

Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Title: Children & Young People Board
Date: Tuesday 14 September 2021
Venue: Victoria Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair (Cllr Bramble) welcomed members to the Children and Young People Board meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Lucy Nethsingha with Cllr Dine Romero in attendance as substitute.

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Note of the Previous Meeting

Members of the Children and Young People Board agreed the notes of the last Board meeting, held on Tuesday 8 June 2021.

3 Children & Young People Board 2021/22: Terms of Reference, Membership and Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Chair introduced the report which outlined the terms of reference and membership for the LGA's Children and Young People Board for the 2021/22 meeting cycle. The report also identified outside bodies to which the Board was asked to appoint for the 2021/22 meeting cycle.

Ian Keating, Principal Policy Adviser, informed the Board that Cllr Cory had expressed his interest to remain appointed to the National Youth Agency's Board. The vacancy for this post would usually be reviewed on an annual basis and would go through each political group and lead members. The Chair confirmed that she was happy for Cllr Cory to continue in his post for the purposes of continuity.

Following the brief introduction, Members made the following comments:

- Members agreed they were happy for Cllr Cory to remain on the National Youth Agency's Board.
- Members from the Conservative group expressed that they would like to nominate Cllr Sutton for the vacant position on the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board. The Chair noted this nomination.
- Cllr Fallon voiced her interest in remaining on the LGA's Asylum, Migration and Refugee Task Group.

Decision:

Members of the Children and Young People Board:

1. Formally noted the membership of the Board for 2021/22 at **Appendix A**;
2. Agreed the appointments to Outside Bodies for 2021/22 at **Appendix B**;
3. Agreed the Board's Terms of Reference for 2021/22 at **Appendix C**;
4. Formally noted the list of Board dates for 2021/22 at **Appendix D**;
5. Agreed the appointment of the Equalities Advocate for the Board; and
6. Agreed on members representing the Board on outside bodies over the previous meeting cycle.

Action:

- Officers to inform the Board on length of term for appointments to Outside Bodies.

4 **Board Work Programme 2021/22**

The Chair introduced the report which outlined proposals for the Children and Young People Board's priorities and work programme for 2021/22.

The Chair highlighted that it was important to consider emerging work that may come through in the municipal year, that local authorities were finding a challenge to meet.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members proposed that lobbying government for more funding would be a challenge over the next few years due to

pressures of COVID-19 and perhaps putting forward innovation projects would be better suited.

- Members commented that they would like a review on role of regional school's commissioner. In particular, the effectiveness, cost, impact, value and the relationship with local authorities. The Chair responded that she felt this was a much-needed review for the child-centred recovery programme within the education sector.
- Members expressed that they would like to see the increase to the minimum age of criminal responsibility as a priority for funding to undertake research proposed in the report.
- Members agreed the child-centred recovery programme was important to consider the impacts on young people as the COVID-19 pandemic hugely affected poorer residents.
- Members raised dental health was still a huge issue, which was poor before the pandemic and was yet to improve, highlighting a clear lack of provision.
- Members agreed that the Government's review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was needed to bring about the system changes that are required.

Decision:

Members of the Children and Young People
Members agree the Board's priorities and work programme for 2021/22.

Action:

- Officers to consider members comments made during the discussion.

5 Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

The Chair introduced the report which highlighted the findings from The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) and their recent "scale and nature of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)" report and provided information on the Centre's current work to support councils and their partners.

The Chair welcomed Ian Dean, Director, Lisa McCrindle, Policy Advisor and Kairika Karsna,

Senior Research and Evaluation Officer - Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse to introduce their presentation.

Kairika introduced the presentation and highlighted the following key points:

- The CSA Centre was established 5 years ago with the first scoping report, Measuring the scale and changing nature of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.
- Prior to the report there were no documents that brought together different pieces of evidence on the scale and nature of child sexual abuse.
- In June 2021, the latest evidence published by the CSA Centre summarises what the centre currently does and doesn't know on the scale and nature of child sexual abuse, drawing on:
 - the latest prevalent data and analysis
 - Crime survey England and Wales 2019
 - official agency data for 2019/20.
 - Child protection
 - Police recorded crime and outcomes
 - Prosecutions and convictions
 - Sexual Assault Referral Centres and sexual health clinics
 - Helpline's: NSPCC, Stop It Now!, Internet Watch Foundation
- Based on national population estimates in mid-2019:
 - 15% of girls and 5% of boys experience child sexual abuse before the age of 16.
- Key trends before COVID showed that there was an overall decline in the number of identified child sexual abuse cases across all data sets.
- England saw the largest drop in child protection plans for sexual abuse over 2021/20 at 12%, the steepest decline in 18 years.
- There was a small decline in child sexual abuses offences reported to the police, with fewer cases proceeding to court. Prosecutions had fallen by a third with offenses investigated by police falling from 37% (2015) to 20% (2019/20).

- Despite a significant increase in the number of people reporting abuse, fewer offences were being prosecuted and convicted in 2019/20 compared to 2016/17.
- Large disparity in how different areas named, recorded and dealt with child sexual across the agencies.
- In order to better protect children, the gap between the number of children who have experienced sexual abuse and the smaller number who were identified and supported by agencies needs to be addressed.

