

Item 3(a)

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

National Children and Adult Services Conference

1. The Children and Young People Board held a number of sessions at the National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCAS). I chaired several sub-plenary sessions on a variety of subjects including achieving permanence and stability for children in care, early years, driving sector-led improvement, children's health and Hidden Talents. I also took part in a panel discussion on the council role in education. The conference was well-received with over 1000 delegates attending over the three days. The conference heard from the new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families, Edward Timpson MP as well as the Rt. Hon. David Laws, Minister of State for Schools and other Government speakers.
2. I chaired the Children and Young People Board meeting at NCAS, which gave Lead Members for Children's Services from across the country the chance to discuss the key issues affecting them in their work. Lead Members raised concerns about the changes to the early intervention grant, new duties to support Raising the Participation age, the new arrangements for funding pupils with high needs and the effects of court delays on adoption services. Just over fifty councillors attended the session and we used an electronic voting system to capture their views. The answers we got will help to inform our business planning. I would really like to thank all the Lead Members who attended and made the session such a success.

Careers guidance transitions from councils to school

3. On 31 October, I gave oral evidence to the Commons Education Committee's inquiry into careers guidance looking at schools' new duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance from September 2012, which was previously the responsibility of local authorities. My evidence focused on the variety of transition arrangements local authorities have put in place to support schools to take on their duty, and ways in which they themselves are supporting the re-engagement with young people who have already dropped out of the system. The evidence I gave was based on local examples published in October 2012: *Hidden talents: examples of transition of careers guidance from local authorities to schools*:
www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=ed49b51d-629c-4608-b8ea-bbad383c9203&groupId=10171.

Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services

4. On 6 November I spoke at the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services (CHYPS) annual convention. CHYPS represents the interests, and advocates on behalf of, all those who deliver, manage and commission youth work and those who are responsible for the effective delivery of all elements of Youth Services. I spoke about how councils can work with the voluntary and business sector to deliver youth support services and how this can be achieved in light of budget reductions. I set out the LGA's expectations and ambitions for youth services in councils and more broadly about how children's services fits in with broader agendas such as health, education, family and the community.

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Media

5. My call for councils to be given back powers to monitor the performance of academies was picked up by a number of newspapers. This is especially important in areas where they form more than half of all secondary schools in order to prevent standards in education from slipping.

Visits to councils

6. I have continued to visit councils to discuss their work, including a recent visit to Birmingham City Council.

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