust, we are enclosing a short pack of materials based on learning from the pathfinder areas. The pack includes a timeline; key questions for strategic leaders; information on resources and support materials available; and examples of practice. Much more detail, including information packs on specific areas such as personal budgets, local offer and co-ordinated assessment, with examples from pathfinder authorities, are available from the Mott MacDonald pathfinder support team (www.sendpathfinder.co.uk). Two example EHC plans from pathfinder local authorities are attached to this letter. Non-pathfinder local authorities have received £75,000 each in 2013-14 to allow them to develop their SEN systems and services in line with the Government's SEN policy.

You will be aware that earlier this year, the Government introduced changes to school and post-16 funding, including a new system for funding pupils and students with high needs. Some aspects of these new arrangements are taking time to implement effectively but they provide a funding framework that will support implementation of the reforms.

In the coming months, the Department for Education and the Department of Health, working with NHS England, will continue to share information and resources with you and a range of other partners, including early years settings, schools, further education providers, child and adult social care and the voluntary sector. If there are other forms of support you would find welcome, we would be interested in your feedback (please send this to: sen.implementation@education.gsi.gov.uk).

Involving parents, carers and young people

From September 2014, all children and young people newly referred for a statutory SEN assessment will be assessed under the new arrangements and, where necessary, provided with an EHC plan. We are consulting on arrangements for the transition of children and young people from existing statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments to the new system. It is very important that parents, carers and young people are involved in developing your local plans for implementation.

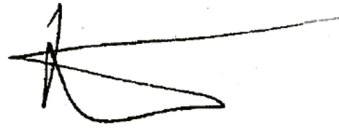
Children of Armed Forces personnel

We would also highlight the importance of Clinical Commissioning Groups, Armed Forces Networks, NHS England, and local authorities working proactively with local Armed Forces units, to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the children of Armed Forces personnel with SEN, when they return to England from overseas or are moved between units within the UK.

Thank you again for all that you do for children and young people in your local area.
Please do seize this opportunity.



EDWARD TIMPSON



DR DAN POULTER

Implementing the 0-25 special needs system

Government advice for local authorities and health partners

December 2013

Selected pages from the implementation pack

Questions for local strategic leaders

The following questions are intended to assist local strategic leaders in thinking about implementing the new approach in their area. They are drawn from pathfinder experiences.

- What can I be doing personally to support this reform agenda and change cultures?
- Who is responsible for each of the major steps of implementation; and who has overall accountability for ensuring we are ready for implementation in September 2014?
- What does my local area's data tell me about outcomes for children and young people with SEN?
- How does SEN reform link to other reforms we're leading locally (e.g. health, education, adult social care, youth services, youth offending, housing, early intervention)? What new relationships do I need to develop (e.g. with post-16 education and training providers)?
- What are the value for money arguments for reform? If we get this right, can we secure better outcomes for children and young people by deploying resources more efficiently?
- How can we ensure a genuinely person centred approach from birth to age 25, which fully involves children, young people, parents and carers?
- How can I ensure providers across a range of services are supported to implement the reforms, particularly those who the local authority has had little involvement with in this area, such as further education providers?
- How will I know my local area is performing well to help children and young people with SEN achieve in education and employment (outcomes)?

Summary of responses to the October 2013 local authority readiness survey

- In September, the Department for Education wrote to Directors of Children's Services asking them to complete a short survey assessing their readiness to implement the whole spectrum of the SEN reforms from September 2014. We are grateful to the 120 local authorities which responded. We intend to repeat this survey on a termly basis.
- The survey showed a strong degree of engagement with the reforms. Local authorities were asked to report their readiness in 17 areas of the reforms. The most common response (the mode) from local authorities was that they were in the early stages (63%) or that good progress was being made (35%) in the areas of the reforms we asked about.
- Performance against these indicators is as we would expect nearly a year before the reforms come into effect. Local authorities reported good progress in securing senior-level engagement, including appointing a senior responsible officer, engaging parent carer forums and partners in education and social care.
- The survey identified several areas where many local authorities asked for further information and exemplars of good practice:
 - Co-ordinated assessment process and EHC Plans
 - Joint commissioning
 - Personal budgets
 - Engaging with partners – particularly with health
- The resources outlined in this pack will be of considerable value. In particular, local authorities will want to read the information packs developed by the Pathfinder programme (www.sendpathfinder.co.uk) which provide a wide range of case-studies and examples of effective implementation.

To read the full pack please click on this link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264198/Implementing_a_new_0_to_25_special_educational_needs_system_Dec_13_-_Gov....pdf

Education Update

Purpose of report

For discussion and comment.

Summary

This report sets out recent developments touching on the council role in education, including a meeting with Schools Minister David Laws MP; the proposed appointment of Regional Schools Commissioners; an LGA submission to the Commons Education Committee Inquiry into the academies programme; case studies on the council role in school place-planning; announcements about additional schools capital in the Local Government Finance Settlement; and post-16 education, training and employment provision.

Recommendation

This report is for discussion and comment.

Action

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

Contact officers:

Ian Keating/Nick Porter

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Education update

Meeting with David Laws MP, Schools Minister on 11 December

1. Cllr Forbes met with the Schools Minister David Laws MP on 11 December as part of the regular programme of meetings between the Minister, LGA, ADCS and SOLACE to discuss the council role in education. The issues discussed were school place planning; the new National Fair Funding Formula and changes to the Education Services Grant; and Regional Schools Commissioners. Cllr Forbes will give a verbal update of the discussion at the meeting and the issues are summarised in this report.

