

Note of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Title: Children & Young People Board
Date: Tuesday 11 January 2022
Venue: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest

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

Cllr Saunders declared that she was Trustee of North Yorkshire Youth who delivered services to councils and Cllr Cory declared that he was appointed by the Board as Trustee for the National Youth Agency.

No apologies were received.

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 14 September 2021.

3 Youth Services

The Chair introduced the item in which guest speakers Paul Schofield, Jonathan Hopkins and Abbee McLatchie were invited to speak to the Board.

The Chair invited Paul Schofield from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to discuss the priorities of the new Minister, the youth investment fund, and the plans regarding statutory guidance.

Paul highlighted the following key points:

- The Government announced a £500m package for Youth Investment Fund (YIF) in 2019. As a place-based programme, funds would be prioritised to meet the Levelling-up agenda, with majority of the country being covered.
- It was important to engage with local authorities to understand how to connect youth service funding with other key priorities, i.e. keeping young people safe and building services they want and need.
- In the coming weeks DCMS hoped to announce a small capital programme (approximately £10m) to provide equipment for youth

services, i.e. IT and transport vehicles. Open to individual organisations in qualifying areas to bid for.

- A larger fund in excess of over £350m would be delivered over the next few years for capital investment within the youth estate, both those owned by local authorities and Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector. Targeted for areas that have a high need.
- DCMS are actively in discussions with large organisations such as Children in Need and National Lottery Communities Fund to secure a national body to arrange the funding to be delivered.

Following the discussion, the following comments were made:

- The Chair commented that it was challenging to plan and build a sustainable model for youth provision over short funding pots, as over the years many services have closed and staff have left due to funding cuts. Paul agreed that over the last few years significant cuts had been made, prompting a central government response. Long-term engagement with national government and local authorities to engage on key issues would pull together a stronger comprehensive case for further investments within youth services.
- Members agreed that local authorities should be involved in working with DCMS to best spend the investment within their areas. As they would be able to provide bespoke and tailored services to their specific needs.
- Members highlighted that the way in which youth funding was distributed was very problematic, as the National Citizen Service (NCS) took a disproportionate amount of funding given they only work with 16–17-year-olds, although recognised the change in the recent spending revenue. Local authorities needed both capital and revenue funding to use in partnership with other projects that could attract further funding.
- Members raised that certain areas would receive larger capital funding under the Levelling-up agenda, but this would be unfair and leave many services without support and adequate funding. Paul stressed that the DCMS would not dictate where pots of investments would be allocated but would be keen to engage with local authorities to come forward with bids for what they would spend money the money on.
- Members expressed concern on how investments would affect more rural areas as funding was mainly geared towards supporting areas with far larger populations. Paul responded that the DCMS understood the diverse nature of delivery and was focused on including all areas of deprivation and need. Additionally, DCMS would be publishing data sets behind the decision making and priority areas they would choose.

The Chair invited Jonathan Hopkins and Abbee McLatchie from the National Youth Agency (NYA), who joined the meeting to give an update on the recent work undertaken by the NYA, including the census and the national youth work curriculum.

Jonathan briefly introduced the National Youth agency and highlighted key the following key points:

- NYA offered guidance, support, advice, training, and staff development opportunities for youth workers and youth work

- organisations.
- They were responsible for quality assurance and compliance for all Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) recognised programmes in the country through the Education Training Standards committee.
- The NYA augmented their role during COVID-19 to work with DCMS to provide formal national advice to the youth sector. Developing the youth work census to understand the amount and type of provision that is available for young people.
- Areas of work moving forward included; Workforce development, youth work curriculum focusing on quality and practise and youth work census.

