

Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Title:	Children & Young People Board
Date:	Thursday 26 September 2019
Venue:	Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
8	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed members to meeting, and gave a brief introduction and her career history at Leeds City Council, including touching on the improvements made within the Chair's children services. Introductions were given around the table, including the authorities members were representing. Apologies were noted, which can be found at <u>Appendix A</u> . The Following declarations were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deputy Chair, Cllr Mark Cory, declared that they are a part-time teacher for 16 – 18 year olds. This was in relation to item four.	
9	Review of Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Providing Youth Services Item two was introduced by Paul Scholfield and Katie Harman, from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Paul and Katie gave an overview of the Government's plans to review the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in respect of their duty to provide youth services, this coming autumn 2019. The aim of the review is to clarify the Government's expectations around the duty. As part of the review, there will be a call for evidence to better understand how the current guidance is being used and what improvements may need to be made to the guidance. The review will not be considering any changes to the statutory duty itself. Paul and Katie's presentation gave an overview of their plans for the eight week consultation, and sought input from Board members on what the revised consultation should include. Their presentation included details around: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The review's remit this work does not include looked after young people, young people within the youth justice system, troubled	

- families, or young people with SEND.
- The work was inherited from the Department of Education, and forms part of the 2010 Education Act. Paul reminded members that this agenda hasn't been reviewed for nine years.
 - Funding arrangements to local government and how this has declined substantially in recent years.
 - The role of the local government sector and its development from providing residents with these provisions.
 - The different models of funding and service providers.
 - The youth investment fund; DCMS is currently in discussion with the Treasury, who has given a 'green light' for investment in major new developments for front line services and infrastructure.

In the discussion that followed, members then made the following points:

A significant part of the discussion focused around funding, mainly; the need to recruit and retain quality and well-qualified staff, including investment in wages; balancing this with the investment in infrastructure; and the need to ensure funding across the country is fair and sustainable, as many rural areas are facing the same issues and inner cities.

Members questioned if this call for evidence will be used to discuss investment opportunities with the Treasury. Paul confirmed it would.

Concerns were raised over looked after young people, and the most vulnerable within areas, not being included in this work. Paul responded that whilst this work is not aimed directly at these young people who fall within the SEND, troubled families or looked after categories, his team continue to jointly work with other government departments to produce a coherent, quality offer for local areas.

Members agreed that recreational activities and skills are vital for young people's development; however, members raised concerns that was no mention to safeguarding issues and questioned how this consultation will address the knife crime epidemic. Paul responded that local police and crime commissioner safeguarding frameworks will be adopted, and stated that this funding will aim to dramatically reduce serious youth crime.

Members also mentioned the need for digital components, given how important the digital and creative plays a part in young people's lives, and if the consultation will engage young people. Paul responded that digital and creative will form a large part of the consultations agenda, and that the work aims to engage young people through voluntary and statutory, front-line organisations. This led onto a discussion regarding the need to link up private, statutory and third sector organisations and the importance in ensuring all three sectors are consulted. Paul agreed with this. Members discussed the LGA's Bright Future Campaign, and agreed that much of this can form a basis of the response to the consultation. Members also urged Paul and Katie to use Bright Futures as a platform when formulating the consultation.

The Chair thanked Paul and Katy for their time, and stated the Board will be keeping a close focus on the DCMS' work in this area.

Decisions

1. Members provided feedback to DCMS colleagues on the content of the revised statutory guidance.
2. Members provided feedback to officers to shape the LGA's response to the review.

10 Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Service and Activities to Improve Young Peoples Well-being

11 Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

Andrew Christie CBE introduced item three. His introductions focused on the Adoption and Special Guardianship (SG) Leadership Board (ASGLB), which provides leadership to the adoption and special guardianship system in England and to drive improvements in performance.

