

Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Title: Children & Young People Board
Date: Wednesday 4 November 2020
Venue: Zoom

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest Cllr Judith Blake (Chair, LGA Children & Young People Board) welcomed members and children services lead members to the meeting. The following apologies were received: Cllr Susie Charles, Cllr Judy Jennings, Cllr Phil Norrey There were no declarations of interest.	
2	Understanding and learning from responses to the COVID-19 lockdown in schools and children's social care The Chair introduced the item, noting that it encompasses much of the Board's recent work. Natalie Parish and Ben Bryant (Isos Partnership) were invited to discuss the research in more detail. In their presentation Natalie and Ben raised the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The research is intended to provide feedback on the specific challenges faced by schools and local authorities and understand the implications of the steps taken in response. Discussed the core aims.- Natalie provided an overview of the project timeline and methodology, from inception in September 2020 through to publication of findings in January 2021. Eight local authorities spread across geographic, socio-economic, school type and COVID severity were invited to take part in the project across three phases. The authorities engaged with were: Gateshead, Leicester City, Swindon, Stockport, Brent, Staffordshire, Hackney, Lincolnshire.- The initial fieldwork phase has met with Directors of Children's Services. The next steps will seek engagement with school leaders, social workers, elected members and parents.	

- From the consultation with authorities, three main phases have been identified in the response:
 - o **Initial Response:** Encompassed risk assessment, partnership building, establishing communications routines and setting up leadership systems.
 - o **Adaptation Phase:** Which saw changes to communications plans, enhancing partnerships, planning for the next term and handling more regular day-to-day business (i.e. recruitment).
 - o **New Normal:** Supporting return of all pupils to schools, rapid response plans and planning for increased levels of demand.
- DSC's highlighted factors that determined the success of their local response. Generally speaking, the response was best where schools and local authorities enjoyed strong pre-existing relationship, understood mutual expectations and had confidence in their respective leadership & delivery systems. Others highlighted that the pandemic had facilitated the rebuilding of previously poor relationships.
- Ben discussed the challenges raised by DSC's and the lessons that have been learned;
 - o **National and Local Tensions:** Frustration around lack of engagement with local govt and failure to tap into existing expertise.
 - o **Focus on care, less on quality of learning:** Emphasis shift to local delivery of support to vulnerable children and families. Balance needed between delivering support, access to education and a suitable standard of education.
 - o **Partnership-based decision making:** Some positive experiences detailed on governance and working across multi-agency projects. Other evidence of frustration around the barriers between different aspects of children's services.
 - o **System Fatigue:** Risk of system fatigue was raised by several DSCs. Concern that staff resilience and public engagement could elapse with continued extensions to social distancing measures.
- A range of opportunities that have arisen were also noted. These included improved methods for communication and multi-agency working, increased recognition for integrating an emphasis on early intervention and clear frameworks around shared responsibility for the most vulnerable children.
- Moving forward, DCSs highlighted that a more holistic and integrated approach to identifying and supporting vulnerable children and families, is possible across both education and

children's services.

- A more holistic approach could be available, with a more pragmatic and family focused approach.
- Ben reflected on the role of local government during the pandemic in education and children's social care. This included acting as a Champion for children and families, a Convenor of partnerships and the Commissioner of support & services

The Chair thanked Ben and Natalie for their time. In the subsequent discussion the following points were raised:

- Members noted broadly positive feedback from schools in their areas for the work of local authorities in response to the ongoing COVID pandemic. It was suggested that the valuable work of councils in bridging the gap between the Government and schools has been critical and should be championed.
- Concerns were noted around additional costs that have been placed on schools for the provision of PPE and adequate funding to bridge the digital divide. Natalie explained that the digital divide will be considered in the research.
- The mental health impact of the pandemic was also noted as an area for consideration in further LGA work. Abigail Gallop (Senior Adviser, LGA) added that the findings of the research will be considered alongside other workstreams around mental health.
- A question was raised on the engagement of Academies with local authorities. Natalie and Ben noted that while academy leaders hadn't yet been approached but will be in the next stage of the research. Anecdotal evidence from DCS's indicates that the support received from authorities has been appreciated by academies.
- It was requested that the full presentation be made available to all attendees following the meeting.

The Chair summarised the discussion, noting that PPE provision in schools had been a major issue nationwide, and invited Isos Partnership to present again at a future meeting. Ian Keating (Principal Policy Adviser, LGA) explained that the research will be presented to the Board in full in 2021.

Decision

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

Action

- Officers to invite Isos Partnership to present again on the research at a later Board meeting.
- Member Services to share the presentation with all attendees.

The Chair asked the members of the Children & Young People Board to agree the note of the previous meeting on Tuesday 8th September 2020 as an accurate record.

Decision

The members of the CYP Board agreed the note of the meeting on Tuesday 8th September 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 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 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
Apologies	Cllr Susie Charles	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Sara Rowbotham	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Judy Jennings	Epping Forest District Council