

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

Children Services

1. On the 31st of July I wrote jointly with the Community Wellbeing Board to Andrea Leadsom MP, to set out our views in relation to her review of improving outcomes for disadvantaged 0 to 2-year olds. We emphasised our commitment to reducing inequalities, highlighted the need for a whole family and presented some of the positive work already underway to integrated early years services. We will submit further formal evidence to the review at the end of October.
2. On 21 August, Deputy Chair Councillor Lucy Nethsingha represented the LGA at a roundtable led by the Prisons Minister, Lucy Frazer QC MP to discuss accommodation and community provision for children and young people in the youth justice system. During the roundtable, Councillor Nethsingha emphasised the importance of local solutions and cross-departmental working, with local government seen as a key partner in release planning.
3. On 29 September, Vice-Chairman Councillor Teresa Heritage spoke at an Inside Government conference on the role of local authorities in ensuring effective care of looked after children and care leavers. In this presentation, Councillor Heritage emphasised the importance of the corporate parenting role and always asking “would this be good enough for my child?”. The importance of early help, transitions, and listening to the voices of children and young people were also considered.

Asylum & Immigration

4. On 22 September Cllr Nick Forbes, Chair, and Cllr Roger Gough, Vice-Chair, met with Chris Philp MP, minister with responsibility for immigration, with other LGA lead members and regional representatives on LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group to discuss joint work across local and central government on supporting adult and child asylum seekers

Education

5. On Monday 20 July, I attended a cross-departmental stakeholder discussion with Minister Nadine Dorries (DHSC) and Minister Vicky Ford (DfE) on the ‘return to education wellbeing’ fund. The funding was secured and the sector has received £80 million for in-school support for children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing for their return to school.
6. Officers have continued to engage with Department for Education officials on arrangements for the full opening of schools in September. This engagement has allowed us to feed in the concerns of councils, covering issues including the availability of testing kits, free school meals, increased costs for schools and home-to-school transport arrangements.

7. On 2 October I wrote to the Children and Families Minister, Vicky Ford MP, asking for a review of the data collections being requested by the Department for Education. We have received increasingly concerned feedback from councils about the burden these collections are placing on them, with little clarity about the value of the collections to councils, the Department or children and families themselves. I asked for the Minister to ensure that data collections were proportionate, and that any data collected was shared with councils in a timely way to make sure it could be used to improve services for children and families.

Press Releases & Publications

8. The Children and Young People Board has now published its latest policy paper, "A Child Centred Recovery". This three part paper considers the immediate challenges facing children and young people as we move through the COVID-19 pandemic; identifies ways in which councils and the Government can adopt more child-centred approaches to policy and decision-making; and considers the longer-term challenges to ensuring children are at the heart of recovery and place planning. This document will guide the work of the CYP Board for the coming year.
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](#).

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