

## **Children and Young People– report from Cllr Anntoinette Bramble (Chair)**

### **Meeting with DfE Permanent Secretary**

1. At the LGA Annual Conference, I joined CYP Board Vice Chairman Cllr Roy Perry and Deputy Chair Cllr Gillian Ford to meet with Jonathan Slater, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education. We had a very productive meeting covering a range of topics across the DfE's remit, and I look forward to continuing this positive engagement with the Department.

### **Early Years**

2. I attended a roundtable organised by Foundation Years Information and Research on 10 June, looking at whole systems thinking in delivering early years services. I emphasised that councils are best placed to take a leading role in giving children the best start in life thanks to their role in influencing the wider determinants of health, and their proven ability to convene partners.

### **Children's services funding**

3. On 2 July I chaired a session on children's services funding at the LGA Annual Conference. I was pleased to see an excellent turn out, demonstrating how important this issue is to councils across the country. I was grateful to the Department of Education and colleagues from Hertfordshire and Rotherham councils for speaking on the panel, and to delegates for an extremely interesting discussion.

### **Childcare and early education**

4. I have spoken to the press in response to a range of reports this month on childcare and early education. I have emphasised the importance of good quality early years provision in helping children get the best start in life and improving social mobility, but highlighted that funding rates for the 30 hours offer are not high enough, risking both quality and quantity of provision. I also raised concerns about provision for disadvantaged children and those with SEND in particular.

### **Work with Parliament**

5. The Education Committee held an [accountability hearing](#) with the Education Secretary, Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP. James Frith MP highlighted the LGA's analysis of a £1.6 billion deficit in special educational needs and disabilities funding. A range of issues relating to councils were also discussed, including current early years provision and high needs funding.
6. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Childcare and Early Education has published a report on the sustainability of non-maintained private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings. Cllr Gillian Ford gave evidence to the APPG in February. The report states that since the introduction of the 30-hours policy, early years settings have

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struggled to remain financially sustainable and calls on the Government, local authorities, early education practitioners, setting owners, and others to invest the time, energy and funding required to deliver access to high quality early education for all in a fair and just way.

7. We briefed MPs for a debate on Education Funding. Our briefing highlighted the well documented pressures on school funding and the need for the Government to address this, in particular the pressures on SEND funding. Caroline Lucas MP, said that the funding crisis was affecting support for pupils with complex needs and highlighted the LGA's estimated £1.6 billion funding gap in special educational needs and disabilities.
  
8. We issued a briefing ahead of a debate on free schools. Our briefing highlighted councils' key roles in improving schools and our recent analysis that council-maintained schools receive better Ofsted ratings, and improve more quickly, than other types of schools. During the debate, Suella Braverman MP welcomed the contribution of free schools, saying they are driving up standards and asked the Government to open more. Shadow Schools Minister, Mike Kane MP highlighted a National Audit Office [report](#) which found that free schools were more expensive than those provided by councils. Responding, the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb MP, emphasised the Government's continued commitment to free schools.

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