

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

Conferences, Meetings and Public Events

1. We are working closely with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and Solace to develop a council-led support offer that seeks to drive sustainable improvement in children's services focussing on preventative support and utilising council's existing experience and expertise. Once agreed, the offer will be used to influence Department for Education thinking on children's services improvement.
2. We hosted a roundtable with representatives of the youth services sector on 16 August to discuss a range of issues around youth services, including aims, funding, workforce, and challenges and opportunities. This meeting was the starting point for the development of an LGA vision on the council role in youth services, which will be launched at a Youth Services Conference in December.
3. At the last meeting of the Children and Young People Board received a presentation from the Children's Society on County Lines at its meeting on 20 September. This issue will now be taken forward as a priority for the CYP Board in conjunction with the Community Wellbeing Board, and guidance will be developed for councillors through a Modern Slavery Guide and a Youth Justice Resource Pack which will be made available in the coming months.
4. The LGA, working with the European Federation of Education Employers and the London Borough of Hackney, delivered a seminar on promoting social inclusion and achieving high quality education. Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Member of the Children and Young People Board and Deputy Mayor of Hackney, attended and hosted the seminar at Hackney Town Hall. The seminar was attended by delegates from across Europe and provided an opportunity to discuss topics including how to foster education of disadvantaged children and young people, the creation of inclusive school environments and; how to engage with the wider community to promote social inclusion.
5. I attended this year's [National Children and Adult Services Conference](#) on 11-13 October in Bournemouth. The conference provided many opportunities to discuss issues across the spectrum of children's and adults' services and how to respond locally. Members were encouraged to share their experiences and examples throughout the event.
6. Officers attended the schools mental health advisory group meeting hosted by the Mental Health Foundation. The group is providing strategic support to the Mental Health Foundation to roll out peer education training programme to young people in schools. Cllr Gillian Ford will attend these meetings in future.

Board business

7. Recently I have written to Charlie Taylor, Chair of the Youth Justice Board, to express concern over the safety of those in youth custody. This was followed by our press release calling for an action plan from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service to

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address the problem swiftly. Officers have also met with the Youth Justice Board to raise this issue.

8. We have commissioned new research from Newton Europe, aiming to better understand apparent variations in local spending on children's services. Working with a sample of local authorities, we intend to develop a deeper, more complete picture of council spend on children's services while identifying areas of good practice and the underlying levers driving cost and performance. The output of this work will have a range of valuable practical applications, including informing a future children's services finance diagnostic offer to the sector.

Publications

9. Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE and I jointly launched a report showcasing different approaches to supporting the health of young people. Whilst the approach and focus of the work in local areas varies, each case study provides an opportunity to reflect on what made the initiative a success and how we might use this learning in our own areas. This report can be found linked [here](#).
10. In early October I launched a resource pack on [Corporate Parenting](#). This is aimed at everyone looking out for our most vulnerable children and young people, including every Councillor. This resource pack is aimed at helping them fulfil that role as effectively as possible.
11. I also launched a resource pack providing guidance to Councils on [support for care leavers](#).

Press Releases and Statements

12. I have recently made public statements on the [call for urgent action to improve safety in youth offending institutions](#), [the Barnardo's care leavers study](#), [responding to the national funding formula for schools announcement](#), [responding to the Action for children's poll on foster care](#), [responding to Family and Childcare Trust's School readiness survey](#), [the secondary school places crisis](#), [responding to the Children's Society Good Childhood Report](#), [responding to action for Children's 'Revolving Door' report](#) and [warning that children's social care is at breaking point](#).

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