

Minutes of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Children & Young People Board

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

Victoria Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest
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The Chair welcomed members of the Children and Young People Board to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Mark Cory.

There were no declarations of interest.

2	Note of the Previous Meeting
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The minutes of the previous meeting was agreed.

3	LGA Plan
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The Chair invited Ian Keating, Principal Policy Adviser to outline the new 3-year business plan for 2022-25. The LGA Plan sets the direction for the LGA as a whole and includes our policy and campaigning priorities for the period.

Member's comments:

- A member raised the view that children's voices were not heard enough in Board meetings.
- A member highlighted that LGA's partnering professional bodies such as ADASS and ADCS networks were not included in the plan. Ian Keating explained that this may not be possible to be included in the LGA plan, but this would be included in future discussions on priorities.
- Following queries, it was clarified that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) issues would be addressed throughout the LGA plan and across the LGA internally.

Ian Keating explained that the end of year report would feedback on progress, and mentioned the CYP Plan, which is agreed every

September.

Decision

The Children and Young People Board reviewed the Plan and discussed any changes to its workplan to reflect the overall LGA direction and priorities.

Action

- Officers to consider a future item to discuss young people's attendance to Board meetings.

4 Delivering Better Value in SEND programme

The Chair invited Christopher Kelly, Director of Children Services at Newton Europe to introduce the item. Newton Europe had been commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver phase one of 'Delivering Better Value in SEND programme' (DBVS), which is aiming to support councils to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people while ensuring services are sustainable.

Christopher Kelly invited colleagues Steve Knight, a Partner at Newton and Phil Gibby, Accountant from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) who are working closely with Newton on this project - to aid in presenting the 'Newton-CIPFA Update' [presentation](#).

Newton colleagues made the following comments:

- The Methodology behind Newton's approach was adapted after speaking with the 55 councils involved to reflect the initiative and work already being undertaken to make better use of resources in the delivery of SEND support.
- The DBV in SEND programme was just one of many projects that form part of the DfE's work on SEND reform, as set out in the Green paper published in March 2022.
- The programme is currently at the end of tranche one out of three, with grants being awarded and implementation beginning for one tranche one councils in early 2023.
- For councils not on the lists as set out on page 19 of the agenda, themes, learning and outcomes of the programme would be circulated to help inform their work on making best use of high needs funding.
- The insights presented are the summation of the work undertaken on modules 1 and 2, baselines and forecasts and the root causes diagnostic.

Members comments:

- A general concern was raised that the grant funding being offered was not sufficient and there was a need to greater understand how the programme would tackle accumulating deficits.
- A member expressed concern that the evidence presented

supports patterns and concerns raised with SEND demand and spending that were known in 2016.

- A concern was raised regarding the engagement of the partners in joint delivery of the programme for instance, with Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs).
- Concern was raised regarding how increased mainstream inclusion could be achieved in light of the abandonment of the Schools Bill.
- A member raised positive feedback having been through a similar process, where SEND spending did become more manageable. The member highlighted the value of guidance information provision to schools and parents, plus a phoneline for teachers when struggling with SEN children in mainstream classrooms.
- A member raised the need for the voice of children and young people to be included in this work.

In response to Members, Newton colleagues made the following comments:

- That funding would stem the increase in deficits, not reverse them, and their role was to feedback the data-based evidence, even if the programme would not close the deficit.
- Newton colleagues noted the evidence being known in 2016 and emphasised the value of the large amount of evidence they would feedback to DfE.
- Newton colleagues acknowledged the notion of collective responsibility, and the work that would be needed to ensure collaborative working through funding and a joint vision on the ground.
- Newton colleagues outlined their engagement with health colleagues on evidence gathering at ground level, and the strong relationships at the top (DfE, NHS England reps) but acknowledged that engagement was varied 'in the middle' as the Local Authority is the convener at this level and thus engagement is dependent on pre-existing relationships.
- Newton colleagues outlined that a discrete output of the programme was training and upskilling the local areas to ensure a sustainable legacy of the work, through provision of events, workshops and round tables which had been a good vehicle for sharing best practice.
- Newton colleagues highlighted although the voice of children and young people had been present in evidence collation, they sought to increase this in tranche 2 of the programme.

Decision

Members provided feedback on the DBVS programme's progress and considered how the findings can feed into the LGA's wider work on SEND.

Action

- Officers to consider inviting Newton Colleagues back to a future Board to share future learnings.

