

Work of the LGA's Children and Young People's Board

Purpose

For information and discussion.

Summary

This report details the work priorities of the Children and Young People Board for 2014-15.

Recommendation/s

Members are asked to discuss the priorities raised in the report.

Action/s

Members are asked to note the report.

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Education

1. The LGA has supported a strong, continuing role for councils in education as champions of local children and young people and their families.
2. Recent events in Birmingham have highlighted the confusing and overlapping system of accountability for local schools. The LGA will this year lead a campaign to reform accountability in the schools system to make sure that parents know that schools are being held strongly to account by councils who know local schools and understand the communities they serve.

Post 16 participation

3. Councils have statutory duties to ensure all young people up to 19, and up to 25 for those with learning difficulties, are engaged in high quality education and training. But councils have very few formal levers over provision to meet these duties, which has become increasingly centralised and fragmented.
4. The LGA's *Hidden Talents* programme has made the case for simplifying, joining up and devolving support for young people to ensure that it is locally coherent and meeting the needs of individuals and employers.
5. This year we are looking at youth skills and the council role in apprenticeships, commissioning independent research into the performance of the apprenticeship system, and leading debate on youth engagement and careers advice.

Children's social care

6. Keeping children safe is one of the most important jobs that councils do. The LGA will continue to support local work to ensure that help and support is available for children and families when they need it, and to improve the experience and life chances of children in local authority care.
7. The Children and Young People Board will co-ordinate cross-LGA policy, lobbying and improvement activity to ensure councils are seen as effectively tackling child sexual exploitation. This will include a full update of the current range of LGA training, resources and good practice guidance on CSE, corporate parenting, taxi licensing, regulation, whistle blowing and community cohesion.
8. We are supporting councils to drive further improvement to local adoption services, influencing the ongoing reform programme led through the national Adoption Leadership Board.

9. We will influence government proposals to implement more flexible models of children's social care delivery, including the Le Grand review of children's social care improvement capacity.
10. The Board will work to assess the effectiveness of current arrangements for the operation of local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs).
11. The LGA will be assessing the range of council responses to cases of suspected Female Genital Mutilation, and developing and piloting new models of service delivery to tackle this particularly complex form of child abuse.

Early years

12. Councils have a strong commitment to giving every child the best start in life and have a wide range of duties including securing free early education for all three and four year olds and disadvantaged two year olds. Councils also have a duty to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is practicable, for working parents and to ensure sufficient children's centres to meet local demand.
13. We want to see the funding system for early childhood services reformed and simplified for the benefit of councils and parents. As early years education is becoming more school-led we also want to ensure that councils continue to play a key role so that early years provision is an integral part of local education and school place planning and local accountability.

Improvement

14. The LGA is committed to using sector-led improvement to support councils in addressing the challenges that they face, including in delivering children's services; and research has shown that this approach works and is a success for the sector.
15. As part of this we are working with councils who have gone through the new Ofsted single inspection framework to gather intelligence and learning on their experiences.
16. Following the success of the LGA *Leadership Academies* during 2013/14, we have developed three *Leadership Essentials* residential courses for CYP lead members to take place in 2014/15.
17. We are on a campaign to improve levels of social worker recruitment and, more importantly, retention.

Children's health

18. The LGA is supporting local authorities to fulfil their new public health responsibilities for children and young people aged 5-19.

31 October 2014

19. Work is underway to manage a smooth transition for the transfer of responsibility for commissioning 0-5 public health from 2015. To support this we are holding a series of regional events with Public Health England and NHS England to support joint working at the local level.
20. We are working with partners to deliver a range of support tools for local authorities, to help them deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people.