

Children and Young People– report from Cllr Judith Blake CBE (Chair)

Employment and Skills / Youth Participation

1. We continue to engage our member authorities to shape our views and policy around the COVID-19 crisis and what is needed for a jobs and skills recovery. Most recently, officers discussed recovery issues with the Combined Authority Employment and Skills Network (3 June), and organised a roundtable between local authorities from non-devolved areas with DfE, DWP and MHCLG officials (4 June). The Children and Young People (and City Regions and People and Places) Boards discussed a jobs and skills recovery paper at their June meetings. The latest LGA position can be viewed [here](#). To note, a DWP official presented the Government thoughts on employment support at the City Regions meeting.
2. We continue to focus on improving youth participation policy considering that young people's training and employment prospects are expected to be disproportionately affected by the economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis. Engagement with member authorities and stakeholders have continued to shape our views and emerging policy ahead of expected Government announcements on Opportunity Guarantee for young people. We have been working closely with the LGA Workforce team, as many of the measures around, for example, Apprenticeships, traineeships and T levels will involve the sector workforce.
3. The Children and Young People (and City Regions and People and Places) Board Lead Members discussed LGA representation on the Youth Employment Group, set up in response to COVID-19 crisis, that works with stakeholders to improve the offer for young people. The sector views for a local offer are continuing to be fed into the Group.
4. Improving youth participation report, culminating our engagement work with the sector and stakeholders, is being finalised. This will now be reviewed with the impact of Covid-19 crisis on young people. The report will set out our recommendations to Government on improving the education, training and employment offer for the next generation.

Mental Health

5. Lead members of the Children and Young People's Board held a joint meeting with lead members of the Community Wellbeing Board and members of the Children and young people's mental health steering group, to explore the key issues affecting our communities' mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19, and the priorities for the LGA in supporting councils.

Education Committee

14 May 2020

6. I provided evidence to the House of Commons Education Committee as part of its [inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services](#). The session focused mainly on school closures and it was a chance to once again highlight the role of councils in supporting vulnerable children and the children of key workers over the past few weeks, as well as ensuring more pupils have been able to safely return to school.
7. I also highlighted the implications for other services, including children's social care which has seen significant reductions in referrals but that councils were seeking to mitigate by working with partners to identify children at risk. I noted that the partial closure of schools meant that many children were experiencing 'hidden harms' and called for any catch-up programmes to consider the wellbeing of students, with an expanded welfare and mental health support in schools and the community.

Estimates Day debate

8. [We briefed MPs](#) ahead of an Estimates Day debate on Department for Education Spending and closing the disadvantage gap and support for left behind children. Our briefing highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and the additional vulnerabilities arising from the pandemic. We highlighted that local government is offering to build on the effective partnerships to support and protect children, young people and families. We are asking Government to invest in preventative universal and early help services to ensure that children, young people and families receive the practical, emotional, educational and mental health support they need, as soon as they need it.

Press Released and Publications

9. There have been a number of Press Released and Publications put out by the LGA Children and Young People team, you can view them [here](#).

Contact officer:	Ian Keating
Position:	Principal Policy Adviser
Phone number:	0207 664 3032
E-mail:	ian.keating@local.gov.uk