Abbee went on to emphasize the following key areas of work undertaken by the NYA which were:

- Workforce development –
 - o set against the context of huge cuts to the sector and loss of qualified youth workers. The vision for NYA sets out that all young people have sufficient and adequate access to good youth work provision. In order to achieve this, they operate on a model that looks at 10,000 youth workers, 20,000 qualified youth support workers and 40,000 skilled and equipped volunteers.
 - o Most recently, they have welcomed additional bursary funding from DCMS which provided initial youth work training at level 2 and 3 for people across the country.
 - o Two youth work apprenticeships have been approved with a Level 3 Youth Support Worker Apprentice and a Level 6 Professional qualifying apprenticeship.
 - o Working with Department for Education (DfE) to support their alternative provision taskforces. As well as teaming up with the Commission on Young Lives, to recognise youth work has a key role to play in supporting vulnerable young people.
- Youth work curriculum –
 - o Sets out; what youth work is, what it does and how that can be mobilised.
 - o Funding good quality youth work.
- Youth Work Census –
 - o Aim is to ensure understand the availability of and access to youth services across the country.
 - o Two-year programme of research, data, analysis and reporting.
 - o Conduct a deep dive analysis to produce a report to identify trends and issues.

Following the discussion, the following comments were made:

- Members commented that support and funding across the country was relatively patchy with significantly large areas receiving little to no support. Jonathan responded that the NYA would be doing a costal report in the summer to examine the steps along the way of what was being done. Abbee added that the youth work census was vital to understand and better connect different organisations in different areas.
- Members mentioned that there would be a benefit to having a mixed model with universal provision. Jonathan replied that they

were not looking to have a one size fits all model but wanted to ensure the quality and skills were in place as most volunteers within the sector did not have safeguarding skills. Additionally, the NYA were publishing a sector-led youth strategy with support from the Local Government Association (LGA) and DCMS.

The Chair thanked Paul, Jonathan and Abbie for taking time to attend the Board meeting and discuss their stimulating presentations.

Direction:

Members of the Board noted the presentations by DCMS and NYA.

4 Childhood obesity

The Chair introduced the report which outlined the recent data released from the National Child Measurement Programme which showed an increase in obesity rates in primary age children and provided an update on the LGA's current work in relation to childhood obesity.

The Chair invited Loretta Sollars, Deputy Head Children Young People & Families, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Department of Health and Social Care, to present National Child Measurement Programme: Annual results 2020/21.

Loretta informed the Board that the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) was a statutory requirement for all local authorities, which measured the height and weight of children in England annually and provided data on the number of children in reception and year 6 who are underweight, healthy weight, overweight, obese or severely obese.

Loretta highlighted the following key points from the presentation:

- A steep increase in childhood obesity had been recorded since the programme began in 2006/7 for both reception and Year 6.
- Obesity prevalence among children living in the most deprived areas was more than double that of those living in the least deprived areas.
- Boys continued to have a higher prevalence of obesity than girls and was greater in older age groups.
- Obesity prevalence was highest among Black children in reception and Year 6 and lowest for Chinese children in reception and Year 6.
- Data samples collected in 2020/2 were based on a selection of schools to produce a national representative sample, smaller than previous years due to closures.

Following the discussion. Members made the following comments:

- The Chair questioned if the data looked at regional variation, as it would be interesting to look at different cohorts to further explore areas of disproportionality. Loretta replied that the regional breakdown which included deprivation, gender and ethnicity was mirrored at a regional level. But the overall levels would differ with some areas either above or below the national average.
- Members commented if there were any conclusions that could be drawn from the findings in the long run and if there was any information regarding the financial implications on the system.

Loretta explained that it was significant to look at this with a whole system approach as there was no single factor that contributed to obesity but rather an accumulation of factors. She went on to say it was important to understand and consider that children were at school for limited proportion of the day, and it was important to evaluate their environment and influences around them that could contribute to obesity levels. Regarding financial implications, information could be found on Making obesity everybody's business: A whole systems approach to obesity report on the LGA website.