Regional Schools Commissioners

2. The LGA has long expressed concern that as the number of academies increases, it will become impossible for the Secretary of State for Education to monitor their performance effectively from the centre and to intervene in cases of underperformance. Councils have no powers to intervene in academies, although the new Ofsted school improvement inspection regime expects them to have a role in monitoring academy performance. In December the DfE placed advertisements in the TES for 8 'Regional Schools Commissioners', reported as earning up to £140,000. Their responsibilities, exercised on behalf of the Secretary of State, include:
 - 2.1 Monitoring performance and intervening to secure improvement in underperforming academies, including directing them to commission school improvement services and using formal interventions in the most severe cases.
 - 2.2 Taking decisions on the creation of new academies in their area by approving applications from maintained schools wishing to convert to academy status.
 - 2.3 Supporting the national schools commissioner to ensure that the sponsor market meets local need - including by authorising applications to become an academy sponsor, monitoring the performance of existing sponsors and de-authorising them where necessary, recommending suitable sponsors to ministers for maintained schools that have been selected to become academies and encouraging new sponsors.
3. The areas covered by the commissioners will not follow the standard planning regions and a list of the council areas covered by each proposed Commissioner is attached at **Annex A**. An issue of particular concern is that London will be split into three by the proposed new arrangements, with London Boroughs grouped with neighbouring councils in the South East and East of England.
4. Concerns were raised with David Laws MP on 11 December about the lack of engagement with local government on the creation of the Regional Commissioners. The Minister has agreed to circulate a paper to outline the purpose and intent of establishing the Regional Commissioners, and invited attendees to submit any specific questions or concerns that they would like addressed in this.
5. **Members are invited to propose questions and concerns to be submitted to the Minister.**

Item 2

Commons Education Committee inquiry into the academies programme

6. On 6 November the Commons Education Select Committee announced an inquiry into “certain aspects of the academies programme”, with a deadline for written submissions of 19 December 2013. The terms of reference include:
 - 6.1 the functions and responsibilities in relation to academies and free schools of local authorities and other organisations operating between the Secretary of State and individual schools;
 - 6.2 what these functions and responsibilities should be; and
 - 6.3 what gaps there are in support for schools at this level.
7. A submission to the Inquiry, agreed by the CYP Board Office Holders is **attached at Annex B**. The submission is consistent with previous LGA policy but has strong lines on academy oversight, given the increasing number of academies (now 3,500), and the government’s intention to appoint Regional commissioners, including:
 - 7.1 We would like to see the restoration of decision-making on the provision of new schools to local level, as it was prior to the Academies Act 2011. This should include the option of establishing community schools if that is the locally preferred option. Where academies are the preferred option, decisions about sponsors should be taken locally to meet the needs and wishes of local parents and communities.
 - 7.2 We would like councils to be given a greater role in judging and approving free school proposals to ensure that new free schools are established where they are needed and in a way that supports councils in their place planning duties.
 - 7.3 We believe that councils, as local champions of children and young people, their families and their communities, are best placed to provide the local oversight needed to continue to drive up standards and ensure that all children and young people have fair access to a good local school. We think that councils should have the same powers in relation to all local schools to intervene in cases of underperformance or designation in an Ofsted ‘category of concern’, including the power to select new academy sponsors.

Case studies about the council role in place planning

8. In June the LGA and SOLACE published a report: The council role in school improvement: Case studies of emerging models which highlighted variety of approaches being adopted by councils to support schools in a more autonomous school system. We are now planning to publish a collection of case studies focusing on how councils are responding to the enormous challenges of providing the 417,000 new school places that the EFA estimate will be needed across the lifetime of the current Parliament. A call for volunteers to be case studies through LGA, SOLACE and ADCS networks has produced an enthusiastic response from councils and 25 case studies are in various stages of being finalised.
9. The plan is to launch the report in February 2014 and the aim is to show how councils are rising to the considerable challenges of meeting the sharply rising demand for additional

Item 2

school places in many places and to highlight any areas where they are being constrained in fulfilling their statutory place planning duty.

10. **Attached at Annex C** are the first four fully signed-off case studies – from Oxfordshire, Reading, Sandwell and Richmond They show that councils are responding well and are using innovative approaches, but all highlight areas where the job of councils is being made more difficult by central Government policy and practice. These themes are also reiterated by the other councils that are in the process of submitting case studies and were raised by Cllr Forbes with David Laws MP at the December meeting:
- 10.1 The need for multi-year capital allocations to allow councils to forward plan and bring forward the most cost-effective solutions.
 - 10.2 The difficulties caused by the lack of council involvement in decision-making on where free schools new academies and UTCs are set up; what their capacity should be; and the type provision they offer.
 - 10.3 The lack of notice about approval of free school proposals and uncertainty about whether approved proposals will go ahead is also hampering planning and introducing additional costs into the process of providing new places.
 - 10.4 The need for academies and free schools to engage in local discussions about meeting basic need to support the council role in place planning. There is particular apprehension about how the system will work to provide the secondary places that will be needed, given that the majority of secondary schools are now academies.
 - 10.5 The feeling that most of the 'easy' solutions have been taken and providing new places is becoming increasing complex and costly.
 - 10.6 There are also increasing difficulties in getting S106 contributions from developers, exacerbated by the fact that developers can opt for free school and academy options that do not meet the wider needs of the local community.
 - 10.7 A strong message that the DfE capital allocations do not cover the full costs of providing places.
11. The Minister promised to look at the case studies in detail and said he looked forward to seeing the publication. He particularly asked for more detail about how councils can be more closely involved in the process for establishing free schools to meet basic need, and this will be covered in the forthcoming report.

