

## **Children & Young People Board – Report from Cllr Antoinette Bramble (Chair)**

### **New reports**

1. We have published the following reports since the last meeting:
  - 1.1 We have published [research looking at the response of local education and children's services departments to the Covid-19 pandemic](#). The research looked at council's initial response to the lockdown, adapting to the lockdown, the 'new normal' and; the return to lockdown, before identifying a number opportunities that have arisen from the pandemic period.

### **Children's Improvement Board**

2. Baroness Blake chaired the meeting of the LGA/ADCS/Solace/DfE/Ofsted Children's Improvement Board that took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Discussions focussed on effective local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and the interaction with Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances, the Government's ongoing SEND review, the future of SEND area inspections and; the work of the East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation alliance.

### **Children's social care**

3. On 28 April Baroness Blake attended the first meeting of the Design Group of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The Group is providing support and challenge to the review team, and at this meeting considered the evidence gathered to date and next steps in the review process. We continue to emphasise the importance of considering support to children and families in a holistic way, and the need for sufficient funding for all elements of children's services.
4. Councillor Susie Charles attended the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board on 6 May to discuss a range of issues, including adoption delays, challenges faced by special guardians and racial disparity in adoption.
5. We have submitted evidence to the Competition and Markets Authority "market study" of children's social care placements. In particular, we raised concerns around a lack of placements for children with complex or challenging needs, the impact and lack of oversight of private equity involvement in the children's social care "market", and the challenges in developing new provision.
6. Our evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee inquiry into child poverty emphasised the need for a cross-Government approach, and highlighted our Work Local, Reshaping Financial Support and Child Centred Recovery initiatives as key opportunities to tackle child poverty.
7. We have also submitted evidence to the Public Services Committee on the role of public services in addressing child vulnerability .This wide-ranging submission incorporated a range

of issues, including the shift in funding from preventative to acute services, challenges caused by limited join-up across government departments, the role of the voluntary and community sector and statutory partners working with councils, and the need to understand and tackle differing levels of poverty and economic disadvantage around the country. Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Deputy Chair, gave verbal evidence to the Committee, alongside Jenny Coles, former President of ADCS.

8. Baroness Blake also gave evidence at the House of Lords Select Committee on Covid-19 and the long-term impact of the pandemic on parents and families. The LGA raised the impact of historic underfunding of the system, the importance of early intervention and the impact that Covid-19 has had on services and what we anticipate the impact might be as we start to return to normality.

## **Youth Justice**

9. On 22 March Baroness Blake wrote to the new Minister for Youth Justice, Alex Chalk MP to call attention to the excellent work done by youth offending teams (YOTs) and to ensure they continue to have the resources required. She also called for a review into an increase in the minimum age of criminal responsibility, highlighting the children and young people board's position that it should be increased to 14.

## **Children's mental health**

10. Baroness Blake chaired a webinar on whole household approaches to mental health, this was to showcase good practice that has been pulled together by the Centre for Mental Health, commissioned by the children and young people board and the community wellbeing board. The webinar was joined by the Centre for Mental Health, a range of local authorities, representatives from Leaders Unlocked and Cllr. Ian Hudspeth. The webinar received good feedback and a report will shortly be produced collating all the council good practice.

## **Youth employment and skills**

11. We launched our [Education to Employment: supporting youth participation](#) report at [The role of local government in supporting a jobs and skills recovery](#) webinar in May. It captures what works in overcoming barriers to youth participation and showcase the innovative approaches by the areas involved. Further policy work is planned based on its findings and recommendations.
12. The [House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee](#) launched a new inquiry in late March to consider what measures should be taken to protect and create jobs for young people and the LGA has made a submission. It will focus on how the labour market may change due to current events such as COVID-19, Brexit, and technological developments in the years ahead. We have used this as an opportunity to reiterate our recovery asks for young people.

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