

Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Title: Children & Young People Board
Date: Wednesday 22 January 2020
Venue: Smith Square 3&4, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

| Item | Decisions and actions | Action |
|------|--|--------|
| 1 | <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed colleagues to the meeting and apologies were noted.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Healthy Child Programme Update</p> <p>This item was replaced by a presentation from the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) on <i>Early intervention in the first five years</i></p> <p>Cllr Judith Blake CBE (Chair) introduced Dr Kirsten Asmussen, Head of What Works, Child Development, Early Intervention Foundation (EIF).</p> <p>The speaker had kindly agreed to attend at short notice after the original presenter from Public Health England had to withdraw due to sickness and the Chair acknowledged this. She informed Dr Asmussen of the Board's support of their work and that members were pleased to have the opportunity to work directly with them.</p> <p>Dr Asmussen introduced the background to her talk and thanked the Board for the opportunity to participate and present to the Board. Members received the presentation on work currently underway to look at a range of early interventions with an aim to improve outcomes for children and families. The speaker outlined the purpose behind the EIF and the importance of supporting its work with most recent evidence, proven outcomes and the most important domains vital to early development.</p> <p>The presentation looked at the important period of children's brain development and in particular school readiness at age 5. This looked at physical readiness, cognition and factual knowledge at that age, communicative ability, management of impulses and social and emotional measurements. Dr Asmussen referred to factors which impact negatively on progress.</p> | |

Members noted a range of interventions and practices published in a series of reports. The speaker outlined the nature and timing of support recommended and ways in which parents can be provided with targeted help, appropriate to their own requirements and needs. Evidence-based therapies have proven to have a positive impact on some outcomes for the parent. These have also been shown to have long-term benefits.

Dr Asmussen referred to The Healthy Child Programme which is set to make delivery possible of a range of interventions available at the level of need. She acknowledged however that there are certain challenges in identifying the actual needs and discussed processes being used to access data and correct information. Part of this includes the work of the Early Years Transformation Academy which supports five local areas to assess local needs and determine priorities in order to address these, working together with the local authorities.

Members heard about the different kind of issues faced by populations within particular areas and how specific circumstances affect these. Delays in development are evident in certain cases and the speaker discussed how helping local authorities develop an evidence based combined strategy and theory of change would help address future needs.

Dr Asmussen spoke about EIF's recommendations to Government and local authorities for an active focus on enabling more effective management of these issues.

The Chair thanked the speaker and invited comments from the Board.

Key points from members included;

- Appreciation of the work done to date on Bright Futures. However, there are concerns about training and responsibility referenced in the background paper for this item – is it the responsibility of the NHS to train health visitors?
 - The officer responded that Health Education England and the NHS are responsible for training health visitors. Health visitors are still being trained but there are insufficient numbers coming through in addition to poor retention in the current workforce. The LGA have been lobbying for a comprehensive workforce plan for public health and community nurses such as health visitors and school nurses, this remain a priority.
- The UK is a leader in this field due to the existence of the Health Child Programme but is it also leading in delivery of outcomes?
 - The speaker said that we do not know the long term outcomes – although the data is available, local areas need to be better at looking at these as a priority.
- Members referred to 'at risk' children and the fact that poverty is not a given. Poverty is something that can be tackled which would change the outcome. How are children affected with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) *and* in poverty identified and intervention provided at an early stage?
 - It was agreed that these often overlap but it is very difficult to know this and correctly assess this before the age of four. However,

parents of children younger than this should be able to get the support needed as required. The health visiting workforce is vital to this.

- Members were concerned about early intervention with the parents and the effects on outcomes for their children.
- Members asked for more details on Shiny Apps and Fingertips (the PHE data tool) and also asked for more information on areas where existing data can be accessed.
 - The speaker suggested that local assessment and measuring systems would provide a better understanding of population needs if local councils have the resources available.
- Members asked what the LGA could do more to lobby for the right level of resources so that improving outcomes is achievable and sustainable.
 - The speaker suggested that joined up working and the provision of evidence is vital to approaching government for this.
- A lot of work being done is not continuing because of parent disengagement and members questioned how this can be managed.
 - The speaker referred to the role of health visitors in ensuring it continues beyond the 1001 first days.
- Members referred to work around previous attempts in increasing the number of health visitors and difficulties in assessing impact of their involvement. It was felt that time allocations and other pressures affects their ability to provide an effective and supportive service and these also need to be afforded. There were concerns that home-schooled children are also likely to be missed.
 - Dr Asmussen agreed that there are issues around workload and that data should be used as evidence to plan for need in the future. National support is important.
- Members referred to the work of the EIF Transformation Academy and the speaker suggested that work would continue around particular areas. Vanessa Lucas agreed to circulate a list of the areas involved, to colleagues.

