

# Children and Young People Board

## Agenda

Tuesday, 16 March 2021  
12.00 pm

Online via MS Teams

**To:** Members of the Children and Young People Board  
**cc:** Named officers for briefing purposes

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

This meeting is



**Children & Young People Board**  
16 March 2021

---

There will be a meeting of the Children & Young People Board at **12.00 pm on Tuesday, 16 March 2021** taking place online via MS Teams.

**Political Group meetings:**

The group meetings will take place prior to the meeting. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

**Apologies:**

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

<b>Conservative:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: <a href="mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk">lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Labour:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: <a href="mailto:LABGP@local.gov.uk">LABGP@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Independent:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: <a href="mailto:independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk">independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Liberal Democrat:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: <a href="mailto:libdem@local.gov.uk">libdem@local.gov.uk</a>

**LGA Contact:**

Richard Kember  
07786 542 754 / [richard.kember@local.gov.uk](mailto:richard.kember@local.gov.uk)

**Carers' Allowance**

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

**Social Media**

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

The twitter hashtag for this meeting is #lgacyp

## Children & Young People Board – Membership 2020/21

Councillor	Authority
<b>Conservative ( 7 )</b>	
Cllr Teresa Heritage (Vice Chairman)	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
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 Laura Mayes	Wiltshire Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Warren Whyte	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr James Hockney	Enfield Council
Cllr Mark Sutton	Staffordshire County Council
<b>Labour ( 7 )</b>	
Cllr Judith Blake CBE (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Cllr Rachel Eden	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Alisa Flemming	Croydon Council
Cllr Sara Rowbotham	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr James Beckles	Newham London Borough Council
Cllr Imran Khan	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Lesley Williams MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Helen Godwin	Bristol City Council
Cllr Eamonn O'Brien	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Mili Patel	Brent Council
<b>Liberal Democrat ( 2 )</b>	
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (Deputy Chair)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Nick Cott	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
<b>Independent ( 2 )</b>	
Cllr Julie Fallon (Deputy Chair)	Conwy County Borough Council
Cllr Judy Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Charlie Hull	South Somerset District Council
Cllr Kevin Etheridge	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Julian Dean	Shropshire Council

## Agenda

---

### **Children & Young People Board**

Tuesday 16 March 2021

12.00 pm

Online via MS Teams

---

Item	Page
1. Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest	
2. Presentation from Chair of the Independent Children's Social Care Review	1 - 18
3. Education Recovery Programme	19 - 26
4. Children's Food and Wellbeing in the Context of the Social and Economic Recovery.	27 - 30
5. Note of the Previous Meeting on 12th January 2021	31 - 38

**Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 8 June 2021, 12.00 pm, Venue TBC

## **Independent Review of Children's Social Care**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion.

### **Summary**

The Government launched an Independent Review of Children's Social Care earlier this year.

The Chair of the Review, Josh MacAlister, will attend today's meeting of the Children and Young People Board to hear from councillors about key areas of concern, issues that they believe could helpfully be addressed by the review, and any areas of good practice.

### **Recommendation**

That Board members discuss with the Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care their key areas of concern, issues that they believe could helpfully be addressed by the review, and highlight any areas of good practice

### **Action**

Officers to continue to engage with the Review Team to identify opportunities for councillors to share their expertise with the review.

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Louise Smith
<b>Position:</b>	Senior Adviser – Children and Young People
<b>Phone no:</b>	07464 652769
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:louise.smith@local.gov.uk">louise.smith@local.gov.uk</a>

## **Independent Review of Children's Social CareBackground**

1. On 15 January 2021, the Secretary of State for Education announced the launch of an [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#). The [terms of reference](#) for the review were published at the same time, and highlight that the review will look at the whole system of support, safeguarding, protection and care, and the child's journey into and out of that system, including relevant aspects of preventative services provided as part of early help.
2. The review will be led and chaired by Josh MacAlister, a former schoolteacher who founded the social work charity Frontline. The review will be supported by an [Experts by Experience Board](#) to help the lead reviewer hear the diverse experiences of children and families who are supported by social workers.
3. At the launch, a Call for Advice was issued to inform the review. The LGA's response to this is attached at **Appendix A**.

### **For discussion**

4. The review formally began on 1 March 2021, having already received more than 750 responses to the Call for Advice.
5. The Chair published a document on that day, informed by the Call for Advice, setting out [early thinking around the review](#). This document is attached at **Appendix B**.
6. The Chair will be attending today's meeting of the Children and Young People Board to hear the views of councillors about the children's social care system. This is an early opportunity for members to outline their key areas of concern, issues that they believe could helpfully be addressed by the review, and to highlight any areas of good practice.

### **Implications for Wales**

7. The review covers the children's social care system in England only, however officers are in discussion with counterparts in the Welsh LGA to consider opportunities for cross-border learning.

### **Financial Implications**

8. None.

### **Next steps**

9. Officers will continue to engage with the review team, engaging with both CYP Lead Members and the full CYP Board as appropriate as the review progresses.

## **Appendix A**

### **Independent Review of Children's Social Care – Call for Advice**

February 2021

#### **Local Government Association submission**

The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government. We are a politically-led, cross party membership organisation, representing councils from England and Wales.

Our role is to support, promote and improve local government, and raise national awareness of the work of councils. Our ultimate ambition is to support councils to deliver local solutions to national problems.

#### **1. Who should I prioritise speaking to?**

We welcome the review's emphasis on engagement with children, young people and adults with experience of the children's social care system.

We would also encourage engagement with:

- **Lead Members for Children's Services**, to understand the political context in which services operate. We are grateful that you have accepted our invitation to meet with the LGA's Children and Young People Board in March to start this conversation.
  - **Directors of Children's Services**, for an understanding of the wide range of challenges and opportunities facing children's social care departments. We suggest speaking with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) as a starting point in these conversations.
  - **Children's safeguarding partners**. The police and the NHS must be fully engaged in this review to ensure the wider context around keeping children safe is understood. We would also encourage discussion with **district councils**, to understand the relationship with county councils who have responsibility for children's social care and the complexities this can introduce.
  - **Local authority education leads and Regional Schools Commissioners**. While not statutory safeguarding partners, the role of schools in keeping children safe and well supported cannot be underestimated, as has been clearly shown through the recent pandemic.
  - **Children's charities**, who work with children, young people and their families on a daily basis. The LGA works closely with a group of charities through the Children's Services Funding Alliance, and we recommend discussions with these organisations in the first instance: NSPCC, Barnardo's, Action for Children, The Children's Society and NCB.
- 2. How best should I engage children, young people and families who have experienced children's services?**

Many local authorities would be pleased to arrange for you to meet with their Children in Care Councils, Care Leaver Forums, groups of foster carers and others. The LGA would be happy to put you in touch with councils keen to help with this.

