

CYP Board Policy Priorities for 2017-2018

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This paper sets out proposals for the Children and Young People Board's priorities and work programme for 2017-18. Subject to the Board's views, officers will develop a work programme to deliver these priorities.

Recommendation

Members are asked to discuss and agree the Board's priorities and work programme for 2017-18.

Action

Officers to take action as directed by members.

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CYP Board Policy Priorities for 2017-2018

Background

1. LGA Boards are asked to consider their priorities for the coming year at their first meeting of the new cycle. Set out below are a list of priorities for discussion, based on the priorities identified last year, and adapted to reflect work that has been completed, recent developments in Government policy and issues raised by member councils.

Children's social care

2. In the coming year the Board should;
 - 2.1. Continue to urge government to act quickly to close the significant children's services funding gap and ensure that councils can continue to provide essential services for vulnerable children and families.
 - 2.2. Complete research to better understand local variations in spending on children's services, working with a sample of local authorities to develop a more complete picture while identifying areas of good practice and 'top tips' for the benefit of the wider sector.
 - 2.3. Produce guidance and resources to support local authorities in delivering consistently good outcomes for children and young people, highlighting current practice and research evidence on a range of topics including corporate parenting, achieving permanence for children, support for care leavers, youth justice and working with unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Children's services improvement

3. When considering children's services improvement, the Board should lobby government to support sector-led improvement in children's services by committing to devolve a proportion of DfE's £300 million budget for improvement and innovation in children's services to councils.

The Council role in education and school improvement

4. Regarding the future of the Council role in education and school improvement, the Board should;
 - 4.1. Lobby for changes to government policy to allow councils to set up Multi Academy Trusts and allow maintained schools to support struggling academies if they have a good track record in school improvement.
 - 4.2. Continue to urge government to give Councils the same powers to direct academies to admit vulnerable pupils as they currently hold for maintained schools. In the

absence of legislative change in this area, the Education Funding Agency (EFA), which currently has the power to direct academies must make decisions in a transparent way which are in the best interests of children. Currently 88 per cent of council requests for direction are rejected, which suggests a greater EFA focus on academy freedoms.

Providing new school places

5. In the coming year the Board should;
 - 5.1. Argue for councils to have the lead role in commissioning new free schools to make sure they provide places where they are most needed and do not destabilise existing good and outstanding schools.
 - 5.2. Lobby for councils to have the same power to direct academies to expand to meet increasing local demand for school places if local agreement cannot be reached as they currently have for maintained schools.
 - 5.3. Continue to argue for the system for allocating schools capital to be urgently reviewed to allow schools and councils to work together to join up fragmented funding streams locally in a single local capital pot and provide best value for money in the spending of limited capital resources for schools.

School funding

6. When considering school funding, the Board should;
 - 6.1. Lobby the Government to retain an element of local flexibility in the implementation of a new national school funding formula.
 - 6.2. Make the case to Government for adequate funding for councils to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in their communities.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

7. LGA policy in this area is led by the LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group, made up of regional member and strategic migration partnership representation covering all of the English regions, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Cllr Gillian Ford, Deputy Chair of the Children and Young People Board, is a member of the Task Group, which reports to the CYP and the Community Wellbeing Boards. The Task Group will continue to push for clearer alignment between all the programmes that resettle asylum seekers and refugees to minimise the pressures on local authorities, local communities and vulnerable individuals, and is leading the LGA's response to the current review of UASC funding rates.

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing (activities sit across both this Board and the Community Wellbeing Board)

8. In the coming year the Board should:

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- 8.1. Respond to the green paper on children and young people's mental health, (due Autumn 2017), highlighting key issues from a local government perspective.
- 8.2. Host a round table discussion with representatives from DH, DfE, Health Education England and NHS commissioners and providers, to identify opportunities to build the capacity of providers to deliver services that achieve the transformative change described in Future in Mind.
- 8.3. Highlight to government (through the LGA campaign) the need for; a better balance of funding between early intervention and preventative mental health and wellbeing services and those services focusing on treatment and recovery; the key role of council's in preventing mental illness and promoting mental wellbeing; and the need for stronger accountability on spend and quality of services at a local level through Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Financial implications

9. The priorities will be delivered within existing resources.