Funding

12. In the Local Government Finance Settlement on 18 December the Government 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. This is additional to the £5 billion allocated between 2011-15 and represents an additional two-year allocation, drawing on the £21bn of extra schools capital between 2015 and 2020 announced in this summer's Spending Review. The allocations of the £150 million of capital funding to support the provision of universal free school meals were also announced.

Item 2

13. The expected consultations on the National Funding Formula and the cuts to Education Services Grant in 2015-16 were not published and are now expected early in the New Year.
14. In our 'on the day briefing' the LGA welcomed the fact that the Government had listened to our calls on behalf of councils for a 3-year capital funding allocation to allow councils to plan properly to meet the sharply rising demand for primary school places and deliver the most cost-effective long term solutions. However, we expressed concern 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.

Post-16

15. Councils are now well into the first academic year supporting the Raising of the Participation Age to 17, which will rise to 18 from 2015, as part of their role to ensure young people secure a suitable place in education or training, to identify and track young peoples' participation status, and to help encourage and assist all to engage.
16. In December 2013 the LGA published a survey detailing council experiences of the EFA commissioning process and featured detailed case studies of council activity in five areas; almost 90 per cent of all respondents felt they did not have sufficient influence to fulfil their responsibilities. The LGA will use the report to inform discussions on how 16 – 19 education funding enables councils to help all young people and employers. In December Government announced its decision to make savings from the 16-19 budget by reducing the funding rate for 18 year olds by 17.5 per cent. This will not apply to vulnerable groups such as those with SEN.
17. The numbers of 16 -18 year olds not in education, employment or training has remained stable over the last year at 9.6 per cent, while the number of young people whose participation status is 'unknown' has fallen over the same period. The LGA has launched a 'How to' guide and planning tool to support local efforts to improve the identification and tracking of young people. Members also continue to push the case for greater local determination over the Youth Contract provision for reengaging 16 and 17 year olds, which pilots have shown is far more successful when devolved to councils. The Autumn Statement announced a role and funding for Jobcentre Plus in reengaging 16 and 17 year olds, the LGA will seek to ensure this effectively supports council efforts rather than duplicate them.
18. Jeremy Heywood's review of schemes for 16 – 24 year olds, announced by the Deputy Prime Minister in the summer, has not reported at the time of writing. Although some preliminary recommendations were announced as part of the Autumn Statement, such as reduced National Insurance contributions for employers taking under 21s. Alongside the review, the DPM has announced £50 million of Youth Contract underspend will be given to some places to tackle youth disengagement however it is like only 28 places involved in City Deal wave 1 and 2 will benefit from this funding.
19. Members will continue to lead local governments' call for a more coherent and locally responsive model for reengaging young people. Over the coming months officers will put together proposals to be discussed and agreed with Lead Members of the CYP and

9 January 2014

Item 2

Economy and Transport board. To inform this activity, the LGA has commissioned some statistical analysis of the total participation status of young people, including unemployment and underemployment, and will work with councils to gather case studies to articulate the effectiveness of locally led approaches.

Financial Implications

20. There are no financial implications for the LGA arising from this report.

Local authorities in each region

North East London & East of England	North West London & South Central	North	West Midlands
Barking and Dagenham	Barnet	Cumbria	Birmingham
Cambridgeshire	Bedford	Darlington	Cheshire East
Essex	Bracknell Forest	Durham	Cheshire West and Chester
Hackney	Brent	Gateshead	Coventry
Haringey	Buckinghamshire	Hartlepool	Dudley
Havering	Camden	Middlesbrough	Herefordshire
Newham	Central Bedfordshire	Newcastle upon Tyne	Sandwell
Norfolk	City of London	North Tyneside	Shropshire
Peterborough	Ealing	Northumberland	Solihull
Redbridge	Enfield	North Yorkshire	Staffordshire
Southend on Sea	Hammersmith and Fulham	Redcar and Cleveland	Stoke on Trent
Suffolk	Harrow	South Tyneside	Telford and Wrekin
Thurrock	Hertfordshire	Stockton on Tees	Walsall
Tower Hamlets	Hillingdon	Sunderland	Warwickshire
Waltham Forest	Hounslow	East Midlands & Humber	Wolverhampton
South London & South East	Islington	Barnsley	Worcestershire
Bexley	Kensington and Chelsea	Derby	Lancashire & West Yorkshire
Brighton and Hove	Luton	Derbyshire	Blackburn with Darwen
Bromley	Milton Keynes	Doncaster	Blackpool
Croydon	Northamptonshire	East Riding of Yorkshire	Bolton
East Sussex	Oxfordshire	Kingston upon Hull	Bradford
Greenwich	Reading	Leicester	Bury
Hampshire	Slough	Leicestershire	Calderdale
Isle of Wight	West Berkshire	Lincolnshire	Halton
Kent	Westminster	North East Lincolnshire	Kirklees
Kingston upon Thames	Windsor and Maidenhead	North Lincolnshire	Knowsley
Lambeth	Wokingham	Nottingham	Lancashire
Lewisham	South West	Nottinghamshire	Leeds
Medway	Bath and North East Somerset	Rotherham	Liverpool
Merton	Bournemouth	Rutland	Manchester
Portsmouth	Bristol	Sheffield	Oldham
Richmond upon Thames	Cornwall	York	Rochdale
Southampton	Devon		Salford
Southwark	Dorset		Sefton
Surrey	Gloucestershire		St Helens
Sutton	Isles of Scilly		Stockport
Wandsworth	North Somerset		Tameside
West Sussex	Plymouth		Trafford
	Poole		Wakefield
	Somerset		Warrington
	South Gloucestershire		Wigan
	Swindon		Wirral
	Torbay		
	Wiltshire		

