



## Children and Young People Board – Report from Cllr Louise Gittins (Chair)

### Children's social care

1. In July we published a report looking at [structural change in children's services](#). This research looks at lessons learnt by councils that have undertaken large-scale structural change in children's services, including alternative delivery models, shared services and local government reorganisation. The report identifies the key building blocks to ensure high quality services for children, young people and families as services go through these reorganisations.
2. On 22 July 2022 we issued a [press release](#) highlighting new government statistics which show the number of children in England waiting for a place in a secure children's home (SCH) has doubled in a year. We emphasised that this illustrates the urgent need for more provision to support some of our most vulnerable young people and called for the introduction of national commissioning for these placements.
3. We have submitted a response to Ofsted's [consultation on proposals for a new judgement](#) on the experiences and progress of care leavers within the ILACS (inspection of local authority children's services) framework. We strongly supported these proposals, recognising that they will help to bring more focus to work to support care leavers across councils and partners, ultimately improving outcomes for young people. We encouraged Ofsted to engage with care experienced people to consider what "good" looks like for care leavers, to inform the criteria for this judgement.
4. We have [written to the Public Accounts Committee](#) with regard to its inquiry into evaluating innovation projects in children's social care. We recognised that the Department for Education's innovation fund had many positive impacts, including offering opportunities for the robust evaluation of new approaches which have seen positive impacts for children and families. However we also emphasised that additional funding should not come at the expense of funding core services for all councils, and encouraged the DfE to share the learning from the programme and use this to evidence the value of long-term investment in children's services.

### *Independent inquiry into child sexual abuse (IICSA)*



5. On 6 July 2022 we published a [code of practice](#) to support councils responding to civil claims of non-recent child sexual abuse. This code draws on the findings of the IICSA as well as the experiences of councils to ensure that councils can respond appropriately and effectively to victims and survivors.

#### *Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children*

6. On 23 August I met with the then-Immigration Minister Kevin Foster alongside LGA Chairman Councillor Jamieson and CYP Board deputy chair Councillor Fallon to discuss changes to the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. We made it clear to the Minister that while we recognised the importance of ensuring children have appropriate placements as quickly as possible, the proposed changes to the scheme would not tackle the challenges within the NTS including a shortage of placements, underfunding of the scheme and workforce pressures. We also emphasised the importance of considering children's best interests in any placement.
7. At our Board meeting on 29 September, members discussed support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Members agreed to keep lobbying on the existing challenges within the NTS, and suggested it would be helpful to seek good practice examples to share across the country. Members also agreed that child-centred reception services were preferable to using hotels where placements could not immediately be found for children, though were clear that these should be a last resort, with a clear plan needed to end the use of both reception services and hotels.

#### **Early years**

8. In September we responded to two consultations on early years; one on the regulatory arrangements for the ratio of children that can be cared for by an adult and the other on the funding formulae. We emphasised the need for a strategic review of early years funding, noting that making small changes to the regulations will not make the changes we need to improve outcomes for children.

#### **Children's health**

9. On 12 October 2022, I chaired an LGA webinar on how councils are addressing rising levels of food insecurity impacting children and young people. Councils and local partners have demonstrated their ability to deliver remarkable services and support to try to ensure children and families do not go hungry. During the webinar, we heard how councils and their partners are working together to stamp out food insecurity in their local areas and how they plan to address hunger as essential costs rise rapidly in the coming months.



10. We submitted responses to the [Ofsted/CQC consultation on a new approach to SEND area inspections](#) and to the [Department for Education's consultation on implementing the direct National Funding Formula \(NFF\) for schools](#).

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**Meeting:** Councillors' Forum

**Date:** 20 October 2022



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