

## **Children and Young People Board – report from Cllr David Simmonds (Chair)**

### **Schools**

1. We have called for councils to be given back more control over schools following the issues surrounding school accountability which have been raised in Birmingham. I was interviewed live on BBC Breakfast and BBC Radio 4's Today Programme to discuss the LGA's warning that powers to intervene in troubled schools should be returned to local authorities or public confidence in the education system may be at risk. "Councils are held to account by local people, and this would provide children and parents with a streamlined system that allows high education standards and improvement across the board."

### **Adoption Leadership Board**

2. I attended the June meeting of the Adoption Leadership Board, which presented a positive picture of council performance. 3,980 children were adopted during 2012-13, the highest number since the data collection began in 1992, and quarterly data suggests that we are on course to break that record in 2013/14.

### **Action for Children**

3. I spoke at an Action for Children breakfast briefing on child neglect, alongside Jacky Tiotto, Deputy Director for Social Care Policy and Frameworks at Ofsted, and Paul Kissack, Director of Children's Social Care at the Department for Education. We heard powerful testimony of the extent to which neglect continues to affect children and young people, and I stressed the importance of the whole community working together to identify and address neglect. It is clear that councils cannot do this alone.

### **SEND reforms**

4. I attended a Ministerial roundtable hosted by the Department for Education, which focused on recognising and celebrating the success of local authorities in preparing to implement the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms. The key challenges being faced by the sector, regarding implementation were also discussed, including the capacity needed to manage the transition from SEN statements and learning difficulty assessments to education health and care plans. The recent DfE council readiness survey shows that councils are confident that new entrants would be offered the new legal system from September but long-term resourcing remains an issue.

### **Cinderella Law**

5. On 4 June I responded to the creation of a new offence of causing psychological harm to children through parental neglect which was included in the Serious Crime Bill in the Queen's Speech. "Emotional abuse has been recognised as a significant child protection issue for a number of years, and it is right that criminal law is brought into line with the legislative framework that social workers already follow."

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