The Chair raised concerns about accessibility or young mothers and also said that fathers should not be forgotten as key influencers who are very significant to early years development. She thanked the speaker for an informative and interesting presentation and agreed that work around children and young people's health would continue as a joint priority.

Louise Smith, (Senior Advisor, LGA) took the opportunity to remind members of the Cornerstone VR Preview training session available to them following this meeting. Unfortunately some stated that they were unable to attend this time and so it was agreed to notify the Board should another opportunity arise in the future.

Members requested a copy of the presentation be made available to them

in advance of circulation of the minutes.

Action: Fatima de Abreu, LGA Member Services

Details of the academies involved were requested and it was agreed that this would also be circulated.

Action: Vanessa Lucas

3 Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility

The Chair outlined the purpose of discussion in anticipation of future consultation with government on a decision. Louise Smith summarised the background and government's position and briefly outlined key points from the report. She invited members' opinion in order to get an idea of their views in case the LGA is asked.

Members noted the report and made the following points;

- Although sympathetic to the direction of the report, they felt that the actual numbers of children affected are small and have fallen even more since 2011. Alternatives need to be clearer, particularly for those just under the age of criminal responsibility and they asked what the implications for new burdens on local authorities would be.
- There were concerns about the youngest children who are targeted and used by older people to commit crime and said that assurance needs to be given that these children would get the right support over a criminal record.
- There would be an impact on the law enforcement system and members felt that an informed decision cannot yet be reached until statistics on current levels of support are provided. In other words, are systems in place already to divert those particularly vulnerable children who are not convicted but need intervention?
- There were concerns at a lack of evidence around whether interventions were working and although the majority of members agreed in principle that the age of criminality should be increased, they agreed that the Board should receive further information to formulate a fuller position.
- It was suggested that in order to be better informed, engagement with youth workers and other relevant service officers, as well as the Youth Justice Board would be useful.

Members noted a future review of how young people are looked after and their outcomes. They agreed that the LGA will need to provide input into this when it happens. They felt that this issue needs to be taken forward with greater discussion and with a view to contribute in due course. Evidence of outcomes is vital to any decision and members were in agreement that it was correct for the LGA to campaign further on this work.

Members asked for more information on numbers and types of convictions of children aged 10-12 in order to help them take a proper informed view. They were in support of an LGA campaign to look at this and agreed that the Board should continue to take this forward at future meetings. Research should also include looking at ethnicity and similarities around local areas and also study the background of those diverted to crime.

In principle, the group agreed that the age of criminal responsibility is too low. It was agreed that this work will be incorporated into the priorities of the Board in order to inform a decision should it be needed in the future.

4 Post-Election Priorities

Members noted the paper which outlined priorities for the Board after the recent election. Ian Keating (Principal Policy Advisor, LGA) discussed the current processes in agreeing and setting these. Members noted the item and suggestions for future work.

The Board heard of pressures around funding and the work being done to lobby for more funding for children's services, high need and the early years programme. Mr Keating addressed issues around school placements, particularly for those with special needs and local authority input into where schools should be built. Members agreed that Local Authorities should have the final say on these type of decisions.

Key points were noted of work undertaken to;

- Allow flexibility around the funding formula and distribution;
- Focus more on reviewing schools capital and support of failing academies;
- Deal with items not addressed within the Queen's speech.

Members went on to discuss the current debate around adoption processes and current legislation in addition to the lack of support to councils in ensuring high quality education.

Concerns about the context of the report included;

- Voice of the Child should be the first point and their feelings should be fed in to the review of the care system;
- A proper definition of 'early years' needs to be included;
- There were questions about supporting teachers in their discipline decisions and growing numbers of exclusions;
- The lack of firm decisions on home school registers following the recent consultation;
- SEND is not just a funding issue but also a systemic problem;

- Vulnerable children falling out of the system is a key issue to be considered;
- The use of isolation booths needs to be properly considered;
- More security is required over long-term funding rather than a proliferation of one-off grants;
- Transition from children to adult services is very complex and should be looked at, while specific issues to consider for care leavers include management of finances etc.

The Chair thanked members for an interesting contribution to the discussion.

5 Bright Futures 2019 - Getting the Best for 30 Years

Members noted the report on Bright Futures 2019 – Getting the Best for 30 years. The Bright Futures Champion – Councillor Dick Madden – provided a summary of the background behind the document. Members were reminded of their contribution to the first version and were pleased to hear it continues to feed back to senior ministers, including the Children’s Minister, and other Parliamentarians.

Members suggested that young people could be invited to speak to the Board now and again.

Decision – Agreed to invite the Children’s Minister to attend a future meeting.

6 LGA Business Plan for 2019-22

Members noted the report.

It was felt that Climate Change should be pushed more to the front and that the business plan of the whole organisation needs to be more proactive in working with the Board.

7 Note of the Previous Meeting

The note of the previous meeting was agreed.

Next meeting: 19 March 2020, Local Government Association.

Appendix A -Attendance

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