

Board Work Programme and Priorities Report for the 2020/21 meeting cycle

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This paper sets out proposals for the Children and Young People Board's (CYP) priorities and work programme for 2020/21. Subject to the Board's views, officers will develop a work programme to deliver these priorities.

Recommendation

Members are asked to discuss and agree the Board's priorities and work programme for 2020/21.

Action

Officers to take action as directed by members.

Contact officer: Ian Keating
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 0207 664 3032
Email: ian.keating@local.gov.uk

Board Work Programme and Priorities Report for the 2020/21 meeting cycle

Background

1. LGA Boards are asked to consider their priorities for the coming year at their first meeting of the new cycle. Set out below are a list of priorities for discussion, based on the priorities identified last year, and adapted to reflect work that has been completed, recent developments in Government policy and issues raised by member councils.

Children's social care

2. Continue to work with partners across the public and voluntary sector on the LGA's Bright Futures campaign, including sharing best practice, sector-led improvement and urging government to act quickly to close the significant children's services funding gap and ensure that councils can continue to provide essential services for vulnerable children and families.
3. Investigate issues around the children's social care placements market, including independent fostering agencies and residential children's homes, to identify areas for improvement in value for money, oversight and support for children.
4. Contribute to the Government's review of the children's care system.

Early Years

5. Develop an early years policy position paper summarising our policy key asks underpinned by a supporting evidence-base, including work around the best use of funding for disadvantaged children and those with SEND.
6. Continue to lobby for appropriate early years funding, including securing sustainability for Maintained Nursery Schools.

Children's services improvement

7. Work with the Department for Education, ADCS and Solace to develop a new, funded system of improvement support that will provide timely and effective support to councils before they are rated as *inadequate* by Ofsted.

The Council role in Education and School Improvement

8. Councils have been pivotal in leading local education systems during lockdown, the closure of schools to most pupils and in supporting schools to stay open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. DfE should continue to support councils and schools facing a very complex set of issues as schools reopen to more children and recognise the need for powers to open and close schools to be devolved to councils to deal with local flare-ups in infections; for timely access to testing, tracking and tracing data; for planning and funding to tackle the public transport challenges of increasing numbers of pupils returning to schools; and for appropriate resources for schools and councils to deal with the additional support that will be needed for children's emotional wellbeing and to help them catch up following an extended period out of school.

9. To continue to allow councils and partners flexibility to deliver support to children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans, while schools are not operating as normal and CCG resources are focussed on recovery.
10. A 'reset' in the relationship between schools and councils. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of councils working closely with all schools, including academies, as well as the vital partnership between children's services departments and local schools in keeping children safe. Councils should be given the powers and funding to ensure all schools work closely with education and children's services to ensure they are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.
11. We plan to commission research on the council role in managing the partial closure and reopening of schools and their priorities for the recovery in the medium and long term.

School funding

12. Lobby the Government to continue to allow a degree of local flexibility as part of the National Funding Formula for schools and also call for the creation of single, locally held schools capital funding pot to allow for available resources to be used as efficiently as possible.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

13. The Government's on-going review of the SEND system must ensure that councils have the powers and funding to act as local leaders of SEND systems, allowing them to hold partners to account for the support they provide to children and young people with SEND, as well as sufficient funding to meet the ever-increasing demand for support. This should include the opportunity to consider new ways of working that have been implemented as a result of the lockdown and that have benefited children and young people with SEND, as well as councils, schools and CCGs.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

14. LGA policy in this area is led by the LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group, made up of regional member and strategic migration partnership representation covering all of the English regions, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.
15. It will continue to raise issues around unaccompanied asylum seeking children and those leaving care, including full funding to support these children and young people. The Task Group will continue to push for clearer alignment between and sustainable funding for all the programmes that resettle asylum seekers and refugees to minimise the pressures on local authorities, local communities and vulnerable individuals. Information and updates are provided on the LGA [website](#), with regular updates to be provided to the Board.

Child Health

16. Work with the Government, NHS and partners to rebuild the Healthy Child Programme workforce to ensure children and families are supported, unmet need is identified and work begins to address the adverse impact COVID-19 is predicted to have had on children and health inequalities.

17. Work with Government and partners to ensure that future arrangements for the Health Improvement functions of Public Health England, work to support and enhance local systems.
18. Following the publication of the [PHE review of disparities and risks in outcomes](#), we will also be developing work to support local authorities to tackle the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups.
19. Make the case for reform and investment in the Healthy Child Programme to continue whilst the future of Public Health England and oversight for the programme is decided. This will include supporting councils to move towards an integrated 0-19/25 service, improving capability and skill-mix in delivery team and improving outcomes in the high impact areas i.e. breastfeeding and school readiness.
20. Support the delivery of statutory and comprehensive personal, social and health education programmes, comprising sex and relationship education, across all primary and secondary schools, including free schools and academies. This will include ensuring a full range of supportive local services are built into Health and Wellbeing Education.
21. Ensure learning is shared from the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme and continue to lobby for increased powers for local authorities to tackle junk-food advertising around schools and nurseries.
22. Work with PHE, NHS and the education system to continue to develop system wide responses to tackling and reducing childhood tooth decay.
23. Undertake media work to highlight the role of public health nurses during Covid-19, to ensure equal reward and investment in public health nurses working outside of the NHS.

Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing (activities sit across both this Board and the Community Wellbeing Board)

24. Undertake research and renew the LGA policy position and campaign lines for the LGA Bright Futures Campaign, including calling for a refocus of national policy and funding towards prevention, early intervention and general support for children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as for those with multiple and complex needs, articulating and championing the key role that councils play.
25. Provide particular focus on the role of health and wellbeing boards, improving the transition between children and adult services, the 16-25 cohort, the role of schools, the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan and the new schools-based NHS-led mental health units.

Youth Services

26. Work with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and other partners on reviewing the statutory guidance on youth service provision.

27. Work with partners to continue to raise the profile of youth work and lobby for adequate funding, including as part of the response to COVID-19 recovery and child criminal exploitation.

Youth Justice

28. Lobby for protection of the Youth Justice Grant
29. Consider issues around the age of criminal accountability and ongoing support for children and young people at risk of entering the youth justice system

Financial implications

30. The priorities will be delivered within existing resources.