

## **Children and Young People Board - End of Year Report**

### **Background**

1. The Children and Young People Board provides strategic oversight of the LGA's policy, regulatory and improvement activity in relation to education and schools, children's social care, children's health and early years in line with the LGA priorities as they relate to this activity.

### **Achievements**

#### **Education and schools**

2. The LGA commissioned the Isos Partnership to undertake research looking at the evolving role of councils in school improvement. The findings, which were published in January, looked at how councils, in their efforts to drive up school standards, have taken a variety of different approaches to developing effective school improvement systems, responding differently to the challenges facing the education system.
3. To promote and share the findings of the report, we ran five, well attended regional workshops, enabling councils to explore and discuss issues in the report relevant to their circumstances directly with the research team. The workshops also created opportunities for councils to share their issues and learning with other colleagues, and enable a peer dialogue about their local school improvement systems; and also enable councils to work through some of their challenges, engage in problem-solving, and consider their plans to develop their local strategic partnerships further.

#### **National Children and Adults Services conference**

4. The LGA, in partnership with ADCS and ADASS, delivered a successful National Children's and Adult Services conference which took place in Bournemouth in October. The programme included a wide variety of sessions including effective delivery of SEND support, modern slavery, publication of the *Bright Futures* report and children's mental health, as well as an opportunity to hear from the Children's Minister. Planning for the 2018 conference, taking place in Manchester, is already well underway.

#### **Children's Improvement**

5. In March the Department for Education (DfE) awarded the LGA, working with ADCS and Solace, £2 million over two years to help improve both corporate and children's services leadership. This funding will help to deliver an enhanced programme of sector-led support to councils, offering an enhanced programme of children's peer reviews and training for lead members and senior officers. DfE funding of this programme demonstrates the success of council-led improvement and shows what councils can achieve by working together and supporting one another.

## **SEND**

6. In May the Department announced that £50 million had been allocated to expand special schools and improve existing facilities for children with SEN. This follows on from the DfE allocating an extra £215 million to support children with SEN in 2017. While this funding is welcome, we have continued to lobby for councils to have sufficient funding to meet the needs of all children with SEN in their areas and for reform of high needs funding arrangements.

## **Early Years**

7. The LGA has been awarded funding by the Department for Education to develop, pilot and deliver an Early Years Social Mobility Peer Review programme, which will sit at the heart of an £8.5 million programme to share best practice on improving language outcomes. This is part of the Government's plans to improve social mobility through education, and will see councils working together to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.
8. As part of the LGA's commitment to sharing best practice and supporting councils to develop services, we published a collection of case studies this year looking at different models of delivering children's centre services.

## **Young People**

9. Following consultation with local authorities, partners and practitioners, the LGA launched its Vision for Youth Services at a conference in partnership with the National Youth Agency. This aims to provide a starting point in taking a fresh look at youth provision, encouraging true collaboration between all providers, to give every young person the bright future they deserve. The vision outlines a range of support for local authorities to help them to work towards delivering improved outcomes for young people, and will be used to help make the case for additional government funding for youth services that genuinely meet the needs of young people.

## **Children's Social Care**

10. We have published three new resource packs for councils, covering corporate parenting, support for care leavers and youth justice. These packs provide a detailed overview of each topic, alongside case studies from councils around the country and key lines of enquiry for councillors to pursue when assessing the effectiveness of local services. Following positive feedback from members and other key stakeholders, further packs will be prepared and published over the coming year.
11. As a result of lobbying from the LGA and our sector partners, councils will receive £7.6 million per year to extend virtual school head support to previously looked after children, including adopted children, in line with new duties introduced through the 2017 Children and Social Work Act. Government had previously argued that councils should cover these costs from existing budgets.. We were also successful in arguing for an uplift to new burdens funding for the extension of personal adviser support to looked after

children aged 21-25. While the initial new burdens assessment estimated a cost of £7.8m per annum, local authorities will now receive £12.12m per annum on full implementation. However, we still consider this to be an underestimate of the true cost to local authorities and will continue to lobby for a review of this funding and further uplifts as necessary.

12. We commissioned new research into the causes of variation in council spend on children's services, in response to criticism that some councils appear to spend considerably more than others to achieve broadly similar outcomes. We held a well attended event in March 2018 to share early findings with councils from across the country, and have also arranged a number of bespoke briefings for the Children and Young People Board, Directors of Children's Services, Chief Executives, MHCLG and DfE. The final report is scheduled for launch in June 2018, and a workshop session will be held at LGA Conference in July.
13. The LGA and Barnardo's received an additional £1.7 million from the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme to continue the work of the National FGM Centre through to at least 2020. This funding will allow the Centre to expand its work into new local authorities, including high prevalence areas alongside its existing work in areas of relatively low prevalence, and broaden its support offer to cover breast ironing/flattening, child abuse linked to faith or belief and other harmful traditional practices
14. We have engaged closely with the Youth Justice Board over the past year, and lobbied strongly on the importance of maintaining funding for youth offending services after significant cuts to the government's YOT grant in recent years. We were pleased that, following pressure from the LGA, the grant was not cut for 2018/19 and plans to impose a central top slice have been shelved.