We also suggest some of the organisations who already support those who have experienced children's services, including (but not limited to):

- Become
- Coram Voice
- Adoption UK
- Fostering Network
- Grandparents Plus
- Family Rights Group
- The Black Care Experience

**3. What should I be reading? Links to books, blogs, documents, or studies welcome.**

- LGA policy position papers:
  - [Bright Futures: Getting the best for 30 years](#)
  - [A Child-Centred Recovery](#)
- Budgets and spending
  - LGA: [Explaining variation in children's services spending](#)
  - LGA: Activity-spend visualisations (sent by email)
  - Newton Europe: [Making Sense – Understanding the drivers of variation in spend on children's services](#)
  - Shared Intelligence: [the impact of local government spending](#)
  - National Audit Office: [Pressures on children's social care](#)
  - Communities and Local Government Committee: [Funding of local authorities' children's services](#) (this includes helpful links to individual local authority submissions which outline specific pressures)
- Children's services improvement and good practice
  - Isos Partnership: [Action research into improvement in local children's services](#) (and [practical summary](#))
  - Shared Intelligence: [Evaluation of the LGA Sector Led Improvement Programme for Children's Services](#)
  - National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers: [Second Report](#)
  - Department for Education: [Children's Social Care Innovation Programme Round 2 Final Report](#)
- Early help:
  - Isos Partnership: [The key enablers of developing an effective partnership-based early help offer](#)
  - LGA: [The relationship between family violence and youth offending](#)
  - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: [National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme](#)
  - Institute for Fiscal Studies: [The health effects of Sure Start](#)
  - Early Intervention Foundation: [The cost of late intervention](#)



- SEND:
  - Isos Partnership: [Developing and sustaining an effective local SEND system](#)
  - Isos Partnership: [Have we reached a 'tipping point'? Trends in spending for children and young people with SEND in England](#)
- Evidence around demand and external factors
  - ADCS: [Safeguarding Pressures series](#)
  - Family Rights Group: [Care Crisis Review](#)
  - Isos Partnership: [Children missing education](#)
  - Institute of Health Visiting: [Annual Report 2020](#)
  - Shelter: [The impact of homelessness and bad housing on children's education](#)
  - Paul Bywaters: [Inequalities in child welfare intervention rates](#)
- Placements
  - Revolution Consulting: [Profit Making and Risk in Independent Children's Social Care Placement Providers](#)
  - SECNewgate Research: [Barriers and facilitators to the development of children's homes by councils and small providers](#)

#### **4. What are the big questions I should be asking as part of the review?**

The Local Government Association welcomes the review of the children's social care system. Recognising that the review will be wide ranging and focussed on improving outcomes for children and families, we particularly encourage reviewers to consider the following areas:

##### **Funding**

**What funding is needed to deliver the outcomes we want for children, young people and families and how can we ensure services are fully funded?**

Councils have worked hard to protect and even increase their children's social care budgets, but in light of significant cuts to overall council funding, it has proven impossible for these budgets to meet increasing demand. A range of issues is impacting upon costs to support vulnerable children, including higher numbers of children in care, on child protection plans and being referred to children's services; increasing placement costs; and increasing complexity of need of those children receiving support.

Councils have been increasingly diverting money away from early help and universal programmes to try to meet this demand for urgent child protection work, however this is not sustainable and fails to ensure the right support for every child at the right time. We must find a way to ensure children's services is fully funded if we are to both support children in care properly, but also safely prevent children coming into care in the first place.

Of course, we must recognise that the review should not stand in the way of more immediate change. The impact of funding shortfalls in the face of rapidly rising demand and increasing complexity of need cannot be overestimated. While the question of funding undoubtedly

needs to be considered as part of the wider review, this must not overshadow the clear and urgent need for more funding as part of this year's Spending Review.

**Early intervention, edge-of-care and step-up/step-down**

**What does a 'good' experience of, or journey through, the system look like?**

Any review of the children's social care system, to be truly effective, must look at how we prevent children coming into care, how we support them to leave care, and the journeys children take through the children's social care system. Early support and well-managed transitions can make an enormous difference, whether that is preventing a child from coming into care in the first place, or making sure a child feels safe, supported and listened to as they move between placements and levels of support. Similarly, an excellent experience in care may be compromised by a poorly managed transition back into the family or onto independence.

We must also recognise the enormous impact that other services beyond children's social care have on children and families, including the likelihood of their needing support from children's services. These include health, welfare, maternal mental health and other support. For this reason, along with issues highlighted later in this submission around support for children in care, the review must draw in other government departments, making it clear that there is a cross-Whitehall responsibility to give children in the social care system brighter futures.

**Voice of the child**

**Are children's voices at the centre of policies and decisions affecting them, at all levels of Government and amongst partners?**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is clear about children's rights to have a say in decisions being made about their care and their lives. Care-experienced children must have the opportunity to influence the Government's review, and we must also look at how children's voices are informing practice and policy across the country.

**Placements for children in care**

**What placements are needed and how can these be delivered? What impact is the current 'market' having on children's outcomes and experiences?**

Councils are increasingly concerned about the difficulties in finding appropriate placements for children in care, especially those with complex needs, and about the rising costs of these placements. This applies to all forms of formal care, including fostering, residential care and secure children's homes. You will be aware of concerns raised in recent months about the rising use of unregulated placements, which is linked in part to the problems with sufficiency.

Linked to this, the market for children's social care placements has changed significantly in recent years, with increasing involvement of private equity groups and the stock market, and consolidation of providers. We are not clear about how this is impacting on experiences and outcomes for children. Our own research on the levels of financial risk within the largest organisations raises serious questions about the national oversight of the market.

Placements and support for children with complex needs are not only under pressure for those in care, but also for placements within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities high needs placements, and youth

justice. Each of these systems has a significant impact on the others, for example with children who should be in CAMHS provision instead being placed in secure children's homes due to a shortage of beds.

It is essential that the review considers placements for children in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and other children with high or complex needs, and how we wish this system to look going forward to ensure not only good value for money, but the very best outcomes for children.

**Support for foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive parents**

**What support do those caring for children who cannot live with their birth families need and are they getting it? What is the impact of that support not being provided?**

Linked to the issues raised above regarding sufficiency, it is essential that we properly support our foster carers to ensure stable, loving placements for children, and to retain enough foster carers to meet the needs of all children in care. However we know that some foster carers do not feel as well supported as they could be.

Kinship carers provide invaluable support for many children and allow children to remain with their wider family rather than requiring care from the state. However, despite often having similar levels of need to children in care, children in kinship care and their carers often receive very limited support, putting enormous pressure on those families and risking the stability of those placements.

Recent announcements about the Adoption Support are welcome, but we must ensure that support is provided for adoptive parents in the long term. Good quality support, at the right time, can be the difference between a placement breakdown and a child remaining with their adoptive family long-term – we must get this right.

The review must look at how we support all carers to allow them to give children the homes, family lives and futures they deserve.

**Support for children in care**

**How holistic is the support provided for children in care and are all partners playing their part?**

We consistently hear of difficulties encountered by children's social care departments in accessing the support they need for children in their care, in particular mental health support. Meanwhile, children in care are more likely to experience special educational needs and disabilities, however the well-documented pressures on the high needs block means that these children may not always receive the support they need to thrive at school, contributing to poor educational outcomes.

Partnerships between councils, the police, health services and schools are key to providing children in care with the support they need, but councils can struggle to get the buy-in they need from partners to provide the holistic care they would like to.

**Workforce**

**How are we ensuring we have a sufficient workforce with the right skills and qualifications?**

We are keen for workforce to feature in the review, in particular looking at how we can ensure we have enough suitably trained social workers and residential care workers, including children's home managers. We know that stability and trusted relationships improve outcomes for children in care, but too often, high turnover of staff can result in changes to those with responsibility for children's care. We also need to make sure we have enough staff to keep workloads manageable, allowing workers the opportunity to build relationships and spend time with children and families, and the funding to suitably reward staff for the vital work they do. The professionalisation of the children's home workforce should also be considered as part of this review.