Local Government Association Submission to the Education Select Committee Inquiry into Certain Aspects of the Academies Programme December 2013



Introduction

The LGA supports greater autonomy for schools as a way of driving up standards. We believe that giving frontline professionals the freedom to innovate and respond to the needs and priorities of local children and young people and their families will improve educational attainment and overall outcomes. We have called for greater devolution of power from the Government to councils and would not want to deny schools greater freedom.

We have encouraged councils to play a more strategic role and to work with all local schools - including the increasing numbers of academies - to drive improvement; promote fair access; support pupils with Special Educational Needs; and ensure there are sufficient school places at a time of sharply increasing demand. Councils across the country have also supported a greater role for school-to-school improvement in improving educational outcomes for children and young people¹.

However, we have argued that as schools are given more freedom, it becomes more important that they are effectively held to account and swift action is taken in the case of underperformance. As more schools take responsibility for their own admissions, it is also vital that admissions are fair, and seen to be fair, particularly for the most disadvantaged children and young people and those with special educational needs.

1 The process for approving, compelling and establishing academies and free schools, including working with sponsors

1.1 Councils alone have a legal responsibility to make sure sufficient school places are provided to meet local need. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) estimates that an additional 417,000 primary school places will be needed over the lifetime of the current Parliament and councils face an enormous challenge in providing these places in time and with limited capital resources. Until now, the majority of places have been provided by expanding existing schools because this is the most cost-effective way of providing new places.²

1.2 However, as the room for expansions is exhausted, councils are concerned that the process of building new schools will be hampered by the 'academies presumption' which places all the final decisions about new schools in the hands of the Secretary of State and Department for Education-approved academy sponsors. We believe this hampers effective local decision-making and partnership working with schools and sponsors. In many cases, it is likely

¹ See the LGA report on 'the council role in school improvement' (June 2013):

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/schools-and-education/-/journal_content/56/10171/4024029/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

² The National Audit Office's report, *Establishing Free Schools*, highlighted that expenditure on the free schools programme is over the sum originally allocated: <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/10314-001-Free-Schools-Book.pdf>

Submission

to override the input of local parents and local communities. It is not sustainable to continue to remove decision-making from councils in this way.

1.3 We would like to see the restoration of decision-making on the provision of new schools to local level, as it was prior to the Academies Act 2011. Councils need the flexibility to deliver whatever new type of school is required to fulfil their statutory duty to offer places and to contribute to the local education offer. This may include the option of establishing community schools if that is the locally preferred option. Where academies are the preferred option, decisions about sponsors should be taken locally to meet the needs and wishes of local parents and communities.

1.4 The process for establishing and funding free schools is completely outside the control of local councils, although councils are increasingly trying to engage potential free school sponsors to make sure that new schools are established in areas of need. The Department for Education (DfE) have said that they are taking local need into account more in making decisions about free schools. However, we would like councils to be given a greater role in judging and approving free school proposals to ensure that new free schools are established where they are needed and in a way that supports councils in their place planning duties.

2 The role of the Secretary of State in intervening in and supporting failing academies, and how this role will work as the programme expands; and the functions and responsibilities in relation to academies and free schools of local authorities and other organisations operating between the Secretary of State and individual schools; what these functions and responsibilities should be; and what gaps there are in support for schools at this level

2.1. Currently there is a two-tier system of school accountability. Local councils have oversight of the performance and finances of maintained schools. They have powers to intervene in the case of underperformance and to direct them to take individual pupils to support local fair access protocols. However, they do not have these powers for academies – these rest with the Secretary of State for Education and the EFA.

2.2. This two-tier system might have been viable while there were low numbers of academies, however we do not believe that the DfE has either the capacity or the local knowledge and connection to exercise effective oversight of standards and financial propriety in a situation where the majority of secondary schools and a growing number of primary schools are now academies.

2.3. The DfE's recent advertisements for Regional Schools Commissioners to exercise the Secretary of State's powers in relation to underperforming academies are an acknowledgement that the current arrangements are no longer sustainable. However, we do not believe that this is a sustainable long-term solution either. A region is too big an area to carry out detailed oversight of the performance and financial propriety of schools. If all 24,000 schools become academies, rather than the current 3,500, then a middle tier at the level of a council is likely to have to be re-introduced.

2.4. We believe that the Regional Commissioners will add a new confusing layer of bureaucracy for parents. The regions covered by the Regional Commissioners do not align with the standard regions, and London will be split in three by the new regions, which will confuse parents who are familiar with the standard regions. Furthermore, it is unlikely they will be able to raise

their concerns about a local primary school with a Regional Commissioner which might be hundreds of miles away, in the same way as they do with the local council. It is unlikely that the Regional Commissioner will be able to deal with all the issues a parent is likely to raise – they are likely to have to refer them back to the EFA, the DfE or to the local council.

