

## **Children and Young People Programme Board – report from Cllr David Simmonds (Chairman)**

### **Youth remands**

1. In September I wrote to the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Public Bill Committee to highlight issues related to the transfer of costs of young people on remand to councils. Whilst local government has supported the devolution of funding responsibility, it is a complex issue and it is critical that the full implications are fully and carefully worked through to ensure that it is successful in its aim of further reducing the number of young people on secure remand. I stated the need for an agreed assessment of the full, true costs of youth remands to be transferred to council budgets before the transfer is enacted. I also urged careful drafting of secondary legislation to ensure that proposals to give young people on remand 'looked after' status are proportionate.

### **Inspections of children's services**

2. We have responded to Ofsted's consultation on proposed new arrangements for the inspection of children's services, as well as discussing these proposals with Miriam Rosen, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, in person at the Children and Young People Programme Board awayday in September. We made clear the important role that sector self-regulation plays and in particular the need for inspection to link intelligently to the work of the Children's Improvement Board. Many of the principles contained in the consultation are positive, for example greater proportionality and recognition of the role our local partners have to play in protecting vulnerable children. However, more work is needed to ensure that the vision of an effective and proportionate system that reduces burdens on councils is realised in practice.

### **Children's Improvement Board**

3. The Government has shown its commitment to local ownership of improvement support for children's services, with ministers agreeing to provide £10.5 million to the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) to improve outcomes for children and young people. The CIB, which was set up earlier this year, is a partnership between the Local Government Group, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and the Department of Education. The Board recently commissioned an independent external review of governance arrangements to maximise the effectiveness of the organisation of the Board in delivering an effective improvement system. As a result of this review, the Board agreed at its September meeting that there

should be two elected members nominated to CIB. The Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Programme Board will join me in representing the Local Government Group on a cross-party basis. Councillors - especially lead members and leaders - are fundamental to achieving excellence and need to drive this work if we are to succeed.

### **CYP Lead Member Induction event**

4. In early September I chaired and presented at the Children and Young People Lead Member Induction event in Birmingham. This gave me the opportunity to talk about the work of CYP Programme Board, introduce the work of the Children Improvement Board and outline the key issues for lead members in children's services. Catharine Grundy presented on the strategic role in education for councils. Gareth Barnard led an interactive discussion on the leadership role in children's services.
5. We had members from across the country and the event was very well received. It enabled the Children and Young People Programme Board to make links with lead members in councils and gave lead members valued learning from each and the opportunity for discussion.

### **Children and Young People Programme Board awayday**

6. The Children and Young People Programme Board held its first meeting on 6 September. As well as hearing from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education on the new inspection framework, we discussed with Matt Dunkley, the President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services the priorities for the coming year and opportunities for future collaboration with the LG Group. Fiona Blacke, Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency described progress on the youth service programme commissioned by the LG Group. We also discussed the recent riots their causes and the important part that services for young people played in the response.
7. Members discussed the Board's work and commented on the work they were undertaking in their own authorities as well as the national context in which they were working. It was a useful discussion and we are looking forward to tackling these issues during the coming year.

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