Lisa then outlined the following three recommendations:

- Carrying out a dedicated national survey of child sexual abuse.
- Encouraging local and national agencies to improve data recording of all concerns of child sexual abuse.
- Providing dedicated training giving professionals the confidence to recognise the signs and indicators of child sexual abuse.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members commented that some people were not able to identify child sexual exploitation and some schools were not identifying it at all. What could councillors do to ensure schools in their local authorities were supported, as the Ofsted inspection framework considered safeguarding within inspections and impacted on schools' ratings. Lisa responded that people not being able to identify harm was important and one of the reasons why the CSA Centre would like to conduct a prevalent study. Kairika added that more work needed to be done in schools to up-skill teachers and to understand what the barriers are for children and young people to talk about sexual abuse. Ian also added that they had met with Ofsted and shared their insights and subsequently had been approached by the What Works centre for Children's Social Care, to help undertake work to help match supervising social workers to designated safeguarding leads in schools.
- Members raised that it was vital to understand how to address and speak to

people who have experienced child sexual exploitation. Lisa replied that there was training for teachers, particularly for child sexual exploitation but there was no training provided for schools and teachers on the broader understanding of child sexual abuse and where it may take place. Lisa also mentioned that schools have an opportunity on how they embed relationship and sexual education, setting expectations and how to interact and treat each other.

- Members highlighted child sexual abuse between child on child, particularly online to be considered in the report. Lisa responded that the report showed that there was limited information around online harm and it would be taken into account once data was available.

The chair thanked Ian, Lisa and Kairika for attending the Board meeting and sharing their insightful presentation.

Decision:

Members of the Children and Young People Board noted the report and the presentation.

6 Healthy Development Review

The Chair introduced the report which looked at *The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days*, which set out six key actions to improve health outcomes in the period between conception to two years of age.

The Chair welcomed Dame Andrea Leadsom MP, who is leading the review and attended the Board meeting to provide an update and hear from members about key areas of concern, areas of good practice, and how best to support councils with this agenda.

Dame Andrea Leadsom DBE MP informed the Board of the six key actions areas:

- **Seamless support for families:** a coherent joined up Start for Life offer available to all families.
A welcoming hub for families: Family Hubs as a place for families to access Start for Life services.
- **The information families need when they need it:** designing digital, virtual and

telephone offers around the needs of the family, including digitising the personal child health record, commonly known as the 'red book'.

- **An empowered Start for Life workforce:** developing a modern skilled workforce to meet the changing needs of families.
- **Continually improving the Start for Life offer:** improving data, evaluation, outcomes and proportionate inspection.
- **Leadership for change:** ensuring local and national accountability and building the economic case.

The following questions were put forward to the Board:

- Were there any particular thoughts on what Start for Life could do to help local authorities in building their own Start for Life services?
- How do families in your local authority's access Start for Life services?
- Who could be the single leader in your local authority responsible for Start for Life services?
- Are there barriers to delivering support through digital channels?
- How are you evaluating and inspecting Start for Life services in your area?
- Do you offer birth registration outside of registry offices?

Following the presentation and discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members welcomed the digitalisation of the 'red book' and agreed that the lack of communication between professionals needed to be improved.
- Members raised how non-traditional families would be catered for within the plan. Dame Andrea responded that non-traditional families were a core part of the review and specifically have tried to identify a range of family types.
- Members commented if the funding for services would be ring fenced, as it was crucial to understand where the funding and resources were coming from. Also, the digitalisation of services included in the review needed to consider that during the COVID-19 pandemic digital connectivity especially within education highlighted that not all families had access to smart phones, tablets or laptops. Dame Andrea replied that within some councils

people have said their local Sure Start hours weren't convenient and wanted the convenience of being able to join virtual groups online to get support and advice. Ring fencing funding would be down to individual local authorities but would not be advised except where there might be a specific task e.g., publishing Start for Life offer.

- Members asked what the transition would be from early years into child mental health services within their local authorities and adult mental health services supporting parents.
- Members raised that local authorities should be given the opportunity to spend funding in the best way they can for their locality and not mandated.
- Members commented that the role of public health needed to be clearer moving forward including the funding, they could have a greater role of pulling together a much wider view than just statutory services. Flexibility was key as this would allow innovation and better fit around local need. Andrea replied that flexibility was a fundamental aspect of the review, allowing local authorities to be able to influence and learn from each other.

The Chair thanked Dame Andrea Leadsom DBE MP for attending the meeting and sharing an informative presentation with the Board.

Decision:

Members of the Children and Young People Board noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to continue to engage with the review team and identify ongoing opportunities for councillors to share their expertise and insight.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Teresa Heritage	Hertfordshire County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE	Lincolnshire County Council

Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
Cllr Laura Mayes	Wiltshire Council
Cllr Antony Mullen	Sunderland City
Cllr Janet Sanderson	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Mark Sutton	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Eamonn O'Brien	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Sara Rowbotham	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
MBE	
Cllr Fiona Venner	Leeds City Council
Cllr Imran Khan	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Mili Patel	Brent Council
Cllr Denise Scott-	Royal Borough of Greenwich
McDonald	
Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Judy Jennings	Epping Forest District Council