### **Support for care leavers**

#### **What support do care leavers need to thrive and how can this be effectively delivered?**

Despite welcome developments in support for care leavers, including the extension of personal adviser support to 25 and the introduction of the care leaver covenant, outcomes for many care leavers still are not good enough. This is for a wide range of reasons, including a shortage of affordable accommodation and limited access to mental health support. It is not enough to simply support children when they are in our care – our responsibilities must be longer term, and we must properly resource the services providing that support.

Outcomes for care leavers are well-reported: we know they are more likely than their peers to have poor educational outcomes and have a higher risk of homelessness, and we know that they are over-represented in the prison population. Making sure we can effectively support children through care and as they move on to independence is vital.

Of course, we also know that many young people thrive in care and as care leavers. It would be a disservice to those young people and those who have supported them not to reflect these more positive stories in the review as well, highlighting what can be achieved when the right support is available at the right time, and when the child is put at the centre of every decision.

### **Permanence**

#### **Is there sufficient emphasis on all forms of permanence in national and local policy, ensuring the best interests of the child are at the centre, and how effectively do councils, the courts and CAFCASS work together to achieve positive outcomes for children and families?**

We are clear that no form of permanence is better than another, and that placing the needs and voice of the child at the centre of all decisions about their care is key. This is increasingly important as issues such as social media mean that the boundaries between, for example, adoption and special guardianship or long-term foster care are increasingly blurred. We must consider how permanence is planned for, and how children and their families are supported regardless of the type of care they are in. We must also look at practice in the family courts and relationships between councils, the courts and CAFCASS to make sure processes are as smooth as they can be, to avoid drift and delay, and to ensure children and families are well supported.

Conducting a thorough review of the care system is an enormous task, but one that can potentially make an enormous difference. The Local Government Association is prepared to support the review in any way that it can.





# Independent review of children's social care: early plans

## Introduction

Since the independent review of children's social care was announced on 15th January, I have been struck by the response I have received, both by the number of people who have offered their support to the review and the overwhelming desire for us to do so much better for children and families.

I am sharing this document on 1st March to coincide with my first official day as chair of the review to set out my current thinking about how the review will work. This has been informed by the approximately 750 responses I have already received from the Call for Advice and the many conversations I have had so far.<sup>1</sup> We will be sharing more reflections and findings from the Call for Advice over the coming weeks, as well as more opportunities to get involved in the review. As always, we'd welcome your views on the plans set out here and you can get in touch with the review team at [Review.ChildrensSocialCare@education.gov.uk](mailto:Review.ChildrensSocialCare@education.gov.uk).

## The review's big question

When the government asked me to chair the review, I was given broad and ambitious [terms of reference](#). Whilst these set out the overall scope of the review, there are important decisions I need to make about how the review focuses its work to achieve maximum impact. Having considered the advice I have received so far, my view is that the overarching question that drives the review's work should be as follows.

How do we ensure children grow up in loving, stable and safe families and, where that is not possible, care provides the same foundations?

This simple question needs some definitions to be clear on what this means in practice.

### Safety, stability and love

Together these are the basic foundations of a good childhood, which the vast majority of children are able to enjoy with their family, without the intervention of the state. It is those children for whom this is not the case where the review will focus its efforts. A well-established pillar of the Children Act 1989 is that wherever it is possible for children to live safely with their families, they should. A driving question of this review will be investigating what more we can do to ensure children have love, stability and safety in their families. In the circumstances where children do need to enter care, the focus of this review will be how children's social care can work to provide children with those same enduring foundations.

Often there will be a balancing act that children's social care must undertake between these three objectives, taking action to keep children safe, whilst maintaining the glimmers of stability and loving relationships that already exist. At its best the children's social care system can achieve all three - finding the wider networks and relationships that can help keep a child safe, whilst providing an anchor of stability and love.

<sup>1</sup> I am also indebted to the many people and organisations who began collecting evidence for the review before it began and which has fed into my thinking, including: [Our Care Our Say](#), [the Children's Commissioner](#), [Bright Spots 10,000 voices publications](#), [Care Experienced Conference](#) and many others.

# Independent review of children's social care: early plans

## Love

This is perhaps the most important foundation, with the legacy of loving relationships enduring into adulthood. Some people describe this as being connected, belonging and having a strong sense of identity. One of the most striking messages of the Scottish Care review's wide ranging listening exercise was the importance of love. This review will listen deeply to those who have experienced children's social care about what a childhood with love means to them and how it can be achieved. We need to do so much more to ensure that every child feels loved as they grow up.

## Stability

Stability is meant in the broadest sense of the word, spanning the places children live, the people in their lives and other factors that provide consistency like education (a factor that has already frequently been raised with me). Where children's social care works well it provides children with stability – either by helping them stay with their family, or where necessary by providing them a stable, permanent alternative. Work by the Children's Commissioner has shown that children who have experienced care want stability in their lives; with moving home, school and changing social worker being an unsettling and at times upsetting experience.<sup>2</sup> We know that one in four children in care in both 2018 and 2019 experienced two or more 'placement' moves over two years.<sup>3</sup>

## Safety

By safety I mean protecting children from experiencing harm, whether this stems from inside or outside of the home. This includes both the roughly 50,000 children at risk of significant harm who are subject to a child protection plan, as well as the types of harm that would lead a child to being classified as a child in need.<sup>4</sup> Whilst this review rightly seeks safety for every child, I agree with Eileen Munro when she said that uncertainty and risk are features of child protection work and we can only work to reduce the probability of harm, not eliminate it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [cco-childrens-voices-childrens-experiences-of-instability-in-the-care-system-july-2019.pdf](#) ([childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](#))

<sup>3</sup> [Children's Commissioner, Stability Index 2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Characteristics of children in need, Reporting Year 2020 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK](#) ([explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk](#))

<sup>5</sup> [The Munro Review of Children Protection, Final Report, 2011](#)



# Independent review of children's social care: early plans

## Which children will the review consider?

As the review terms of reference set out, the review will look at children throughout their interaction with children's social care, from referral, to child in need and child protection plans, through to becoming looked after. Broadly speaking, this is the roughly 390,000 children who at one time have a social worker,<sup>6</sup> we also know that between 2012-2018 roughly 1 in 10 children had a social worker at some point.<sup>7</sup>

I am using a broad definition of "child", looking across childhood, adolescence and into independence. The importance of supporting children as they transition to adulthood has been a key theme in your advice so far and is something the review will consider. This is best described as 0-25, but I am not setting any hard and fast rules, just as parents don't set an arbitrary age where they start considering their child an adult.

This overall group of children is diverse in their background and needs and the review will seek to uncover and listen to a wide range of experiences. More detail about some specific factors that may shape a young person's experience of social care and how the review will consider them are in the box below.

### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Almost half of children with a social worker also have a special educational need.<sup>8</sup> Children with special educational needs and disabilities are children first and so, as with all children, the review will consider their needs and the support they should receive wherever there is a barrier to them having a loving, stable and safe home, in or out of care. Through the Call for Advice I have heard many moving testimonies from parents of children with special education needs and disabilities who felt that with more support their children could have stayed safely at home – and I am keen for the review to examine this question.

There is currently a review of SEND provision underway, which is looking at how the system can provide the highest quality support that enables children with SEND to thrive and prepare for adulthood and I intend to look for the synergies between the two reviews.