The Chair invited Heather Wills, Principal Adviser (Improvement), to introduce the report, which summarised the LGA's policy and improvement activity to address workforce capacity challenges in local government and sought the Board's feedback on priorities for future activity. This would be fed back to the Resources Board and Executive Advisory Board.

Members comments:

- A member raised the need for a national cap to be implemented on the amount agency workers in health and social care should be paid, as there was increasing competition between councils for the same people leading to bidding wars. Also, the issues that arise when you cannot employ one agency worker, you must employ a team. Ofsted shared this concern. In this member's local area, a solution was sought in the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation which ensured councils stopped outbidding each other.
- A member raised concern for the high turnover of staff, as many people leave councils after being trained because they can receive higher compensation elsewhere in roles such as specialist teaching assistants. Thus, there is a need to incentivise working for a council such as additional time off, flexibility, benefits, and work culture to create loyalty.
- A member raised the restrictions placed on training of staff, for instance only a small number of educational psychologists can be trained by councils each year and suggested that conversations should begin with universities and other bodies to expand training.
- There was a request for the LGA to consider the advantages and disadvantages of international recruitment in social care and how to manage this.

Louise Smith, Senior Adviser advised that the LGA, DfE and ADCS had been in discussions surrounding the agency issues mentioned, creating proposals on how to better manage these issues which had been awaiting ministerial approval. A formal response is anticipated when the response to the care review would be released.

In response to Members, Heather Wills made the following comments:

- The LGA is lobbying to ensure that the NHS workforce strategy is integrated, including adult social care. This demonstrated the need for a holistic approach which could be mirrored for children and families
- The LGA currently work with councils to help deliver different models of working, such as flexibility and improved culture.
- Work is being started to map out pathways to develop each profession and understand where conversations need to be had with academic institutions.
- HR advice is that it will usually be preferable to recruit locally, but there is understanding of the urgency of the situation and so consideration was being given to how international recruitment can be best supported.

Heather Wills thanked members for their input, which will be integrated into the drafting of a paper for Executive Advisory Board. Members were advised that the LGA would be engaging with government on consultation children and families social workforce consultation.

Decision

The Children and Young People Board noted the LGA's policy and improvement activity to address workforce capacity challenges in local government and endorsed the next steps set out in paragraph 58 of the report.

6 Youth Justice Board

The Chair invited Keith Fraser, Chair of the Youth Justice Board (YJB), to give an update on the Youth Justice Board's work and explore areas for joint working and collaboration with local authorities.

Keith made the following comments to accompany his [presentation](#):

- The Youth Justice Board was created to prevent children coming back into the justice system, alongside continued work on prevention.
- 'Child First' approach emphasised children being children, evidence has shown that they are not 'little adults.'
- The average age group of children coming into the system had risen and more serious crimes was being committed, increased likelihood of transition to the adult estate.

Members comments:

- A Member requested that as the Board and YJB continued to work together, work should be focused on the statistics provided, detailing that 71% of children in the youth justice system who had speech, language, and communication needs. Another member raised that neurodiversity should be a wider focus.

Decision

Members are to provide feedback on the challenges and opportunities arising for councils regarding youth justice, share good practice and highlight relevant topics following the presentation from YJB. Potential for this to take place at a future meeting.

Action

- Members to consider the presentation and opportunities for councils to work with YJB.
- Officers to consider YJB for a future meeting for Keith to receive feedback.

7 AOB

The Chair invited Cllr Fiona Venner to feedback on the Children's Placements Working Group:

- The group had met once and planned to meet on 20 February. The focus was to consider how to improve the sufficiency of placements for children in care. Cllr Venner noted that many councils were paying very high prices for residential placements.
- The working group had discussed some of the causes of increased pressure on placements, including rising numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, along with the increase in number of adolescents in care.
- Further work had started to understand what "good" looks like in foster care recruitment and retention and how to create a long-term solutions to provide in-house foster care and children's homes.

Action

- Officers to consider feedback from the working group as a March agenda item.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
	Cllr Kam Kaur	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Laura Mayes	Wiltshire Council
	Cllr Antony Mullen	Sunderland City
	Cllr Mark Sutton	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Adrian Hardman	Worcestershire County Council
	Cllr Beverley Momenabadi	Wolverhampton City
	Cllr Adam Ellison	South Tyneside Council
	Cllr Fiona Venner	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Imran Khan	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Mili Patel	Brent Council
	Cllr Tim Roca	Westminster City Council
Cllr Judy Jennings	Epping Forest District Council	
Apologies	Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
In Attendance		
LGA Officers		