As Chair of the Board, Andrew provided an update to members on the Board's current work and priorities, and to receive feedback on these from board members. This included:

- The focus and drive on adoption under the adoption reform grant. Andrew's aim is to broaden this agenda to include SG's, as they share the same issues and values. Andrew reminded members that under an adoption order a birth parents rights is extinguished as soon as that order comes into effect. Under a SG order, their rights are not completely extinguished.
- Slide two of Andrew's presentation focused on the blueprint for adoption and SG and mentioned that a councils statutory duty doesn't end after these orders are made. This included an update on care leavers and children with disabilities.
- Slide three focused on the increase of looked after children, however, adoption orders largely remain at the same number. Andrew mentioned that CAFCAS are finding it increasingly difficult for courts to agree to adoption orders and the background around decision, and how they form their rationale over what pathway a looked after child goes down.
- An update on the recruitment of adopters, and the differences county and city authorities.
- Key partners in this work – including the NHS, CAMHS, and the education sector.

In the discussion that followed, members made the following points:

Members discussed the need to ensure councils take a 'whole life commitment' for every looked after child in foster care, under adoption orders and under SG's. Members also agreed how vital SG's are.

Members spoke at length about the difference between adoption and SG's, and their plans and structures. The overall consensus was that whilst adoption arrangements are extremely well structured, SG's are not.

Concerns were raised around the number orders that are being made by the Court's, which local government do not agree with, as well as the costs of private adoption agencies and their adequacy.

Discussions were held between members and Andrew over the data featured in his presentation, how these were gathered and the rationale behind trends that were presented. .

Members discussed with Andrew SG's breakdowns compared to adoption breakdowns, and the differences in feeling – members agreed that adoption feels more final once agreed by the courts, and agreed that SGO's provide a clearer background for children in care. Member also discussed the need for consistency around the country, and for more formal plans – based on adoption pathways plans – to be produced. Andrew agreed with these statements.

Decision

1. The Board provided feedback to the ASGLB from their own authorities.

- a) Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board slide deck

12 Youth Participation in Education, Training and Employment

Bushra Jamil, Adviser, introduced item four. Bushra commented that the paper provides a brief context on youth participation policy and provision. It sets out the core areas of focus for this policy: careers advice and guidance, technical education (T levels) and NEETs. A draft policy position for lobbying, along with a summary action plan on how this piece of policy work will be developed. This work forms part of our wider Work Local ambition.

The youth participation policy work will be jointly developed by this board, People and Places, and City Regions Boards to ensure read-across. Bushra commented that the City Regions and People and Places Board are holding roundtables for the devolution agenda, and requested member volunteers.

In the discussion that followed, members made the following points:

Member welcomed this work, but stated that introducing skills at a much younger age should be considered, in order for appropriate time for young people to develop the skills they wish too – and leaving enough time for them to change their mind. Members agreed that child and young people's aspirations should be at the forefront of this work, which evolved into gender barriers.

Members mentioned the LGA's Bright Futures campaign again, and agreed that this work should also be incorporated into the campaign in order to lobby government with a more integrated campaign.

Members discussed NEET services, which have been heavily impacted by government cuts.

Discussions briefly touched on the devolution agenda. Members raised

concerns that the 16-24 year old age range is too large, and this should further be split up, and where education and educational staff play a role in the skills agenda.

Members expressed their support for apprenticeships around the table, and agreed that wording and terminology and further advertisement for apprenticeships need refreshing. Members also agreed that apprenticeships need to be meaningful, and not just a tick-box exercise or free labour for an organisation to undertake. Members also discussed the need to equalise vocational and academic pathways.

Deputy Chair Cllr Mark Cory, and Cllr Imran Khan, volunteered to attend the skills roundtable.

Decisions

1. Members agreed the policy position and provided comments on its scope and contents (**paras 21-38**) to officers.
2. Members agreed that the policy, action plan and next steps are moving in the right direction (**paras 39-45**).

