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

**NCAS Report**

1. At the LGA's Chief Executive meeting on 24 October, I gave an oral report to members including office holders and chairs of the Boards, alongside Katie Hill, Chair of CWB, on the National Children and Adults Services Conference. I emphasised the optimistic atmosphere at the conference, the positive outlook of delegates and the fantastic number of examples we saw of innovative practice being shared by local authorities. I explained that financial sustainability was a recurring theme raised by delegates as an issue and encouraged the LGA to take it forward even more robustly in its lobbying work.

**Draft Deregulation Bill**

2. I recently gave oral evidence to the Draft Deregulation Bill Committee in my position as chair of the CYP Board. During my session I emphasised to the board that the draft bill designed to remove red tape and bureaucracy from thousands of businesses and make life easier for individuals and civil society has received a largely positive reception amongst local government as our written submission outlined. However, I also used the session to detail our concerns and explain where the sector feels the draft legislation could be used as a more "exciting opportunity".

**Local Employment schemes**

3. This month the Guardian held an online discussion with a panel of experts all looking into local employment schemes. I spoke to the press prior to the session outlining the problems with the current schemes. Whilst there are a number of good initiatives happening around the country, the government has sidelined councils and incentivised a series of providers such as schools, colleges and the third sector to work in isolation from each other, with no clarity on who is responsible for leading the offer to young people on the ground. I emphasised that Councils are best placed to provide and commission coordinated schemes and need to be allowed to develop employment programmes for the young people in their areas.

**Ofsted Social Care Annual Report**

4. Since the last report the LGA has responded to the Ofsted Social Care Annual Report which said that improvement in children's services required strong and stable leadership, and published figures which appeared to show some authorities were not meeting the standards needed. In the response we highlighted that nothing councils do is more important than protecting children and the responsibility on local authorities to continually make sure children are becoming safer is one which every council takes incredibly seriously. I outlined in the response that recent cases of neglect and abuse have brought the need for vigilance right to the forefront, and it is important to recognise that the number of looked-after children under the care and supervision of local authorities is now higher than at any point in almost 30 years.
5. The LGA also responded to Ofsted's consultation on the Inspection of services for looked after children, care leavers and those in need of help and protection. Here we outlined that the inspection regime must be both complement and leave space for sector led improvement, and mutual aid. I emphasised that it is recognised peer to peer challenge

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and support is the most effective tool in driving sustainable improvement and the sector remains committed to this approach, driving sustainable improvement whilst reducing the burden of central inspection and regulation.

**Education Select Committee**

6. Councillor Robert Light, who chaired the steering group of the LGA's action research on more effective commissioning of children's homes, gave oral evidence to the Education Select Committee, as part of its inquiry into proposed DfE regulatory reforms to children's homes alongside provider representatives and Ofsted. Councillor Light highlighted key messages from the research and talked about the need to listen to individual children; balancing formal qualifications with practical care skills in the workforce; and, the importance of an on-going dialogue between local authorities and children's homes providers.

**Academies Programme**

7. On 5 November I released a statement discussing the government policy on their academies programme. This was in response to the government's insistence that schools in some cases should convert to academies despite it not being value for money. In the BBC article I explained that in many cases, giving more flexibility to local areas to take swift action, for instance by recruiting new governors and staff, would be a better and more cost effective way of improving standards. Councils are often unable to intervene quickly in failing schools due to excessive bureaucracy; the government need to understand money being spent on conversion costs could be saved by enabling earlier intervention by councils who are focused on school performance rather than management structures.

**Contact officer:** Helen Johnston  
**Position:** Head of Programmes  
**Phone no:** 020 7664 3172  
**E-mail:** [Helen.johnston@local.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.johnston@local.gov.uk)