

Children and Young People Board – report from Cllr Roy Perry (Chair)

Asylum seeking children

1. Government wrote to councils on 13 May with further information on the proposed transfer scheme for unaccompanied children, including the resettlement of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, children deemed at risk from countries around Syria and children from other European countries. Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships will be facilitating conversations about the new regionally based arrangements, alongside the Association of Directors of Children's Services. We will be working with the Government and partners on the detail of the scheme and are pressing for further clarity on process, implications for individual authorities and funding, particularly at a regional level, to enable these regional discussions. The scheme is expected to start in July, with transfers from Kent to continue at the current enhanced daily rates. In the meantime, further information including new funding levels are on our website, which also has the contact details of RSMPs:
www.local.gov.uk/refugees

Education

2. The Government's White Paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere* was published on 17 March 2016. As announced in the Budget 2016 on the previous day, the White Paper set out the Government's ambition that all schools would be expected to become, or be in the process of becoming, academies by 2020, with all converted by 2022. The LGA voiced strong opposition to forced academisation and transferring education-related powers from local government to DfE civil servants. Additional work undertaken highlighted the effectiveness of councils as education leaders, the costs of converting 16,500 schools to academy status and also raised concerns about the ability of councils to discharge their remaining statutory duties in a fully academised system.
3. On the 23rd March I took part in a conference call - The future role of councils in Education – with CYP Lead members & CCN in response to the government's release of education white paper.
4. On the 25th of May Cllr Richard Watts and I attended and spoke at a 'round table event' hosted by a Think Tank on Education - 'Reclaiming Education' at the House of Commons. The meeting addressed the future role of local government in Education.
5. On 6 May the Government announced that it would no longer legislate to force all schools to become academies, but the Education for All Bill announced in the Queen's Speech will give the Secretary of State new powers to force all schools in a council area to become academies if she considers that the council is underperforming or unviable in its support for local schools. The Bill will also end the statutory role of councils in school improvement by removing their duty to promote high standards in local schools.

School funding

6. The DfE published consultations on a proposed new national schools funding formula and changes to high needs funding on the 7th March. On the 18th of May, I delivered the closing keynote speech at an Inside Government conference entitled 'The Next Steps for School Funding in the UK'. The speech tackled a number issues around the schools funding formula including the LGA's strong support for the principle of a fairer funding system for all schools, and the need for further dialogue with the Department for Education to understand how the

proposals set out in the consultation will be impacted by the *Educational Excellence Everywhere* White Paper.

Safeguarding Children

7. On the 13th April I attended an All-Party Parliamentary Group on runaway and missing children and adults, entitled: an inquiry into safeguarding missing and absent children. This is a highly complex issue, and our experience suggests that the precise response to children classified as 'missing' or 'absent' will vary between different local authority and police force areas. However, we have outlined some broad views from an LGA perspective in a submission highlighting a number of issues which we believe the Inquiry should consider when forming its recommendations. We hope that these comments will add to the more specific responses that the Inquiry will have received from individual local authorities.
8. On the 1st May I spoke at the Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: Policy priorities for child protection - preventing abuse, improving children's services and reforming social work. I argued that councils cannot be complacent in the delivery of social care, and they need to be looking critically at what they're doing at all times.
9. On Wednesday 23rd March I attended a session on national and local leadership in children's social work (including the role of the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families), the Government's approach to establishing a new framework of governance and accountability, the future provision and delivery of statutory children's social work, and children's social work innovation.

Early years

10. The LGA made a submission to the joint Work and Pensions and Education Select Committees' inquiry on 'life chances and foundation years'. The submission was prepared in partnership between CYP and Resources lead members. The submission made strong representation about the need to better integrate services around the needs of low income households and to better join up policy and support on employment, housing, homeless and financial advice with early years provision and family support. The Government reiterated its commitment to the development of a 'life chances strategy' in the recent Queen's Speech. The LGA will continue to bring together LGA work and evidence in this area to influence and critique the development of the strategy.
11. Councillor Helen Powell, the Deputy Chair of the board, spoke at an Ambition Seminar entitled 'A Positive Agenda for Young People' on the 23rd May. The general aim of the session was to consider the future needs of young people under the broad banner of the government's Life Chances strategy. Much of the CYP Board's work around life chances to date has focussed on early years services and support for disadvantaged families. However, we plan to begin work to draw youth services policy more firmly into this agenda over the coming months.

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