### **Bright Futures**

15. The CYP Board's children's social care task group launched their report *Bright Futures* at the National Children and Adults Services (NCAS) conference in October, setting out a seven point plan for the future of children's social care alongside a number of asks of government and offers from the LGA to the sector. This report has now been downloaded more than 1600 times. While continuing to take forward specific actions and recommendations from the report, we have used many of the headlines as the basis for our wider *Bright Futures* funding campaign, which highlights the urgent need for a sustainable funding settlement for children's services and emphasises the importance of renewed investment in early intervention services. We have also delivered a separate strand of the campaign with a specific focus on children and adolescent mental health services.
16. In February 2018 we launched the Bright Futures children and young people's mental health campaign alongside the Community Wellbeing Board. Highlighting members concerns about the slow pace of the reform and the lack of national accountability for the £1.4 billion funding. In the campaign we call for greater accountability, mandatory independent school based counselling in every secondary school, improved standards and sustainable funding. Our call for independent counselling has been supported by the

Association of Childrens Services, The Children's Society, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

17. We hosted a parliamentary exhibition on our Bright Futures campaign between 21 - 25 May 2018, promoting councils' outstanding work in children's services to MPs, Peers and external stakeholders. Our Chairman, Lord Porter, spoke at the launch alongside Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi, Liberal Democrat Local Government Spokesperson and sponsor of the exhibition Wera Hobhouse MP, and mental health campaigner Hope Virgo. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire MP, visited the exhibition later in the week as did a number of Shadow Ministers and members of key committees. Councils from Bedford, Ealing, Haringey, Hertfordshire, Portsmouth, Staffordshire, Sefton, Sutton and Lincolnshire provided case studies showcasing their work as part of the exhibition programme.
18. Further support from Parliamentarians has included Lord Watson speaking about the shortfall in funding for children's services in a debate on 'Children in Need' in the House of Lords, and Shadow Communities Secretary, Andrew Gwynne MP repeating our warning of a £2 billion gap in children's services funding by 2020 in a debate on education and local government. Our cross-party EDM on children's mental health and school counselling has so far been signed 36 times, while Lord Porter tabled written parliamentary questions on in-school counselling and the Government's assessment of *Bright Futures*. We have also sent summaries of the campaign to all MPs, provided briefings for key debates, and written to 150 parliamentarians to promote the key recommendations of the campaign.
19. The campaign webpages have been visited over 26,000 times in total and video content setting out our key asks, promoted on social media, has been viewed over **43,200** times. Since the 1 October 2017 to date we have published 188 tweets related to the campaign, reaching 608,483 people. Since the launch of the campaign, we have achieved significant positive media coverage including:
  - 19.1. 'Children's social care at 'breaking point' (9 and 11 August 2017) which achieved 12 episodes of national coverage, including BBC Breakfast, BBC News, Guardian and Cllr Watts on Channel 4 News.
  - 19.2. '90 children a day entering care - urgent cash injection needed for children's services' (12 October 2017), issued at the launch of the campaign, generating 10 episodes of national coverage including Cllr Watts on BBC Radio 5 Live, Good Morning Britain, BBC News, BBC Radio 5 Live news bulletins, BBC Online, ITV Online, Independent, I paper, Sun and Mirror.
  - 19.3. 'Child protection services launching more than 500 abuse investigations daily' (12 December 2017) which achieved 9 episodes of coverage, including the Sun, Mirror, Independent, Times, BBC Radio London, Talk Radio and LBC.
  - 19.4. 'A child is referred to children's services every 49 seconds, councils warn' (12 January 2018) which achieved 19 episodes of national coverage, including

Councillor Watts on BBC Radio 5 Live, Councillor Simmonds on Good Morning Britain, coverage reported on Sky News, Channel 4 News and the Times.

19.5. 'LGA calls for compulsory independent mental health counselling in secondary schools' (7 February 2018), covered by the BBC and i paper.

19.6. We also led on a joint letter to Government calling for action on the children's services funding gap, co-signed by Barnardo's, Action for Children, The Children's Society and the National Children's Bureau, which was featured in the Independent.

### **LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group**

20. The LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group, chaired by Cllr David Simmonds, reports to both the Children and Young People Board and the Community Wellbeing Board. Cllr Gillian Ford from the Board is also one of the cross-party LGA lead members for asylum and attends the Task Group meetings. The Task Group met with the Immigration Ministers in October and May, and both meetings included a discussion on councils' support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). The LGA contributed to the Home Office-led review of funding for UASC, and resources and information to support councils were provided on the LGA [website](#).

### **Financial Implications**

21. All work programmes are met from existing budgets and resources.