- 2.5. The Ofsted framework for inspection of council school improvement support, introduced in June 2013, makes clear that councils are expected to have a role in driving and supporting improvement in all local schools, including academies. In support of this, Ofsted point to Section 13A of the Education Act 1996. This places a duty on councils to exercise their relevant education functions with a view to promoting high standards.
- 2.6. With the increasing number of academies, we do not think it is sustainable for oversight of, and intervention in, failing academies and free schools to rest with the Secretary of State or with regional bureaucrats. We do not believe it is reasonable for Ofsted to hold councils accountable for performance in academies when they have no funding or powers in this area.
- 2.7. Parents ask for clear accountability in order to ensure swift action when issues arise during their child's one opportunity to get a good education. The proliferation of different agencies with different areas of responsibility and improvement offers puts this at risk. Parents with concerns will be faced with dealing with local and national Ofsted offices, their local council, and potentially a Regional School Commissioner. Councils responding to their concerns may have to engage the DfE, the EFA, regional and national Ofsted and a Regional School Commissioner. This is not an efficient way of supporting improved standards.
- 2.8. We believe that councils, as local champions of children and young people, their families and their communities, are best placed to provide the local oversight needed to continue to drive up standards and ensure that all children and young people have fair access to a good local school. We think that councils should have the same powers in relation to all local schools to intervene in cases of underperformance or designation in an Ofsted 'category of concern', including the power to select new academy sponsors.

3 What role academy chains play or should play in the new school landscape; how accountable they are; and what issues they raise with regard to governance arrangements

- 3.1 We think academy chains will have an increasing role to play in the new school landscape with the growing number of academies, particularly in supporting school-to-school improvement and providing additional capacity for severely underperforming schools. However, if councils' improvement support to maintained schools is to be inspected by Ofsted, we think academy chains should also be open to inspection on the support they provide for schools in their chain. In addition, academy chains, as proprietors, have too close an interest in their own schools to replace the current role of councils as champions of children, young people and their families with statutory duties to promote high educational standards in their areas.

4 The appropriateness of academy status for primary schools and what special factors apply; and what evidence there is that academy status can bring value for money either for individual primary schools or for the system as a whole

- 4.1 We are concerned that many primary schools are just too small to become stand-alone converter academies. We have called for a radical rewiring of public services³ which will allow decision-making for public services to be brought together in one place. We argue that what people want more than anything else is for services to be built and integrated around the needs of children and their families, not around buildings, institutions and wasteful bureaucracy. Therefore, we do not believe that a fragmentation of the school sector into more than 24,000 separate public service units will promote value-for money in spending of public money, particularly if accountability lies with the Secretary of State for Education or remote Regional Commissioners.
- 4.2 Many primary schools rely heavily on the central services procured and provided by councils and would not have the desire or capacity to negotiate a good deal for the taxpayer with other suppliers. Our concern is that too many primary schools lack the scale to provide efficiently the range of services that they need. One solution is for smaller primary schools to federate or form a multi-academy trust with other schools and this is likely to be a more sustainable arrangement than individual primary schools becoming academies.

5 What alternatives to sponsored academy status should be offered to failing primary schools

- 5.1 Councils need the flexibility to make whatever arrangements are required to deliver improvement, engaging the resources of the local education community and outside support whether through a sponsored arrangement or a federation. We believe that federations, mergers and partnerships with other high-performing schools in an area offer an alternative to sponsored academy status, if that is the preference of governors, local parents and children.

³ <http://www.local.gov.uk/campaigns/>

School place planning case studies

Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire has seen demand for primary places rise by three per cent a year on average, up to 10 per cent in urban areas. The council created just over 4,000 new places between 2009 and 2013.

The demand has not always been predictable, as urban areas have been greatly affected by inward migration and denser occupation of housing. Some emergency action has been necessary such as creating bulge classes, even on occasion where this was opposed by the governors. Following five years of such measures, school capacity growth is now keeping up with population growth.

The extra provision has mainly been through whole- or half-form entry expansion, accommodated in extensions or by bringing existing spaces into use. A secondary school has been extended to create a new primary, and there are two new free schools.

Free schools/academies

Oxfordshire has a proactive approach to free schools and works with applicants to influence their location. A free school opened in Oxford in 2013, and the council has a good relationship with the provider.

In a less successful situation, a free school opened in a village location alongside a planned development with, as yet, no housing. The developers refused the council's request for Section 106 funding for a new-build, one-form-entry primary and a contribution towards the council-approved local secondary school strategy. Instead, they have opened a free school, converting buildings into a two-form entry primary and a secondary school.

This has created surplus capacity in the wrong place, undermining existing schools and strategic planning. The Department for Education could not confirm that the school was opening until a day before term began, so the council had to double-allocate the pupils, creating uncertainty for schools and parents. In another case, a primary academy received EFA funding to double in size when the council already had expansion projects underway in that area.

Studio schools and UTCs

Demand for secondary places will increase from 2014 in some parts of Oxfordshire. By 2019, at least 600 additional year seven places will be needed, provided through a mix of existing accommodation and extensions.

