

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

Children's Leadership Essentials

1. I led two Children's Leadership Essentials courses that took place on the 21st and 22nd October and 20th and 21st November. Lead Members for Children's Services and Children's Scrutiny leads had the opportunity to discuss topics including the shape of an effective Lead Member/Director of Children's Services relationship, the evolving council role in education, effective use of data, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and the SEND review

NCASC 2021

2. The National Children's and Adult Services conference took place online from the 24th – 26th November. I chaired a session with Will Quince MP, the new Children's Minister and Charlotte Ramsden ADCS President. Other children's topics covered included early years, education, mental health, inspection and child and family poverty.

Youth services

3. In December, I attended a roundtable focused on youth services chaired by Nigel Huddleston MP, who was appointed in the October Cabinet reshuffle as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society) which also covers youth. I raised the key role that councils have in delivering and facilitating youth services but due to funding reductions and increased need for urgent child protection work, council spending on youth services has had to be cut by 69 per cent since 2010/11, from £1.4 billion to £429 million in 2018/19 and more than 4,500 youth work jobs have been cut and 750 youth centres closed.

Spending Review

4. On 27 October, I met with Will Quince MP, Minister for Children and Families, to discuss the Spending Review announced that day. I welcomed additional funding provided through the Spending Review, including for family support, early years provision and children's residential care. I also expressed my concern around the ongoing delays to the SEND review and called on the Government to write off high needs block deficits. I also noted that challenges for children's social care funding remained, and emphasised the need for further mental health support for children and young people.

Independent Review of Children's Social Care

5. The Design Group for the Independent Review of Children's Social Care met on 27 October. Our representative on the group, Baroness Blake of Leeds, attended this meeting where a range of ideas for possible improvements to the children's social care system were

discussed. Baroness Blake spoke in particular on the ways in which kinship carers can best be supported and the importance of listening to children themselves.

Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB)

6. The Children and Young People Board representative on the ASGLB, Councillor Mark Sutton, attended the ASGLB meeting on 4 November. At this meeting a wide range of issues were discussed including the national adoption strategy, data on adoption and special guardianship and issues of racial disparity.
7. Councillor Sutton met the Chair of the ASGLB, Dr Krish Kandiah, on 20 December to discuss kinship care and how to share best practice with councils to support them in developing their offers to kinship carers.

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