

29th June 2016

Children & Young People - End of Year Board Report

Purpose of report

For information and discussion.

Summary

This report provides an overview of the issues and work the Board has overseen during last year. It sets out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the CYP Board in 2015/2016, and looks forward to next year's priorities.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- (a) Consider and comment on the Board's activity in 2015/2016.
- (b) Consider the process for developing the 2016/17 programme of work.

Action

Officers to action as appropriate.

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Education and schools

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The DfE published consultations on the principles of a proposed new national schools funding formula and changes to high needs funding on the 7th March. The LGA strongly supports the principle of a fairer funding system for all schools. However, we are concerned that a single formula can never be sophisticated enough to cope with all local variations in costs. An element of local discretion and local discussion between schools and councils is essential to cope with the different challenges faced by different areas. A second consultation, on the detailed proposals for the new national funding formula for schools and early years is expected before Parliament's summer recess.

Children's social care

4. The DfE is currently intervening in 21 councils judged to be *inadequate* by Ofsted, 25% of the total number of councils that have been inspected so far under Ofsted's tougher Single Inspection Framework, introduced. The Board commissioned a piece of work analysing the outcomes of all Ofsted Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspections to date, alongside a textual analysis of the key judgments set out in the inspection reports. The resulting research highlights seven characteristics of an authority that is likely to be judged as good, which will help to inform local authorities' improvement work. The Board also commissioned action research on children's services improvement, which was published in June.
5. We held 'Leadership Essentials' events for children's services from 7 – 8 November and the 28 – 29 January. The events provided portfolio holders, service committee chairs and interested council leaders a chance to develop leadership skills specific to the area of children's services and share their experiences among colleagues dealing with similar challenges.

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Early Years

6. The LGA lobbied on the passage of the Childcare Act. The main provision of the Act is the implementation of an additional 15 hours free childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds (In addition to the existing 15 hours entitlement for all parents of children this age). We successfully softened proposals in the Bill for the Secretary of State to intervene on flexibility and sufficiency. The LGA continues to work closely with both the Department for Education and local authorities on the design and implementation of the 30 hours entitlement.
7. 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.
8. The LGA hosted a joint conference with ADCS at Local Government House to open and build on our dialogue with the sector on the two key work areas above.

Healthy beginnings: Giving our children the best start in life

9. Together with the Community Wellbeing Portfolio, [we published a document](#) in which a number of leading practitioners outline the major implications of the transfer of responsibility for delivering public health services for children aged 5 years and under from NHS England to local government.

CYP objectives going forward

10. We expect a number of high profile and priority Bills and reforms, including:
 - 10.1 An Education Bill to end the statutory council role in school improvement to achieve £600m of savings to the Education Services Grant and introduce the amended proposals in the Education White Paper on forced academisation of council maintained schools in unviable and underperforming council areas. The deadline for ending the council role in school improvement and ESG cuts is September 2017, so we expect a Bill in the forthcoming session.
 - 10.2 A Children and Social Worker Bill to extend the entitlements of care leavers to continuing council support to 25, reform the law on adoption and other forms of permanent placements for Looked After Children, and introduce a national accreditation system for social workers and a new regulatory body – this is likely to be a priority Bill for LGA.

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- 10.3 Significant reform of the council role in schools funding and the introduction of a 'hard' national funding formula for schools funding. There will be a transition to the hard formula by 2020, but a 'soft formula', with a transitional council role beginning in September 2016. Funding for high needs (SEN) and early years will also be implemented to this timescale, but with a continuing council role in distributing these funding pots after the full introduction of the national formula for the schools block in 2020.
- 10.4 The implementation of the Childcare Act 2016, providing for additional 15 hours of free childcare, in which councils will have a central role, by September 2017, with 'early adopter' areas from September this year.
- 10.5 The implementation of SEN reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 continues, with a risk to council's reputation from the difficulties they face in moving all children currently on an SEN statement to the new Education and Healthcare Plans by September 2017 – as mentioned previously, the implementation was significantly underfunded by DfE.