A university technical college (UTC) is opening in 2015 in an area of housing growth where the council had already secured a site for a secondary school. The UTC will provide some, but not all, of the secondary places needed. At the time the application was approved, the council had begun consultation on finding an academy provider for the planned school. The separate processes caused confusion locally. In this case, the site was large enough for co-location. However, elsewhere the council faces a similar situation with a studio school and a site too small for co-location, which is complicating the process of finding academy providers.

Joined-up plans

Councils should be properly empowered, or at least there should be area-wide joining-up of proposals, says Barbara Chillman, service manager for pupil place planning. "We need a local plan that all parties can help shape, which is given credence when decisions are made. Without coordination, resources will be wasted at a time when the council is cutting other services."

Reading Borough Council

Reading is creating 2,520 additional primary places by 2016. It began by conducting two community consultation exercises. The message was clear: people wanted quality school places local to them. Myles Milner, school services service manager, says the extra demand is concentrated in pockets of the borough. The solution has been the provision of bulge class facilities in existing school buildings, and sometimes in modular buildings.

Funding

As part of its long-term strategy, Reading looked at the feasibility of different options, identified 13 schemes and bid for government funding for eight of them (one new school and seven expansions). All eight bids were successful and the council will receive a total of £19.1 million. That accounts for only 40 per cent of the actual cost, and Reading is now looking to borrow £34.5 million. While the government grant is welcome, the loan will cost around £2.5 million a year from the council's revenue funds, putting more pressure on non-statutory services. However, councillors were sympathetic to the need to meet the council's obligations around education.

Reading would like to see the introduction of three-year spending reviews so resources can be directed to the key areas of demand. It sees the two-year allocation of basic needs funding as a step in the right direction, but there is a problem with deteriorating school buildings, and longer-term funding would help to address that.

Secondary schools

Another issue is how to meet the rising demand for secondary school places, which will be exhausted by 2016. The lack of control over free schools and academies is making it more difficult to plan for this. Myles suggest that there are two solutions to meeting secondary demand. One is to encourage free school applications and get the government to recognise that these must provide the right thing in the right place (one current free school application could provide six of the 16 extra secondary forms of entry needed by 2021). The other solution is to negotiate with existing schools, but most are academies so do not have any obligation to meet this demand.

Infrastructure

Community consultation was the foundation of Reading's approach, but it can be difficult to balance everyone's needs. Existing schools can't necessarily cope with increased pressures such as traffic and car parking. As a unitary authority, Reading has its planning and transport planning departments under the same roof, which can be an advantage.

There is also doubt that the figures quoted by central government for the cost of projects can really be achieved. The government figures appear to be "stripped down" and don't reflect the real issues that urban authorities face in developing brownfield sites.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

In Sandwell, the birth rate has risen by almost 20 per cent in seven years. By 2015 an extra 25 primary school forms of entry will have been created, or over 5,000 extra places. The reception cohort of 2012 was the first big increase.

Most provision has been through school expansions plus a small number of bulge classes. Some temporary accommodation was used due to the late announcement of capital funding in 2013, but this will be replaced over time.

Sue Moore, Sandwell's school organisation manager, says the biggest single challenge is the allocation of resources on a yearly basis. This is severely restricting their ability to plan ahead, and there is an urgent need for at least a three-year allocation. "Local authorities need some certainty about what's coming over the horizon."

Secondary schools

By 2023 an extra 26 secondary school forms of entry will be needed, which is 3,900 school places. However, with the focus on primary schools, the borough has no money to spend on planning for this future demand.

Sandwell believes that the school capacity return, which provides evidence to the DfE on future demand, could be used to support a three-year, or longer, allocation of resources. Secondary demand can be forecast over a long period. Earlier access to resources would mean the solutions could be more cost efficient and timely.

Sandwell closed a secondary school seven years ago due to over-provision. Re-use of that site would provide eight of the required 26 extra forms of entry. It hopes to find a provider to re-open the school, but is concerned the DfE will reject the proposal, as its guidance says councils should have all the capital monies for a project from the outset.

Funding

Sue Moore says the borough is running out of solutions and space, and the options are becoming more complex and costly. "The solutions are getting more difficult, and as a result there are more objections from other schools and communities."

There are also concerns around the cost-per-place formula. For example, the highways department often asks for traffic calming measures, but this cost is not taken into account. "For most situations we have a solution. The concern is whether we can afford to deliver these solutions as they become more complex. We certainly can't do it for what they say we can per square metre."

Academies/free schools

Free schools are not yet filling the gap. Sandwell expected provision in one area to increase through a new free school. However, the project was abandoned and the council had to create those places at short notice. The DfE did not say why the application had failed as it only engages with councils at approval stage, which can make planning very difficult.

Chris Ward, learning services manager, says: "The challenge to the council is to balance its school place planning responsibility with other priorities at a time of diminishing resources and rising numbers. Local authorities have to respond quickly to changing legislation as more schools opt out of council control and have greater autonomy in setting admission limits."

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Back in 2008, having noted the growing demand for school places since 2005, Richmond was one of only three London boroughs to successfully bid for basic need funding for growth. This, along with other capital funding, Section 106 receipts, council reserves and borrowing, enabled it to embark on a major primary expansion programme.

Richmond has created 27 new primary forms of entry, from a base of 57, most of that since 2010 and most through straightforward expansion by one form of entry. Two schools have expanded twice, and one of them onto a third site, a former mental health facility. Two schools have been converted from three-form entry infant and junior schools into two-form entry all-through primary schools, creating a fourth form and a second geographical entry point between them.

