

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

### **Ofsted Annual Report**

1. At the end of November we responded to Ofsted's Annual report, which showed that schools in England were improving, but criticised some councils, saying that the variations in performance of schools between different local authority areas was too wide. We highlighted the key role that councils play in improving standards in local schools but highlighted the bureaucratic obstacles put in the way of councils in using their intervention powers to turn around failing schools.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

2. The release of the Children's Commissioner's inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups on 21 November showed the appalling scale of these devastating crimes. The LGA and the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) are offering councils a range of practical support and we will continue to ensure that expertise on preventing child exploitation and tracking down perpetrators is shared across the country. We will work with the inquiry through its second phase and keep you updated with any developments. You can find further information on our work on child sexual exploitation on our website: [www.local.gov.uk/cse](http://www.local.gov.uk/cse).
3. On 18 December Councillor John Osman represented the LGA at a roundtable on this issue, chaired by Children's Minister Edward Timpson MP. The meeting brought together relevant stakeholders including government departments, local government and charities to take stock of progress and consider what more can be done. The importance of local political leadership was recognised and Councillor Osman reiterated the LGA's commitment to supporting councils to tackle this terrible crime.

### **The councils' role in tackling tobacco conference**

4. On 3 December I chaired the morning session of the Joint Children and Young People Board and Community Wellbeing Board conference on "The councils' role in tackling tobacco". The Ministerial address was given by Anna Soubury MP, the conference was well attended and there were some lively discussions.
5. A joint Community Wellbeing and Children and Young People Board resource was launched, it contains key questions, policy information, ideas for success and case studies to help local authorities and their partners tackle tobacco related issues.

### **The council role in education and training: raising ambition, achieving potential conference**

6. The following day on 4 December I chaired the LGA's "The council role in education and training: raising ambition, achieving potential" conference. We had a variety of speakers including the Rt. Hon. David Laws MP, the Schools Commissioner, Dr Elizabeth Sidwell and Rachel Wolf, Director of the New Schools Network. Attendees discussed a wide range of issues including new school places, the Hidden Talents campaign and Raising the Participation Age. The LGA will use these discussions to inform our work in the coming months.

**Item 3(a)**

**Children's Improvement Board (CIB)**

7. In a speech to the Institute of Public Policy Research on 16 November, the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP confirmed that CIB would receive funding for next year 2013-14. He re-affirmed his support for sector led improvement saying that "the best people to help lead improvements in children's services are those from local government who have outstanding track records in child protection."
8. The CIB has launched a programme of development demonstrators which are being supported to share learning as they respond to the Munro Review and work to narrow the gap in achievement at the early years stage. Each of the demonstrators will be offering ten learning events to colleagues in other councils between now and the end of March. The programme of events is underway and continues to develop. An up to date schedule can be found here: <http://bit.ly/SRimAw> .
9. The CIB has produced an A-Z guide to the activities it supports nationally and in regions. This snapshot of activity is available to download <http://bit.ly/UbYwOK> . Hard copies are available from [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk).

**Political Leadership in Children's Services Leadership Academy**

10. I led and facilitated the second and third 'Political Leadership in Children's Services Leadership Academy' on 24 and 25 November and 5 and 6 December. The programme has so far attracted a third of lead members for children's services in the country and feedback has been excellent. This development event for members is funded by the Children's Improvement Board and supports lead members to work through the key challenges they face in their authorities, in their statutory role and to share experiences and learning. A hot topic was the increased expectations and scrutiny placed on lead members by the new Ofsted inspection framework. I would like to thank Cllr Rob Stanton (Wokingham) and Cllr Claire Kober (Haringey) for their input into these events. I am looking forward to the final session in the programme for this financial year in February. Whilst final funding and programme details are yet to be formally approved, I hope that the Children's Improvement Board will continue to fund this programme of events in 2013/14.

**Meeting with Children's Minister**

11. On 12 December I met with Children's Minister Edward Timpson MP. A key focus of the discussion was the national shortage of adopters and how the current system of recruitment and assessment could be made more effective. The meeting also discussed briefly the forthcoming Children and Families Bill, particularly in relation to Special Educational Needs and holding health partners to account; tackling child exploitation and safeguarding; and the work underway to reform children's homes. The LGA is launching a project to support councils' strategic commissioning and market shaping role in relation to children's homes, so that the system can be improved.

**Visits to councils**

12. I visited West Sussex County Council on 7 December for a meeting to start a regional network for members involved with scrutiny and corporate parenting.

**Contact officer:** Sally Burlington  
**Position:** Head of Programmes  
**Telephone:** 020 7664 3099  
**E-mail:** [sally.burlington@local.gov.uk](mailto:sally.burlington@local.gov.uk)