### Contact with the criminal justice system in England

Between April 2018 and March 2020, around 19,000 children were cautioned or sentenced.<sup>9</sup> We know that children in the youth justice system are very likely to have had previous contact with children's social care. Between April 2018 to March 2019, 56% of children sentenced in the Youth Justice System at some point had a social worker.<sup>10</sup> For those children who are remanded in custody they are automatically designated looked after by a court.<sup>11</sup> It is therefore essential that the review considers the experiences of children in the youth justice system, building on the recent review of the youth justice system in England and Wales.<sup>12</sup>

6 Characteristics of children in need, Reporting Year 2020 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK ([explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk))

7 [Review of children in need - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

8 [Special Educational Needs and Disability, an analysis and summary of data sources](#)

9 [Youth Justice Board, Youth Justice Statistics 19/20](#)

10 [Youth Justice Board, Assessing the needs of sentenced children in the Youth Justice System 18/19](#)

11 [Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012](#)

12 [Charlie Taylor, Review of Youth Justice System in England and Wales](#)

# Independent review of children's social care: early plans



## Racial disparities

Another issue that has been brought to my attention both through the Call for Advice, and by the many signatories of an open letter coordinated by Home for Good<sup>13</sup>, is the question of racial disparities across children's social care. One example of this is that Black children and children from some other ethnic groups are significantly more likely to be in care.<sup>14</sup> My intention is that the review will look to understand this issue in more depth and consider what should be done to address it.

## Care Experienced Adults

The predominant focus of this review must be ensuring more children who are currently in the social care system have loving, stable and safe homes. However we must also acknowledge that, whilst there are a great many children for whom social care has improved their lives, there are also many who have had unacceptably poor experiences. Through the engagement and participation we'll conduct throughout the review, I want to hear from those who have experienced the social care system about what it has meant for them in adulthood. Many care experienced people have told me that many of the principal features of the system have remained consistent over time. It is therefore critical that we learn from care experienced adults and think about what support may be needed into adulthood, for instance many have raised issues around understanding family history and access to case files.

## Who is "we"?

This review is not just about the action of the Department for Education, local authorities or even the wider government or public sector. It is about the obligations we **all** have in supporting children and I will make recommendations accordingly. One theme that has come through very strongly in the Call for Advice responses is the importance of support that exists outside of formal services - the community, neighbours, friends and extended family. A focus for this review will be to answer how together all of us can do more to better support children and families.

## Achieving whole system change

One question I have been frequently asked is how the review can look at such a broad scope in enough detail to achieve real deliverable change. Part of this will be about me and everyone who supports me moving at pace and building on the significant amount of work that already exists. It also means the review must prioritise the whole system issues that will make the greatest difference to children achieving love, stability and safety. The review will be comprehensive and ambitious, but that does not mean it will be able to resolve every issue that is raised. I will aim to listen deeply and be transparent as I consider the issues in the system and what should be covered.

<sup>13</sup> [Open Letter to Secretary of State delivered December 2020](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Paul Bywaters, Josephine Kwahli, Geraldine Brady, Tim Sparks, Elizabeth Bos, Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Ethnic Inequalities in Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care Intervention Rates, The British Journal of Social Work, Volume 47, Issue 7, October 2017, Pages 1884–1902](#)

# Independent review of children's social care: early plans

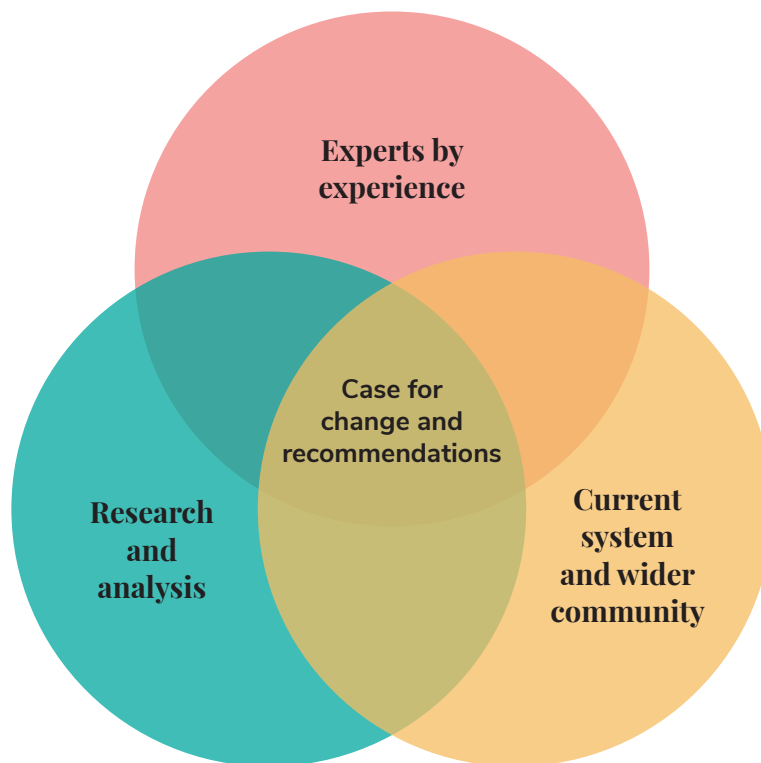
## Not a historical inquiry but a future facing review

The terms of reference of this review are clear that it is a forward-looking review, rather than a historical inquiry. Whilst I want to hear about people's experiences of children's social care to help understand the problems with the current system and improve it for the future, it is beyond the review's remit to investigate or intervene in individual cases past or present. If you have concerns about a child there is more information about what you should do [here](#).

## Delivering the review

Successfully delivering the review means bringing together a wide range of voices: including those who are experts by their experience and those who work to support children and young people either professionally or through their communities. These perspectives will be used alongside the best data and evidence of what works.

I plan to set out a case for change in the summer, highlighting what most needs changing in children's social care. This will give everyone the opportunity to understand the review's thinking and tell us whether we have missed or misunderstood anything. The review will then begin to build recommendations for how the system can be improved, still feeding in a wide range of views, culminating in the review's final recommendations and report.



# Independent review of children's social care: early plans



## Engaging experts by experience

At the review's launch I prioritised recruiting an Experts by Experience Board – which will include a small number of children, young people, adults and families with experience of children's social care. We received more than 1,000 applications in total, and we have appointed members today. This Board is going to advise me and the team so that, together, we can engage thousands of people throughout the review and so that these voices are reflected in the final report. The Board is meeting for the first time today and I want it to tell us whether our initial thinking on the methods for hearing other voices is right. Once this is done we will publish our plans, in the next 2-3 weeks. These will include a place for every person who wants to get involved in the review.

This is just the beginning of the work I want us to do to bring the voice of those with lived experience into the review, and I have already had lots of valuable feedback through my call for advice and initial meetings the team have had with some of you about how I should do this. I want the Experts by Experience Board to tell the team and me if we are getting this wrong or right – but also want to be clear now that our ambitions are big. We will have a number of ways for you to get your voice heard in the review – which recognise that some people prefer, or can only do that, in certain ways. I want to make a commitment today that every child, young person, adult or family member in England will have an opportunity to share their views and ideas with us if they want to and we will publish our plans later this month.

## Current custodians of the social care system

The other set of voices that must have a say in this review are the many different people who work to support children and families, whether they are social workers, residential care staff, the police, voluntary organisations or the many other organisations and people who are too numerous to list.

I will shortly be setting out a structured plan for engagement that will give all those who are part of the social care system the opportunity to input into the review's work and shape the recommendations. To do this I will be reliant on the many membership bodies and other forums that can facilitate these conversations and many of you have already been in touch – but if you haven't and you can convene one of these conversations then please get in touch with the review mailbox.

