

Children and Young People Board – report from Cllr Richard Watts (Chair)

Conferences, Meetings and Public Events

1. Cllr Gillian Ford (Deputy Chair) spoke at Inside Government's "Working in Partnership to Safeguard Children and Young People" forum, highlighting the LGA's work on children's social care improvement and innovation.
2. I met with Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, to advise on her office's lobbying and research priorities for the coming year. I urged for a stronger focus on the challenges facing councils in meeting rapidly increasing demand for children's social care services at a time of significantly reduced resources across the public sector.
3. Cllr Roy Perry (Vice Chair), Cllr Gillian Ford and I met with Sir Martin Narey and his review team for early consultation on the government's ongoing fostering stocktake. The wide ranging discussion focussed on key points in the LGA's review submission, available [here](#), including the role of independent fostering agencies, challenges around foster carer recruitment and the importance of consistently high quality support for children in need regardless of their care status.
4. I met with Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Children and Families, for an introductory discussion focused on children's services funding and demand pressures, sector led improvement, and the future of the National Female Genital Mutilation Centre.
5. I delivered the key note address at the NHS England and LGA C&YP Mental Health Transformation conference 2017. The event highlighted the good work that is underway in many areas, but also provided an opportunity to reflect on what else needs to happen. It was a fantastic opportunity to highlight to delegates the key contribution that councils make to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people both through their public health responsibilities and their corporate parenting role for looked after children. The event was attended by NHS commissioner and provider colleagues, local council commissioners and public health staff and Directors of Public Health.
6. Cllr Gillian Ford attended the fifth and the sixth meetings of the Social Care Institute of Excellence Expert Group on Improving Mental Health of Looked After Children. The overall aim of the project is to ensure that the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people in care, those adopted from care or under a Special Guardianship Order and care leavers are better met. The Expert Group has developed draft care pathways and quality principles and is working on finalising these, before it reports on its work in October 2017.

Family Rights Group

7. Last year, Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division of the High Court for England and Wales, referred to the "seemingly relentless rise in the number of new care cases" as a "crisis". In response, the charity Family Rights Group is planning to carry out a sector-led review to identify key changes to help manage demand and find sustainable ways to improve outcomes for children. I attended a roundtable on 29 June to consider the scope for this review, emphasising the complexity of cases being dealt with by

children's social services and the need to consider the context surrounding those cases when it comes to safely managing demand.

Press Releases and Statements

8. I have recently made public statements on [setting school budgets from Whitehall](#), [NSPCC's "How Safe Are Our Children?" report](#), [the Queen's speech](#), [DCLG statistics on primary and secondary school offers](#) and [the £2 billion funding gap to support vulnerable children by 2020](#).
9. Cllr Roy Perry (Vice Chair) made a recent public statement on [NDNA research into funding on nurseries](#).
10. In April and March I made public statements on the [number of children securing first place primary school places](#), [the education announcement on selective schools](#), [the supreme court ruling on term time holidays](#), [children with special needs at risk of being turned away by schools](#), [the NAO report on capital funding for schools](#), [the APPG for Children's report into children's social care](#), [the Local Government Ombudsman report into school transport](#) and on [new rules and funding arrangements announced by government which could leave vital school support services at risk following funding cut](#).

Contact officer: Ian Keating
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3032
E-mail: ian.keating@local.gov.uk