A 'shared form of entry' system has been introduced in three Catholic primaries which couldn't expand but are located close together. A set of three community primary schools followed suit. This system groups schools to provide the extra classrooms needed for a full form of entry between them: each admits an extra form of entry every three years.

Matthew Paul, head of school place commissioning, says all these strategies have been very successful. "Close cooperation with schools is vital. No-one should underestimate the difficulties expansion can create for schools. It can be a distraction and has to be managed well."

The council has leased land on a peppercorn rent basis for a new voluntary-aided primary and secondary school and two primary free schools. Both free school providers were directed towards areas with an acute need for places. Richmond welcomes and works closely with high-quality free school providers where the provision will augment its expansion plans.

Richmond does see a problem in the design of the basic need funding formula, which provides more money for secondary places than for primary. Some London boroughs have pressure across all year groups, but in Richmond this has mainly been at key stage 1. With a primary expansion costing up to £3 million, the basic needs allocation doesn't go far. As a result, permanent expansions have been supplemented by a large number of bulge classes. One solution would be to have more schools expanded across split sites, but land here is extremely expensive.

The pressure on school places is growing. Richmond's primary schools top the league tables in England and are very attractive to parents. There is a large drop-off to the private sector, but this fluctuates. The recession reduced the size of that drop-off at a time when birth rates were growing and new housing being built.

Matthew welcomes the fact that the EFA now has a pupil place planning team and is making an effort to consult with local authorities. "Whether that will translate into allocations taking account of local circumstances remains to be seen." As in many areas, Richmond has exhausted the "easy" expansions and the remainder are more difficult and expensive – such as building an extra storey or dealing with difficult access issues.

Item 3

Improving Social Worker Recruitment and Retention

Purpose of report

For information and comment.

Summary

This paper focuses on some specific issues around the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers and sets out thinking about what the LGA might do to help councils. It is important to be clear exactly what the varying challenges faced by councils are and to design practical interventions to help meet them. This requires an assessment of available data and also an awareness of existing programmes, to avoid duplication and to ensure that there is proper coordination.

The paper concentrates on ideas around invigorating social work careers and helping employers to retain good staff but this must all be set in the context of the wider continuing need to enhance the image and standing of social work. It is important also to think about social work in the context of workforce efficiency and transformation.

Recommendation

Members are asked to comment on this draft report and comments will be taken forward for inclusion in the final report that will be considered by the Workforce Board when it meets on the 21 January.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members of the Board.

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Item 3

Improving Social Worker Recruitment and Retention

Introduction

1. The social care workforce is fundamental to improving outcomes for vulnerable people and as a result is a crucial factor in local performance in children's and adult's services. In recent years the sector has put significant effort into workforce development, much of which has borne fruit such as the successful implementation of various Social Work Reform Board "products" including: the "assessed and supported year in employment" which helps the newly-qualified in their early careers; and the Employer Standards and Supervision Framework which sets out the expectations of councils (and other types on employers including agencies) in ensuring a work environment exists which enables social work to flourish. There have been positive partnerships with Government and others both nationally and regionally to deliver improvement. Employers, especially councils have also been enthusiastic in supporting the "step up to social work campaign" designed to support social workers in providing help to children and families.
2. Overall, after something of a hiatus following the report of the Social Work Task Force and the work of the Social Work Reform Board, the Government is now keen to pursue initiatives as demonstrated by the recent appointment of the new Chief Social Workers for children and adults. The College of Social Work is also now becoming more successful after an uncertain start.
3. However, despite many useful initiatives, many social workers choose to leave the active profession after a few years for a variety of reasons, including career stagnation; this makes it harder to retain experienced staff in some places and puts extra pressure on less experienced staff. As a result, many councils and other employers face both immediate and longer-term recruitment and retention problems across social work but especially in children's roles – and especially of those with three or more years' experience. Current evidence suggests an increasing reliance on agencies to fill roles not just on a short-term basis but for longer periods as well. This raises questions not only about how to ensure that agency systems serve the interests of employers and employees but also about whether other approaches are better-suited to improving the supply of good quality social workers. A variety of initiatives are in operation or in advanced planning and it is important to assess whether or not they will be effective and whether there are any gaps.
4. The sense is that there are both immediate shortages in some key roles in some places and endemic retention problems. Thus there is a need to identify both short-term initiatives and longer-term sustainable solutions where possible. It is important also to be clear about the best local mechanisms for action since a high vacancy rate does not in itself lead to poor service, though it is likely to make good service harder to sustain.
5. The key mechanism for LGA involvement in initiatives to improve recruitment and retention is through the hosting of the *Employer Standards for Social Work* which seek to describe what a committed social worker has a right to expect from their employer. Fulfilling these standards is a good way to provide an incentive for individuals to join the

Item 3

direct workforce and stay in it. The Standards are currently being refreshed. Proposals for LGA and sectoral involvement in current initiatives and any proposals for new initiatives can be assessed through the Employer Standards Advisory Group (ESAG) which has a very broad membership.