## Research and analysis

The review's secretariat includes a small team of researchers, and it is key that the review works across the research community and with those working in the children's social care system to ensure recommendations are based on the best available evidence. I am also keen to work closely with other research organisations to ensure we are using the most appropriate and up-to-date evidence and so that there is healthy challenge of the review's emerging findings along the way. If you would like to contribute or can offer support, I'd really like to hear from you.

The review will be starting with an evidence review – considering what we already know about how well the current system provides love, stability and safety. That is why today I am launching a Call for Evidence. This is aimed primarily at the research community and those with robust evidence the review should consider. This asks for specific research and analysis relevant to the big question of the review – it is likely that I will want to ask more specific questions as evidence gaps emerge with further opportunities to submit evidence.

# Independent review of children's social care: early plans



The Call for Evidence will supplement the Call for Advice – every document submitted through the Call for Advice is being considered.

As our understanding of the evidence and potential areas of focus develop, I will share more about my analytical plans for the review.

## Getting involved

I'd welcome feedback and views on the plans in this document and you can contact the review team at Review.ChildrensSocialCare@education.gov.uk. If you want to input into the review here are a few things you can do:

- Give your views about what the review should do: [Respond to the Call for Advice](#)
- Provide evidence: [Respond to the Call for Evidence](#)
- Sign up for email updates about the review, including future events and opportunities to get involved: [Subscribe for Updates](#)



## **Education Recovery**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

Sir Alan Wood, who has been appointed to work alongside Sir Kevan Collins, the Government's Education Recovery Commissioner, will attend today's meeting of the Children and Young People Board to discuss education recovery and the role of councils in supporting this work. This paper sets out key issues around the re-opening of all schools and plans for a programme of education recovery to support children and young people.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to comment on emerging issues around the re-opening of all schools and also on the focus of a planned programme of education recovery.

### **Action**

Officers to take action as directed by members.

**Contact Officer:** Clive Harris  
**Position:** Senior Policy Adviser  
**Telephone No:** 07747 636931  
**Email:** Clive.harris@local.gov.uk

## **Education Recovery**

### **Background**

1. Schools re-opened to all pupils on the 8<sup>th</sup> March as part of the Government's step-by-step plan to lift restrictions related to Covid-19. This paper sets out a number of challenges that have been raised with us by councils relating to the re-opening, as well as key issues that will need consideration as the Government develops plans for an education recovery programme.

### **Re-opening of schools to all pupils**

2. Board members are asked to feedback on school re-opening arrangements in their areas and to share details of arrangements that are working well and where more support is needed.

### **Education Recovery**

3. The Government has appointed Sir Kevan Collins, former Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation and Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets councils, has been appointed to "oversee a comprehensive programme of catch-up aimed at young people who have lost out on learning due to the pandemic".
4. On the 24<sup>th</sup> February the Department for Education announced further details of the education recovery support package. This includes:
  - 4.1 A new one-off £302 million Recovery Premium for state primary and secondary schools, building on the Pupil Premium, to further support pupils who need it most. The average primary school will receive around £6,000 extra, and the average secondary school around £22,000 extra. This will help schools to bolster summer provision for their students, for example laying on additional clubs and activities, or for evidence-based approaches for supporting the most disadvantaged pupils from September.
  - 4.2 £200 million (from the £300 million announced by the Prime Minister in January to expand our successful tutoring programmes). This will fund an £83 million expansion of the National Tutoring Programme for primary and secondary schools; a £102 million extension of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for a further year to support more students in English, maths and other vocational and academic subjects; and £18 million funding to support language development in the early years.
  - 4.3 £200 million (including the final £100 million from the Prime Minister's announcement) will be available to secondary schools to deliver face-to-face summer schools. Schools will be able to target provision based on pupils' needs but the government is suggesting they may want to initially target incoming year 7 pupils. This is alongside wider support funded through our Holiday Activities and Food Programme across the country.
  - 4.4 A range of high-quality online resources, provided by the Oak National Academy, will be available for all teachers and pupils, starting from the summer term and throughout summer holidays.



5. It is clear that it must be a long-term endeavour and go beyond academic achievement to include measures to support children and young people's socialisation, communication and mental health and well-being. While recovery support should be made available to all children and young people, it is vital that vulnerable children, who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, are the focus of this programme of work.
6. Other recovery issues raised with us by councils include:
  - 6.1 The Department for Education (DfE) will need to undertake extensive engagement and communications work to ensure schools, councils, parents/carers and young people have a clear picture of how these arrangements will work in practise.
  - 6.2 Extending the school term into the summer will clearly have resource implications for both schools and councils, for example an extension to home-to-school transport and these will need to be funded by the Department. We are also concerned that teachers have been working incredibly hard for the last twelve months and must be able to have time off over the summer to rest and recover.

#### **Children's social care**

7. We anticipate a need for additional support for children, young people and their families over the coming months and possibly years as a result of pressures introduced or exacerbated by the pandemic. This includes issues around financial hardship, mental health and wellbeing issues (including stress and grief), domestic abuse and drug and alcohol misuse. Much of this will not be at the higher end of need – rather, it will require short term interventions to support people through a difficult period. However, many early interventions have been scaled back or withdrawn altogether as funding challenges and increasing need for urgent child protection services have diverted funding towards more intensive services. To ensure families can get the support they need, when they need it, and to prevent needs from escalating, we are calling for the £1.7 billion lost from the Early Intervention Grant since 2010 to be restored, and the reinstatement of the £700 million removed from the public health grant since 2015.
8. Schools are one of the main referrers into children's social care, thanks to the unique relationships of teachers and support staff with their pupils and the ability to spot if something isn't right. These relationships and opportunities for disclosures will be challenged if school staff continue to have additional expectations placed upon them in terms of infection control and education catch up.
9. The See, Hear, Respond programme (funded by DfE and coordinated by Barnardo's) has provided significant levels of support for children and families where they need help to cope with the challenges of the pandemic but fall below social care thresholds. This programme will end in March, and we have concerns about support for some of the children and young people in the programme when this happens. In particular, Barnardo's reports that their delivery partners have supported significant numbers of children to return to school where this has been a challenge, and worked with thousands of teenagers through their outreach youth work. In the absence of the programme from April, we are keen to work with the DfE to identify alternative funding that will enable councils to commission early help support to meet ongoing need.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

10. We are concerned that as schools re-open and lockdown measures ease there will be an increase in requests for support from children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans where the support set out in their plan has not been provided, particularly due to pressures on the health service. We are keen to work with the DfE and Department for Health and Social Care and NHS England to ensure that the support needs of children with SEND can be met as soon as possible. The on-going review of the SEND system should also consider learning from the pandemic, for example that some children and young people with SEND benefited from being away from the classroom and being taught at home.

### **Mental Health**

11. Mental health support needs to be on an equitable footing as education and the drive to 'catch up'. It is clear that children won't engage in education if they have poor mental health, thus widening the learning gap further. Any proposals set out for catch up need to include emotional and social needs of young people, not purely academic.
12. Councils have a clear role in providing a strategic oversight role in co-ordinating different partners (mental health specialists but also youth groups and the voluntary sector) to support schools, children and young people, as well as using their expertise to facilitate conversations locally and bringing schools nurses, educational psychologists and others together.
13. We would encourage Government to consider extending the Wellbeing for Education Return funding, as it is currently due to end in March 2021. We know this has been well received and would welcome consideration on how this could be bolstered. For example, embedding pastoral support for children in schools.
14. We recognise that currently the majority of funding comes through the NHS so would wish to see a national expectation that each ICS prioritises children and young people's emotional health and well-being.
15. We want to see a greater investment in early intervention to support preventative and universal services to support young people's emotional wellbeing. This includes the £1.7 billion removed from the Early Intervention Grant since 2010 to be reinstated and the £700 million of public health funding reductions to be reversed.

