

Children and Young People Board - Report from Cllr Shireen Ritchie (Chairman)

1. On 26 July the LG Association held a **looked after children roundtable** with representatives from local authorities, government and key third sector organisations to discuss how best to respond to the increased demand for the protection of vulnerable children and young people, given the current financial climate. The roundtable sought solutions to help councils deal with growing demand for their services, the reordering of priorities and changes to practice that will inevitably ensue. We will be using the ideas generated from this meeting to inform our response to the Munro Review of child protection, the Family Justice Review of the family court system and the government's Comprehensive Spending Review this autumn.
2. At the **Centrepont Roundtable Policy** meeting on 21 July, I spoke about the important role that local authorities play in addressing issues of youth homelessness, including the role of corporate parent; the need for effective multi-agency approaches to tackling entrenched, interconnected and complex issues; and called for innovative approaches that prioritise resources to support vulnerable children and young people in the challenging financial climate we are now in.
3. In my meeting with Professor **Eileen Munro** on 6 August, I conveyed the LG Association's support for her Review of child protection and the opportunity it presents to address LGA priorities for reducing bureaucracy; tackling the burden of inspection; improving practice and increasing job satisfaction, recruitment and retention. I also emphasised the fact that, as strategic commissioners of services, councils are up for change and innovation and for working within a mixed economy of care in partnership with private, voluntary and independent sector players. I agreed to send the Professor Munro LG Group ideas on how to improve the inspection regime.
4. At the time of writing, the Chairman and I were due to attend the second meeting on 9 September of the **Ministerial Advisory Group** established by the Secretary of State for Education to advise on the role of local authorities in education. Our aim will be to influence the education white paper, expected in October, to make sure that the government follows through on its commitment to giving councils a strong strategic role in local education in the key areas identified in the LGA report 'Local freedom or central control?' published in July. The meeting was due to consider reports from three sub groups on: the council role in: local commissioning of education; admissions and exclusions; and school improvement. I will be happy to provide feedback at the meeting.

5. The **Children and Young People Programme Board** will have its first meeting of the annual cycle on 14 September. The Board is due to hear from Lord Hill, Schools Minister and David Norgrove, Chair of the Family Justice Review, amongst others.
6. In addition to considering the Board's work programme for the year we will be seeking to build on our successes in ensuring a strategic commissioning role for local authorities in education, and in gaining assurances on admissions and exclusions with the Academies Bill, by considering the LG Group position and work on the Education and Children's Bill. The Board will also consider the LGA giving oral evidence to the Education Select Committee's inquiry into the role and performance of Ofsted.

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