

Children and Young People Programme Board – report from Councillor David Simmonds (Chairman)

Children's health

1. My predecessor Baroness Ritchie chaired a Children's Health Roundtable discussion on 25 July 2011. The event was hosted jointly by the Children and Young People and Community Wellbeing Programme Boards. It provided an opportunity for an informal discussion with senior representative from partner organisations at the forefront of the health reforms and the children and young people's agenda. During the roundtable stakeholders were able to discuss their key concerns, top priorities and share their ideas for a support offer and lobbying activities. The recommendations arising out of the roundtable will be discussed at the next joint CYP and CWB Office Holder's meeting.

Schools funding consultations

2. At the end of July the Government launched a number of consultations on education funding, covering: schools capital funding; schools revenue funding; and the transfer from formula grant to take account of academies' central functions.
3. The LG Group has been lobbying hard on schools capital and revenue funding in recent months, to ensure that any new funding system retains a council role in reflecting local needs and priorities in allocating schools funding. The proposals in the consultation papers contain a number of welcome concessions to our arguments including: a clear recognition of the continuing need for an element of local authority discretion in allocating revenue funding; and a proposal that schools capital funding should move towards being allocated through a single flexible budget in local areas as opposed to tightly controlled central ring-fenced budgets. The consultation will run for 12 weeks until Tuesday 11 October and we will work with the Association of Directors of Children's Services in making a response.
4. The academies funding consultation was restricted to 4 weeks, ending on 16 August, despite a letter to the Secretary of State for Education from my predecessor Baroness Ritchie requesting an extension to reflect the fact that the consultation period fell during the school holidays. The LG Group response reflects our serious concerns about the methodology the Government proposes to adopt in making the transfer. It is still proposing to calculate the top slice on the basis of the additional amounts to be paid to academies as opposed to the actual savings to councils, which is the basis on which any transfers should be

calculated under the Government's own New Burdens Doctrine. We worked with 32 councils in the short timescale available to provide evidence that the savings to councils from academy conversions are substantially lower than the cost to the Department of directly funding the central functions of academy schools.

Contact officer: Helen Johnston
Position: Head of Programmes
Phone no: 020 7664 3172
E-mail: helen.johnston@local.gov.uk