### **Early Years**

16. Councils have been asked to prioritise early years settings for testing and whilst councils want to work closely with government when rolling out testing for different sectors, and recognise the importance of this, it is vital that the Government considers the range of pressures on testing and vaccination programmes and provides the resources needed to deliver them.
17. The current approach of funding early years providers at up to 85% of their January 2020 amount is causing significant concern for the sector and for local authorities.

18. Councils are anticipating budget deficits after last year's funding arrangements. We are working closely with local authorities to understand the impact that this may have on them.
19. We would wish to see a return to the 2020 funding arrangements, and emergency funding injected into the sector to ensure there is sufficient childcare available when we emerge from lockdown.

### **Children's health**

20. Local authority public health teams continue to work closely with schools and have provided an enormous amount of support throughout the pandemic. Public health teams provide schools with advice on infection control, contact tracing and vaccination, as well as keeping health and wellbeing services running such as school nurses and emotional wellbeing support.
21. Public health funding for councils has reduced by £700 million over the last five years, yet the value of local public health services has never been clearer. Councils need the right funding now to ensure they can continue to support schools, as well as delivering preventative programmes to tackle health inequalities and give children and young people a healthier start in life.
22. Local authority public health teams and the services they commission, such as school nursing, have done an enormous amount to support schools, parents and vulnerable children during the pandemic. School nurses provide a holistic service, offering advice and support on long term conditions such as asthma, healthy weight, sexual health and emotional and mental health issues. They identify problems early and can signpost to specialist services such as mental health support teams.
23. The Government should invest in the school nursing workforce and ensure every secondary school has access to a school nurse, who can support them in meeting the increased health and wellbeing needs of their pupils during the recovery and catch up period. Public health teams would be best placed to coordinate and commission additional support for schools through the Healthy Child Programme, linking it to wider child health outcomes and tackling child health inequalities.
24. From the academic year 2020/21, the law has required schools to provide some relationships, sex and health education to all secondary age pupils in the academic year 2020/21, and to provide some relationships and health education to all primary age pupils. Many schools have flagged their inability to deliver a comprehensive RSHE package this year given the unique pressures they face. The Department has been flexible with this requirement.
25. However, we would encourage government to communicate clearly with all schools and to reassure them around the expectations for delivering RSHE in 20/21 and to reissue support and training offers in RSHE implementation. Many local authorities are supporting schools with the implementation of RSHE and would appreciate the space and time to ensure public health teams and schools can work together to identify local needs resulting from the pandemic and tailor RSHE appropriately.

26. Due to a combination of redeployment, Covid restrictions and an already depleted workforce, health visiting services have had to make difficult decisions on limiting the number of contacts they have with new parents and babies over the last 12 months.
27. Over the last 12 months we have seen an increase in reports of perinatal mental health issues and safeguarding incidents in 0-2s. It is essential that Government recognises the impact of the pandemic on this age group.
28. We would be keen to work with government, Public Health England and Health Education England to undertake workforce analysis in order to deliver a properly resourced catch-up programme, including additional recruitment of specialist perinatal mental health nurses and expansion of parenting support programmes.

#### **Youth employment and skills issues (including youth participation)**

29. The continued COVID-19 crisis and national restrictions has had an adverse effect on youth participation in education and employment and training (EET) as well as a disproportionate impact on young people's employment and skills more widely. The latest [Labour Market Statistics](#) show a steep rise in youth unemployment.
30. While the overall unemployment rate currently is 5 per cent, it is 13.2 per cent for 18 to 24-year-old and 25.6 per cent for those aged 16-17. Even when national restrictions are lifted young people will find it tough to compete in a crowded job market against the newly unemployed with more experience and relevant skills. The youth participation in education and training rates for 16-18-year olds has held around the 86.1 per cent mark, with the number of those not in education, employment or training (NEET) young people (aged 16 to 24 years) the UK remaining high at 757,000 on the last count in November 2020.
31. Councils/combined authorities as leaders of place have a key role in driving economic recovery. With rising youth unemployment and high number of NEETs, it's vital that local government is given the appropriate powers and resources to fulfil their statutory duties for young people to ensure relevant programmes and support offer is in place.
32. We are calling for a you minister to be appointed to work across Whitehall and have oversight of a new Youth Employment and Skills Taskforce (YES), which should include representative of government departments, LGA, business and other representative organisations. This will provide a more co-ordinated and cross-departmental approach with a rapid and focussed response to address the issues. The LGA will work in partnership with the Government and the YES Taskforce members to share insights, ensure initiatives land well in local areas and support the delivery the Government's Opportunity Guarantee measures at pace.

#### **Careers, advice, and guidance reforms**

33. There is an ideal opportunity for radical reforms in the careers space by giving local government a key role. DfE and DWP commissioned provision should make it a contractual requirement for providers to work with local areas. Councils should have additional resources to co-design and co-commission a local careers offer to ensure that every young person is well informed about national and local labour market opportunities.

As we move towards a green economic recovery, we need a clear line of sight of where and when jobs will be created.

### **Support for young people, NEETs, and vulnerable groups**

34. Data sharing between school and councils and providers should be improved by providing further clarification and enabling the sharing the data with DWP for tracking and identification of NEETs. A targeted approach is more effective and can deliver value for money.
35. A multi-year flexible funding pot is needed to respond to local challenges, scaling-up successful projects or provide wrap-around support for young people to secure or sustain education, employment or training. The funding should be allocated to councils or combined authorities as a 'single pot' with the same criteria to spend in their respective areas.
36. DfE and DWP commissioned programmes should make it a contractual requirement for providers to work with local authorities more cohesively to avoid unnecessary competition and duplication of provision.

### **Apprenticeships flexibilities**

37. To improve the apprenticeship starts for young people further apprenticeship flexibilities should be introduced to enable local pooling of public levy funds, so that councils could strategically plan provision across the area to address supply/ demand side issues, target sectors to support the local economy, and widen participation to disadvantaged groups and specific cohorts. A proportion could be spent on pre-apprenticeship training or administration of programmes. This local activity would support the Opportunity Guarantee measures and a green recovery.

### **Financial implications**

38. The priorities will be delivered within existing resources.



## **Children's Food and Wellbeing in the Context of the Social and Economic Recovery**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This paper sets out recent updates on food poverty and nutrition for disadvantaged children, including recent government measures and the nationwide roll out of the Holiday Activity and Food programme.

### **Action/s**

CYP Board members to discuss the LGA's current position on children's food and wellbeing programmes and to agree whether this direction remains suitable.