Data on vacancies and use of agency staff

6. The most recent data come from the *Community Care magazine annual survey* which shows that vacancy rates have fallen for the fourth year in a row but suggests the gap is increasingly being plugged with agency staff.
7. The survey found 6.5% of all social worker posts across the UK were vacant in September 2013, down from 7.1% in 2012. The fall appears to be largely due to progress in filling positions in adult services. In 2012, 7.5% of social worker posts in adult services were vacant, but this has now fallen to 6.7%. Vacancies in children's services rose by one percentage point to 7.1% in the same period.
8. In 2012, local authorities were using an average of 16 agency social workers across both children and adult social services. This year, the average has climbed to 22.
9. The East of England continues to be the region with the highest overall vacancy rates, as it was in 2012. According to the results, 14.7% of social worker posts in the East of England are vacant; almost double the figure for London, the region with the next highest vacancy rate at 8.7%. Northern Ireland appears to have the lowest vacancy rate in the UK, with just 1.1% of social worker unfilled.
10. There are of course other data sets that can be used to help refine the analysis of challenges in social work and they will be used in future discussions.

Practitioner views

11. The ESAG recently ran a workshop for officers on improving social work careers in which the dominant view was that councils would prefer to see most staff employed directly on a long-term basis with agencies used for filling short-term needs only. The debate was about how to encourage good people to join the direct workforce and stay. The event produced a number of ideas including:
 - 11.1 improved links with higher education establishments to enhance relevance of social work education
 - 11.2 the importance of a clear career framework linked to appraisal, supervision and personal development
 - 11.3 clearer career pathways between children's and adult's services
 - 11.4 greater emphasis on shadowing, mentoring and career guidance; and
 - 11.5 opportunities for secondments between different sectors such as health and local government

Item 3

12. These suggestions are all about demonstrating to individuals that they have good opportunities for enhancement and varied careers. The fact that in many ways they are not new ideas and that some steps have already been taken to implement them suggests that there are strong common themes for employers and efforts need to be re-doubled.

Current and planned initiatives and reviews

13. A number of initiatives and reviews are in the pipeline and it is important to ensure that they cover all the issues involved and enhance the practical opportunities available for improvement:

- 13.1 Employer Standards for Social Work, as described.
- 13.2 Career Framework advice planned through the ESAG.
- 13.3 Professor Croisdale-Appleby's review of adult social work education, commissioned by the Minister of State for Care and Support; its remit includes considering the case for a generic qualifying course and scope for increased specialisation.
- 13.4 Sir Martin Narey's wide ranging review of children's social work training, commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education, due to be published in the coming months.
- 13.5 Frontline - a new social work training programme targeting outstanding graduates. It combines an intensive summer training programme followed by two years paid placement in a local authority. The Department for Education is funding pilots starting in 2014 and 2015 in London and Manchester, with a combined cohort of 200.
- 13.6 Care bill training plan (a national learning plan designed to map and deliver the skills needs associated with care service reforms).
- 13.7 Centre For Workforce Intelligence supply and demand model (a government commissioned tool for identifying how many social workers might be needed to deal with assessed service needs which is still being developed).
- 13.8 College of Social Work established and working.
- 13.9 Chief Social Worker in post.

Options for immediate LGA activity

14. There are a number of ways in which the LGA already supports the sector in addressing social work recruitment and retention challenges, including hosting the employer standards, standard job evaluated role profiles, surveys and workshops on career development. Options for further practical support that can be delivered within existing resources include:

- 14.1 Benchmarking information to support better informed negotiating on agency rates.
- 14.2 A campaign toolkit for social worker recruitment, which could be adapted by local areas to meet circumstances.

9 January 2014

Item 3

- 14.3 Facilitate/encourage discussions with higher education institutions.
 - 14.4 Sharing best practice in recruitment and retention.
 - 14.5 Encouraging “buddying” and mentoring relationships for social workers.
15. The LGA will work with other organisations interested in reforming the system who are represented on the Employer Standards Group in pursuing these ideas.

Option for a more advanced LGA role

16. Some councils, notably in the West Midlands, have argued that current recruitment problems are such that dependency on agencies is becoming routine and cannot be removed from the equation and that the sector should therefore seek to make the best of the situation. The suggestion has been made that the LGA should consider options for supporting the supply of social workers at a national level.
17. The LGA clearly does not currently have the expertise and resources to establish any form of organisation at a national level to provide specialist services in support of social work employment. It would take time to set up and would not address all immediate challenges but may have longer-term benefits. The nature of any national proposition would need detailed consideration.

Actions

18. Members are asked to comment on this draft report and comments will be taken forward for inclusion in the final report that will be considered by the Workforce Board when it meets on the 21 January.

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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Item 4

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.

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 5th 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.

Item 5

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
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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

Item 5

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

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

Item 5

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
- 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

Item 5

Question 11

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

- 1 10 or more
- 2 5 or less
- 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

Item 5

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 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**

LGA
Officers

Members noted the report

Action

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

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

LGA location map

Local Government Association

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Tel: 020 7664 3131

Fax: 020 7664 3030

Email: info@local.gov.uk

Website: www.local.gov.uk

Bus routes – Millbank

- 87 Wandsworth - Aldwych
- 3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

For further information, visit the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk

Cycling facilities

The nearest Barclays cycle hire racks are in Smith Square. Cycle racks are also available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are

St James's Park (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines), and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line) - all about 10 minutes walk away.

Buses 3 and 87 travel along Millbank, and the 507 between Victoria and Waterloo stops in Horseferry Road close to Dean Bradley Street.

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

- 507 Waterloo - Victoria
- C10 Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria
- 88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

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For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

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- Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)
- Horseferry Road Car Park
- Horseferry Road/Arneway Street. Visit the website at www.westminster.gov.uk/parking