13 Case Studies

14 Membership and Terms of Reference for 2019/20

Benn Cain, Member Services Officer, introduced item five. His update included an outline of the terms of reference and membership for the Board for the 2019/20 meeting cycle, as well as the outside bodies to which the Board is asked appoint for.

In the discussion that followed, members made the following points:

- Deputy Chairs Cllr Mark Cory and Cllr Julie Fallon requested to swap their nominations to the advised outside bodies, following discussions with the political group offices.

Decisions

1. Members formally noted the membership of the Board for 2019/20 at **Appendix A**; and
2. Members agreed the appointments to Outside Bodies for 2019/20 at **Appendix B**. The final nomination list is as follows:
 - a. Children's Improvement Board – Chair, Cllr Judith Blake.
 - b. Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board – Cllr Susie Charles.
 - c. National Youth Agency – Deputy Chair, Cllr Mark Cory.
 - d. LGA's Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – Deputy Chair, Cllr Julie Fallon.
3. Members agreed the Board's Terms of Reference for 2019/20 at **Appendix C**; and
4. Members formally noted the list of Board dates for 2019/20 at **Appendix D**.

15 Board Work Programme and Priorities Report for the 2019/20 meeting cycle

Item six was introduced by Ian Keating, Principal Policy Adviser. The paper sets out proposals for the Children and Young People Board's (CYP) priorities and work programme for 2019/20. Ian stated that following commented made by members, officers will develop a work programme to deliver these priorities.

In the discussion that followed, members made the following points:

Members mentioned the LGA's Bright Futures campaign, and mentioned the refresh to be republished in the upcoming NCAS conference, as well as questioned if the steering group for this campaign is still needed. Members agreed that due to the new membership of the Board, this may be forgotten about, but given its successes, it is vital the LGA still use it as a government lobbying tool.

Members also requested an update paper to give new members a chance to see what Board activity has been undertaken so far.

Members discussed paragraph eight and nine in the report; members agreed that the education system is so fundamental to CYP's lives, and that is the foundation alongside children services in ensuring children prosper. Members discussed the fragmentation in the system, not just around school funding, but systemic problems such as failing Academies and the governments promotion of these, as well as the different party policies..

Members discussion featured around potential vulnerable children who are being home schooled, or children that drop out of education. Members also identified the relationship with regional schools commissioners and the sector.

Members requested more focus on early years and early years funding, and argued that this is the most important part of a child's life from a developmental point of view. The Chair agreed with this, but stated large parts of this work fall under the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board.

There was a discussion over the scope of 'investigation' into Children Services Funding. Officers responded that this focus – or 'investigation' – will remain active and at the forefront of the Board's remit throughout the year.

Member discussed child poverty and the importance of picking this work up with the Board's work programme.

Other areas of interest included contextual safeguarding (such as county lines (which falls under the LGA's Safer & Stronger Communities Board – SSCB – remit)), and the whole SEND system (not just the high-needs funding). Members argued for more joint-up working and updates from other linked Boards such as SSCB and CWB.

Action

1. The Bright Futures Campaign to be circulated to the Board.

Decisions

1. Cllr Dick Madden was appointed as Member Champion for the LGA's Bright Future campaign. This included an update to the Board e every six months.
2. Members discussed and agreed to the Board's priorities and work programme for 2019/20.

16 Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Members agreed to the note of the last Children & Young People Board meeting, which took place on 13 June 2019.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Judith Blake CBE	Leeds City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Teresa Heritage	Hertfordshire County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
	Cllr Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Susie Charles	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Matthew Golby	Northamptonshire County Council
	Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
	Cllr Dick Madden	Essex County Council
	Cllr Rachel Eden	Reading Borough Council
	Cllr Sara Rowbotham	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Imran Khan	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Lesley Williams MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Nick Cott	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Judy Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
Apologies	Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr Laura Mayes	Wiltshire Council
	Cllr James Beckles	Newham London Borough Council
	Cllr Alisa Flemming	London Borough of Croydon
	Dr Phil Norrey	Devon County Council

In Attendance

LGA Officers