

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

Children and Young People Board

1. On 8 June I chaired the Children and Young People Board. The Board heard from officers from Hackney Borough Council on their initiatives to introduce greater diversity into lessons in schools and ensure that black and ethnic minority voices and perspectives are heard.
2. I was pleased to welcome Dame Rachel de Souza, the new Children's Commissioner for England, to the meeting. Members took the opportunity to discuss a range of issues with Dame Rachel, including the importance of building back better for children post-Covid and the value of ensuring children and young people's voices are heard in policy making.

LGA Annual Conference

3. Cllr Sara Rowbotham chaired a session at the LGA Annual Conference, focussed on the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people. "A child-centred recovery: supporting children and young people to recover from the impact of COVID-19" allowed delegates to hear from and discuss the shape of recovery for children and young people with the Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, and Tia Carmichael, Member of the Youth Parliament for Plymouth.
4. Cllr Lucy Nethsingha chaired a session at the LGA Annual Conference on emotional wellbeing and mental health. "*Are you listening? The importance of mental health and wellbeing in a post-Covid world*" had speakers from Leaders Unlocked, a representative group of young people, Cllr Ed Davie who shared his experience with his own mental health challenges as a councillor, and Roman Kemp who spoke about his experience of depression and the loss of a close friend to suicide.

Children's Improvement Board

5. Cllr Teresa Heritage chaired the meeting of the LGA/ADCS/Solace/DfE/Ofsted Children's Improvement Board that took place on the 29th June. Discussions focussed on the LGA's Department for Education-funded children's improvement support programme and the work of the North West Regional Improvement and Innovation alliance.

Children's services

6. On 23 June, Cllr Teresa Heritage chaired an LGA webinar for corporate parents focussing on support for care leavers. The webinar included contributions from a care-experienced young person, the Department for Education, the Care Leaver Covenant and Become, the charity for children in care and care leavers. Over 200 delegates joined the webinar, with a lively question and answer session focussing on the ways in which corporate parents can ensure care leavers get the support they deserve.

7. Baroness Blake of Leeds, the LGA's representative for the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, attended the second meeting of the Review's Design Group on 1 July. The Group discussed the [Case for Change](#), with Baroness Blake emphasising the importance of ensuring the voices, wishes and experiences of children are consistently central to the review. The group also discussed the next steps for the review, starting with a consultation on the case for change which the LGA will be responding to.
8. The LGA has submitted a joint response to the DfE's [consultation on national standards](#) for unregulated accommodation for children in care and care leavers aged 16 and 17. In the submission, we emphasise the importance of good quality provision for these young people while noting ongoing challenges around placement sufficiency. We also call for more flexibility in the regulatory system to ensure that young people receive the care and support they need, when they need it.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

9. We launched a must know guide for councillors on [whole household approaches to mental health](#). This draws together key recommendations from a [series of case studies](#) and discussions with children and young people. The report highlights the need for partnership working, bringing together preventative services and engaging families and young people in the re-design of services.

Early Years

10. I and the vice-chairs of the children's board, alongside the chair and vice chairs of the community wellbeing board, met with Andrea Leadsom MP to discuss the [the Best Start for Life review](#). We welcomed the proposals, and continuing engagement with the early years sector, and also raised the challenges local authorities would experience due to the reductions in the public health grant.

Youth Services

11. On 16 June, I gave evidence at the Youth Services APPG. I raised the challenges for councils to deliver youth services whilst they have had to challenge the rising demand in children's social care. I also called for the release of the youth investment fund to provide some much needed support to the youth sector.

Youth employment and skills

12. I am pleased we have continued to maintain a focus on improving youth participation. Last Autumn, following some engagement activities and discussions with the sector and stakeholders, we published our report on [Re-thinking youth participation for the present and next generation](#). The report provides clear evidence, featuring case studies from different areas, and recommendations to the Government for improving youth participation.
13. To build on this work and support the sector, we published [Education to Employment - Supporting Youth Participation](#). It captures what works in overcoming barriers to youth participation and showcase the innovative approaches by the areas involved in the project.
14. During the year we have published a series of First articles, including, a [case study feature](#) and why it is important that [no young person should be left behind when it comes to training and jobs](#).

15. The LGA has submitted a response to a number of House of Lords inquiries to highlight the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people and their skills and employment prospects. These include the [Employment and Covid-19 Inquiry](#) and [Youth Unemployment Inquiry](#).

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

16. Members of the Board attended or informed a meeting of the member led [LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group](#) with Home Office and DfE Ministers, Chris Philp MP and Vicky Ford MP. The Task Group discussed a range of improvements to the revised [rota system](#) for the transfer of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), including increased funding for UASC and care leavers. The LGA is encouraging councils to both consider participation and to help find placements for recent arrivals in Kent while these regionally led arrangements are put in place.

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