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Rose Doran	Katie Goodger
<b>Position:</b>	Senior Advisor	Graduate Trainee
<b>Phone no:</b>	07747 636843	02076 643 051
<b>Email:</b>	Rose.Doran@local.gov.uk	Katie.Goodger@local.gov.uk

## **Children's Food and Wellbeing in the Context of the Social and Economic Recovery**

### **Background**

1. Access to affordable, nutritious food has become a particular priority issue during the course of the pandemic. This has led government to introduce a range of measures including the £63m from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for councils to help households who were struggling to afford 'food and other essentials', and the Department for Education (DfE) contract to provide vouchers for Free School Meals during the 2020 summer holiday.
2. In November 2020 the government announced that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) would provide councils with £170m Winter Grant.
3. [Part One of the National Food Strategy](#) (NFS), published in July 2020, places a particular emphasis on disadvantaged children.
4. The NFS recommended the government extend the Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) to all areas in England, so summer support is available to all children in receipt of Free School Meals. Under this recommendation, it is estimated an additional 1.1 million children will participate in the programme at an estimated cost of £200 million a year.
5. In November 2020 the government announced that DfE would expand HAF across the whole of England for 2021, covering the Easter, summer, and Christmas holidays.
6. Up to £220 million is being made available throughout the year for local authorities to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities.
7. The National Food Strategy Part 2 is due to be published in July 2021.

### **Position of outside organisations**

8. A coalition of organisations, led by The Food Foundation, have been frequently meeting to campaign for funding for Children's Food Programmes, building on the recommendations in Part One of the NFS.
9. The LGA was invited and has been consistently participating in these meetings over recent months.
10. Current focus for many authorities is on ensuring a strong HAF over the summer holidays. Due to Covid-19 and the roadmap out of lockdown being announced at the end of February, many are focusing on effective summer provision as Easter activities are being delivered virtually with food hampers or vouchers being provided.



11. There are a minority of councils who are organising some face to face provision for the Easter holidays, and equally there are a minority of councils who are not running HAF at all over Easter, instead focusing on a summer roll out.
12. Following intervention from the LGA, DfE and DWP have now confirmed that the provision of hampers is not mandatory for remote provision during the Easter holidays, and councils can use the arrangements that best suit their local circumstances.
13. DWP have confirmed that there will be an extension and additional £59.1 million provided through a similar mechanism to the Winter Grant, to enable councils to continue providing support to households at risk of food poverty and financial hardship. Many councils will put this towards voucher provision or similar during the Easter holidays, using a similar approach to that used at Christmas and the February half term.

**LGA Position and Key considerations.**

14. With recent announcements from DfE on summer catch-up programmes, we need to ensure that councils have the freedom and flexibility to ensure that HAF-funded programmes reflect local need and provide the most effective targeted support to children facing the greatest need.
15. A Knowledge Hub group for those working on HAF has been created and is moderated by the LGA, ensuring council officers have a safe space to discuss any concerns about the programme and provide shared support to one another.
16. The LGA's work on child food poverty overlaps with a range of other LGA work and priorities including:
  - 16.1 Children's health and wellbeing including Healthy Start and work on nutrition, health inequalities and childhood obesity
  - 16.2 Support for low-income households at risk of financial hardship and economic vulnerability – reshaping financial support, the benefits system and local welfare schemes
  - 16.3 A focus on preventative services and early intervention in our work on child poverty and vulnerable children
  - 16.4 Climate change, sustainable development and a green recovery
  - 16.5 Community cohesion and community engagement – food as a way of engaging and bringing people together
17. On the 9<sup>th</sup> February we briefed the LGA Chairman to give evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry on Covid-19 and food supply. The committee's questions centred around food provision for those facing financial hardship and poverty with specific lines of questioning on FSM, food vouchers and food parcels. The Chairman highlighted the need to address the underlying causes of food poverty and the importance of local welfare support.

18. This remains an opportunity to highlight the excellent work that councils already do, for example through existing holiday schemes and local welfare support, and to make the case for sustainable funding.
19. To coincide with the re-launch of the Healthy Start Vouchers in April, Marcus Rashford and his taskforce are to release weekly recipe videos with famous faces promoting uptake of the vouchers. Many supermarkets are also in support of this and have committed to increasing the value of HSV and promoting the recipe cards.
20. Working with the University of Oxford and Sustain, we are planning to hold a roundtable discussion with councils on building resilient food systems and sustainable food places in the early summer.
21. Many councils have stepped-up their partnership work with food and poverty-prevention charities in the wake of the pandemic and are keen to continue providing support to low income families.
22. We are currently delivering a programme of work on 'reshaping financial support' (overseen by the Resources Board) which encompasses work on food poverty. The LGA continues to ask for sustainable local welfare funding of at least £250 per annum to enable councils to provide timely preventative and crisis support to low income households alongside the mainstream benefits system.

### **Implications for Wales**

23. The Welsh Government has a devolved approach to HAF and local welfare funding.

### **Financial Implications**

24. There are no financial implications for the LGA.

### **Next steps**

25. We would welcome the views of CYP board members on the updates given in this paper, and to review whether the current LGA direction remains suitable.

## Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

---

**Title:** Children & Young People Board  
**Date:** Tuesday 12 January 2021  
**Venue:** Online via MS Teams

---

### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<b>Welcome, Apologies &amp; Declarations of Interest</b>  Cllr Teresa Heritage (Vice-Chair) welcomed members to the meeting and gave a brief reminder of etiquette and best practice in remote meetings.  Apologies were noted from Dr Philip Norrey (Observer).  The following Declarations of Interest were made: - Cllr Mark Cory (Liberal Democrats) Item 6	
2	<b>Business Plan 2019-22 - 2020 Review &amp; Update</b>  The Chair asked Ian Keating (Principal Policy Adviser) to introduce the item and give an overview of the Business Plan. Ian explained that the Business Plan has been updated in line with priorities arising from the COVID pandemic as presented to the Board at the meeting in September 2020. Asked that members provide comments and note the update.  In the subsequent discussion the following points were made:  - It was suggested that greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of early intervention in children's services. - A view was expressed that the section on inequalities should refer to reducing inequalities rather than narrowing them. - Members noted that greater reference should be given in the Education section on closing attainment gaps.  <b>Decision</b> The members of the Children & Young People Board noted the 2020/21 update of the Business Plan 2019-2022.  <b>Action</b> The updated plan to be published on the LGA website	

### **3 Understanding & Learning from Responses to the COVID-19 Lockdown in Schools and Children's Social Care**

The Chair welcomed Ben Bryant and Natalie Parish (Isos Partnership) to present on the progression of the research since the previous meeting in November 2020.

In the presentation that followed, Ben and Natalie made the following points:

- Respondents reflected on the changing relationships between local authorities and schools. Furthermore, on the central role that both have played in community response.
- Clear themes were highlighted as being core to an effective response; Strong Shared Values, Strong Relationships and Capacity to Deliver. It was noted by respondents that having such in place enabled an evolution of working methods rather than starting from scratch.
- Four key challenges were highlighted in: national-local tensions, balancing learning and care, decision making processes and systems. More emergent issues included financial implications for schools and families as well long-term support.
- A range of opportunities arose including using greater virtual working to engage certain groups of pupils and improve working with children's services. The pandemic also strengthened communications between schools, families and communities.
- The implications for both education & children's services and local authorities were outlined. This included increases in demand for social care, home education and early intervention as well exposing deprivation. Authorities came to the fore in commissioning services, protecting children and facilitating partnerships.

The Chair thanked Ben and Natalie and requested an overview of the next steps of the research. Ben explained that the final stages of fieldwork were being conducted which would be followed by a workshop session. In the subsequent discussion the following points were raised:

- Concerns were noted on the quality of national leadership and decision making displayed by the Government. An emphasis was placed on learning lessons to inform the approach to future crises.
- Members emphasised the importance of recording and highlighting the instances of leadership displayed by local authorities and the LGA in providing support to schools throughout the COVID pandemic. The flexibility and resilience of local government to adapt and respond to challenges was noted as a key strength.
- Members discussed further analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on schools and children's social care. It was felt that the full impact of the pandemic, including in relation to the exacerbation of inequalities, would only be evident in the long term and would require regular monitoring.
- There was discussion of the provision of food parcels to children and families in receipt of Free School Meals, which were seen to be highly inadequate in some cases. It was requested that LGA officers and Lead Members produce a statement on this matter. Ian noted that officers would discuss such a press release with the Chair.
- Comments were made on funding to provide specific support for vulnerable children outside of school settings and the need for longer term funding to facilitate long term solutions.

