

Children and Young People Programme Board – Report from Baroness Ritchie (Chairman)

1. On 20 January, I attended a meeting of the **Ministerial Advisory Group** (MAG) on the role of councils in education. We received an update on progress with the SEN Green Paper, which is expected next month, and there was a discussion about the funding settlement and proposals for a national funding formula for education. Now that the education white paper has been published, we are changing the focus of the task and finish groups working to the MAG. The LGA will be consulted on terms of reference and membership for new groups, and I have expressed an interest in chairing a group on revenue and capital funding.
2. I met Crispin Blunt, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, on 17 January, in response to the publication of the Green Paper, ***Breaking the Cycle***, which sets out proposals for reform of the system of punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders of all ages. A number of local authorities are interested in becoming pathfinders for devolved budgets for youth custody and the LG Group is interested in engaging with the pilot process. We will be concerned to see that the pilots explore the reality of the costs of youth custody to local areas.
3. On 20 January I spoke at the launch of the final report of the Foyer **Young Offenders Academy** project. The Foyer's work provides a possible model that could be used by councils considering becoming pathfinders for devolved budgets for youth custody.
4. Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education, attended the LG Group Children and Young people Programme Board on 25 January to discuss **education** with the Members. At the meeting he agreed to share with the LG Group the calculations for the academies top slice and consider an alternative approach to recouping central costs from authorities for schools that convert to academy status.
5. Having met the YPLA on 19 January to discuss the transition of their responsibilities to the new **Education Funding Agency** (EFA), I was pleased Members raised concerns with the Minister about the proposals for the EFA and asked that further consideration be given to whether the system can be simplified by transferring functions to councils.
6. Following him, and following up the children's health roundtable hosted in Local Government House on 21 December 2010, the Board discussed **children's health** with Heather Gwynn, Director of the Chief Nursing Officer's Directorate

at the Department of Health. The Board agreed to prioritise this issue and to work with the sector to develop a clear vision of the local authority's strategic role with regard to children's health in the new health landscape.

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