- Members highlighted that ethnicity correlated massively with deprivation, as biologically it wasn't to do with their makeup but rather to do with ethnicities being in deprived situations. Loretta replied that deprivation was the major contributor of obesity. Upon further complex analysis, the link between the impact of deprivation and ethnicity showed that there was still something attributable to ethnicity, whether that was due to physical aspects of ethnicity or the cultural environment.
- Members raised if more could be done to influence what meals were provided to children who received free school meals, as schools were unable to provide nutritious meals to children due to a lack of staff during COVID. Additionally, a mandatory traffic light system on food packaging would allow families and children to make better informed choices.
- Members commented if local authorities be given more powers to stop fast-food businesses from serving children unhealthy meals. Loretta replied that this was something the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme was looking at in terms of planning powers. Paul Ogden, Senior Adviser, Adult Social Care and Health added that the LGA had been lobbying for councils to have greater licencing flexibility for some time and there were examples of local authorities who had been successful in managing the cluttering of fast-food outlets, which could be shared.

The Chair thanked Loretta for taking time to speak to the Board and share her insightful findings from the Childhood Obesity presentation.

Direction:

Members of the Board noted the Childhood Obesity report.

5 Early years

The Chair introduced the report which considered recruitment and retention in early education and childcare and the impact of this on sufficiency of places. The report also provided the opportunity to consider the draft recommendations from research commissioned by Officers to develop further policy positions on early years provision.

The Chair invited Flora Wilke, Adviser, Children and Young People to introduce the item. Flora informed the Board that she sought to gather comments from Members around the considered recruitment and retention in early education and childcare along with the impact on sufficiency and how councils were being able to fulfil their duties. Flora also mentioned that the LGA commissioned work at the end of last year to look at what

works for children in early years settings, the cost of effective provision and what was needed to improve outcomes for children.

Following the brief discussion, Members made the following comments:

- The Chair highlighted that there was an opportunity to do cross-party piece of work on early years, specifically around how different departments reflect and impact on children and parents in early years. Additionally, the reduction in birth rates, COVID-19, the cost per child and working from home would all have an impact on how sustainable placements were.
- Members reflected on the idea of more 30 hour per week placements and noted that adequate funding would need to be in place to ensure correct staffing levels and continued investment for maintained nursery schools (MNS).
- Members commented that were challenges around securing qualified staff in the sector and if there was scope to draw in better recruitment and retention approaches which would be worth considering.
- Members highlighted that the universal childcare offer for 3 and 4-year-olds, eligibility criteria benchmark needed to either be more rigorous or scrapped entirely.
- Members expressed that this sector was neglected and overlooked during the pandemic. There was a danger of a downwards spiral with parents being unable to get childcare and therefore not being able to return to workforce, making workforce issues worse than they currently would be.

Direction:

Members of the Board noted the Early Years report.

Actions:

- Officers to continue to work with councils to understand the situation regarding recruitment, retention and sufficiency in the early years and feed this into central government.
- Officers to continue to develop key policy lines based on members' comments and accompanying work.

6 LGA Business plan 2019-22: 2021 review and update

The Chair introduced the report which set out that in October 2019 the LGA Board approved a new 3-year business plan, built around the United Nations sustainable development goals. In 2020, one additional priority – narrowing inequalities and protecting communities was added, bringing the total to seven.

- Funding for local government
- Adult social care, health and wellbeing
- Narrowing inequalities and protecting communities
- Places to live and work
- Children, education and schools
- Strong local democracy, leadership and capacity
- Sustainability and climate action

The 2021 update was approved by the LGA Board on 8 September 2021.

The LGA's work on Supporting Councils now underpinned each of the seven priorities and there was a greater emphasis throughout on resilience, economic recovery and levelling up.

Following the brief discussion, Members made the comments:

- Members asked how the success of outcome would be measured and when would plans be drawn up for the following year. Ian Keating, Principal Policy Adviser, responded that there was an internal process where Officers at the LGA regularly reported against the objectives to senior colleagues and stakeholders.
- Members highlighted that youth work and services was not mentioned.
- Members added that a reference to poverty needed to be included as it was an undercurrent of mitigating inequalities.

The Chair brought the meeting to a close.

Decision:

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board note the 2020/21 update of the 3-year business plan as the basis for work programmes over the coming months.

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 Lucy Nethsingha	Cambridgeshire County Council
	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 Denise Scott-McDonald	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council	
Cllr Judy Jennings	Epping Forest District Council	