The Chair encouraged members to submit further written comments and asked officers to bring the research back to a future meeting.

**Decision**

That the members of the Children & Young People Board note the report and comment on the next steps.

**Action**

- Officers to proceed in line with Members comments.
- Officers to evaluate claims on FSM and produce statement as appropriate.

**4 Youth Participation & Skills Update**

The Chair invited Bushra Jamil (Adviser) to introduce the report and discuss recent youth participation work. In her update, Bushra raised the following points;

- The Youth Report was launched in October 2020 with Cllr James Jamieson (LGA Chairman) writing to a number of Ministers on it.
- Youth participation work has continued through the engagement with a range of local authorities and partner organisations on issues facing young people and those Not in Education, Employment or Training.
- Noted the T Levels discussion paper .
- A report on Post-16 SEND provision was published in December 2020 which outlined a range of recommendations on planning, transition and the role of local authorities moving forward.

In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points:

- Members stressed the need for a dedicated Minister for Young People given the range of Government departments that currently have an input on this area of work. Ian noted that such reflected existing LGA policy as presented in the Child Centred Recovery report and Comprehensive Spending Review submission.

The Chair requested the members provide written comments to Bushra.

**Decision**

The members of the Children & Young People Board noted the report with further comments to be submitted in writing.

**Action**

Officers to progress in line with Members' comments/steer.

**5 Out of Area Placements Housing Protocol**

The Chair invited Priya Thethi (Adviser) to introduce the report. In her update, Priya noted the following points:

- The housing protocol was developed in light of the circa 4000 long distance housing placements made per year. The majority of these originate from London Borough authorities. There are a range of

concerns on the suitability of such placements and the impact on receiving authorities services.

- The protocol is intended to improve overall practice, reduce disputes between authorities and provide a means for resolution.
- Priya noted that the protocol had been compiled through consultation with a working group of council officers, industry bodies, and stakeholders. Recommendations were compiled into a consultation paper, with LGA management considering publication.

In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points;

- Members noted concerns with securing engagement from local authorities. It was felt that placing authorities were far more likely to join the protocol than receiving ones. Members broadly supported the protocol being a voluntary process but also outlined possible engagement challenges. Priya explained that this issue was being examined with a series of frameworks being examined to promote and secure engagement, including a dispute resolution mechanism which will also be consulted on.
- Regional clusters were proposed as a means of allowing a group of authorities to cooperate on providing suitable housing. Priya agreed to take this point for further consideration.
- It was suggested that greater consideration was needed on financial support, continuing education and any additional needs of a vulnerable child/family in the placement process. Priya agreed to take this point for further consideration.

### **Decision**

The members of the Children & Young People noted the report.

### **Action**

Officers to proceed in line with members comments.

## **6 School Closures, Early Years & School Testing**

The Chair invited Ian Keating to provide a verbal update. Ian noted the following points:

- The LGA had issued several statements on schools and education.
  - o For a suspension of OFSTED inspections during the COVID pandemic
  - o On the importance of children physically attending classes
  - o Around proper support for Early Years settings and the consideration of nursery closures
- An announcement on primary school testing was expected shortly after the time of the meeting.
- Publication of the replacement grade moderation process for GCSE and A-Level pupils following the suspension of examinations in Summer 2021. Ian noted that the LGA is advocating for a model based on regional result moderation.

In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points:

- A view was expressed in support of the current LGA position on grade moderation. However, it was felt that the LGA should make a public

announcement of this position ahead of any Government announcement in an effort to influence policy.

- Concerns were raised with the confused approach taken on school closures, even down to a borough level. A member stressed that a coordination approach agreed by government, unions and local authorities was urgently needed.

### **Decision**

Members noted the verbal update.

## **7 Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility**

The Chair invited Flora Wilkie (Adviser) to introduce the report. Flora raised the following points:

- Noted that this policy was previously presented to the Board in December 2019 and the policy has been developed in line with members comments and input from practitioners and experts in the field.
- Provided a brief overview of the policy context with England having one of the lowest Age of Criminal Responsibility (ACR) in the world.

Flora requested that members consider the recommendations presented and provide comments on future direction.

The Chair asked for clarification on the next steps for any decision taken on the policy. Louise Smith (Senior Adviser) explained that any decision would form the basis for LGA policy moving forward. In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points;

- Members expressed a strong preference for raising ACR, with a preference for an increase to the age of 14.
- A number of points were noted in support of this increase
  - o Improved outcomes for children
  - o Current law disproportionately impacts children from disadvantaged backgrounds, vulnerable families and young men from BAME backgrounds.
  - o Evidence around brain development in children and young people.
- Members requested further information on the early and practical interventions outlined in paragraph 29. This included more detail on the role of local authorities and any additional financial burden they might accrue.
- It was recommended that the report should be amended to account for the role of Pupil Referral Units, and the impact this has on the likelihood of being drawn into criminality.

The Chair summarised the discussion, noting that there was clear support from members for increasing ACR, with a preference for the new age to be 14. Suggested that the Board should forward the decision to the Executive Advisory Board with a strong recommendation on increasing ACR to 14. A counter proposal was put forward by Cllr Imran Khan that the Board should take a decision at the meeting, which was seconded by Cllr Lucy Nethsingha and Cllr Sara Rowbotham.

The Chair moved to a vote on the recommendations presented in the report and on whether the issue should be remitted to the EAB. In the subsequent vote:

- In favour of not remitting the decision to the EAB: Agreed by majority (12:5)
- In favour of increasing the Age of Criminal Responsibility: Agreed Unan.
- In favour of increasing ACR to 14: Agreed Unan.

**Decision**

Members of the Children & Young People Board agreed that:

- LGA policy should call for the ACR to be increased.
- LGA policy should call for ACR to increase to 14, in line with the European average and the recommendations from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

**Action**

Officers will;

- undertake further research to know more about the children who are committing crime
- continue to build up an understanding of best practice in this area to share with both Government and local authorities
- use the LGA's agreed position in future work with the Government
- provide further information on practical and early interventions as requested and the financial burden of such on local authorities.

**8 Children's Homes Research**

The Chair invited Louise Smith (Senior Adviser) to introduce the item. Louise noted that the full research has been shared with Members and requested for written comments

**Decision**

That the Board agreed the recommendations outlined at Paragraph 16 and submit written comments.

**Action**

Officers will take forward recommendations as agreed by the Board.

**9 Note of the Previous Meeting on 4th November 2020**

The Chair asked member to approve the note of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

**Decision**

Members of the Children and Young People Board approved the note of previous meeting on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 as an accurate record.



### **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 Lucy Nethsingha	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
	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 Laura Mayes	Wiltshire Council
	Cllr Rachel Eden	Reading Borough Council
	Cllr Alisa Flemming	Croydon Council
	Cllr Sara Rowbotham	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr James Beckles	Newham London Borough Council
	Cllr Imran Khan	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Lesley Williams MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
	Cllr Judy Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
Apologies	Dr Phil Norrey	Devon County Council

