

Minutes of last Children & Young People Board meeting

Children & Young People Board

Thursday, 5 October 2023

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest
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The Chair welcomed members of the Children and Young People Board to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Cllr Phillippa Williamson, and Cllr Fiona Venner substituted by Cllr Cordelia Law, Cllr Mark Sutton and Cllr Rachel Massey respectively.

There were no declarations of Interest.

2	Note of the Previous Meeting
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Members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 June.

3	Terms of Reference, Appointments to Outside Organisations & Membership
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This report outlines the terms of reference and membership for the LGA's Children and Young People Board for the 2023/24 meeting cycle. The report also identifies outside bodies to which the Board is asked to appoint for the 2023/24 meeting cycle.

Decision

The Board:

- i. agreed its Terms of Reference (Appendix A);
- ii. formally noted the membership for 2023/24 (Appendix B);
- iii. noted the dates of the future meetings (Appendix C);
- v. noted the Outside Bodies for 2023/24 and register interest with their Lead Member

Actions

- Officers to follow up with Lead Members regarding Outside Bodies nominations.
- Officers to amend Terms of reference following Member's

comments.

4 Work programme 2023/24

The Chair introduced the report and clarified that all comments made in the induction will be noted and considered by officers when amending the Work Programme. The paper set out proposals for the Children and Young People Board's (CYP) priorities and work programme for 2023/24.

Members comments:

- There was consensus that the work programme should be focused on fewer priorities, to be able to achieve substantial outcomes to greater influence Government policy.
- A member highlighted the need to clarify school accountabilities now the Schools Bill is not being pursued.
- It was raised that there is a need for further discussion and consideration of the Government's flagship Youth Investment Fund, to better understand youth services and receive updates on progress.
- There was a need to emphasise to Government the overspending on Dedicated School Grants (DSGs), paired with the cost of SEND provision and EHCPs.
- The Chair suggested ordering the priorities in the work programmes by time sensitivity.
- A member commented on the loss of youth work outside of schools and councils.
- It was raised that there is an increasing prevalence of eco-anxiety, and climate migration specifically, which may lead to increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).
- It was highlighted that increasingly schools are being used to communicate with young people due to the loss of youth services, however, this does not always reach the young people in need.
- It was raised that young people's mental health needs to be a priority with a focus on prevention and early help. Further research was needed to understand the causation (including the role of trauma), to understand what communities can do to help. The Chair suggested a task and finish group for mental health.
- There was a suggestion for a joint piece of work with the Community Wellbeing Board on mental health which includes 18–24-year-olds.
- The need for preventative services and early help to be a focus across all work programme priorities.
- A member suggested that there should be more information for councils on commissioning the third sector to support the delivery of priorities.

Decision

The Board agreed the priorities and work programme for 2023/24 subject to members suggestions.

Action

- Officers to implement Members' comments into the work programme.

5 Youth Endowment Fund - Jon Yates, Executive Director

The Chair invited John Yates, Executive Director and Gail Gibbons, Head of Change at the [Youth Endowment Fund \(YEF\)](#) to discuss the work of the Fund and to share how councils can make use of their research. Jon Yates explained that the YEF is a charity, independent of Government but established with a £200 million endowment from the Home Office to discover what works to reduce violence and then put this into practice, which is also known as a 'What Works Centre.'

Members comments:

- A member highlighted that in their area, children were sent to diversionary panels rather than court to avoid young people getting a criminal record.
- It was highlighted that schools have the knowledge to identify vulnerable students, and there needs to be a method to easily refer these students to receive preventative support.
- A member requested clarity on the data, for instance, how many therapy sessions had a positive effect on a young person's behaviour.
- It was raised that a collective approach is needed to communicate this data, such as work with the County Council Network (CCN) and the District Council Network (DCN) to ensure this evidence focused approach is taken.
- A member described a scheme they had been running with the police which involved football, food, and discussions with police officers for young people involved in low level crimes, which has seen a positive impact on reducing their involvement in crime thus far.
- There was a request for any data that evidenced the effectiveness of early help/ prevention.
- A member commented that the data presented is a useful corrective for biases that had developed which create misconceptions about which factors help to reduce youth violence, for instance, there is no evidence that police in schools has an effect on reducing youth violence.
- A concern was raised regarding whether the effect of contextual factors that cannot be controlled across different case studies had been considered, for instance, the strength of services around young people.
- It was raised if there is scope to work with the Safer and Stronger Communities Board on some of this work.
- A member requested thoughts on how to make young people feel safe enough to share information on offenders and what is going on in their communities.
- It was raised whether the effect of speech and language difficulties has been considered.

Jon Yates responded to comments:

- The YEF has begun a stream of work on education, to understand what are the small changes in schools which could make a difference.
- There is a need for greater clarity on who should be responsible for vulnerable children, as often vulnerable children are identified, but no one is accountable to make sure they are 'looked after.'
- The positive evaluations of the effectiveness of therapy tends to be six meetings plus, generally of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Access to therapy is a problem.
- The data shows only high-quality trials, where there is a control group.
- Jon Yates raised the importance of strengthening families and provision of loving supporting environments is essential, as there is a positive correlation between children being neglected/mistreated in their early years and involvement in violence later.
- Data shows that early intervention should not be the only focus as many young people grow out of being violent.
- Gail Gibbons added that the YEF fund projects focused on children at risk of involvement in violence through family work, parenting intervention and family focused therapy to address family support and early childhood trauma. There are also resources available on the [toolkit](#).
- Jon clarified that context matters and every summary on the toolkit describes what is needed for good implementation, more work on this is being done.
- Mentoring has been found to be successful in allowing young people to feel safe enough to share information, particularly if the mentor is of a similar background to the young person.
- Speech and language has been found to have correlations with involvement in violence, however there had not been a high quality review of the evidence of speech and language interventions, therefore YEF is hesitant to comment until the data demonstrates this.

Decision

The Board considered the presentation by the Youth Endowment Fund and offered perspectives from their own authorities on the Fund's current and future work.

Actions

- Share slides.
- Members to contact the YEF for any more information or speaking requests. hello@youthendowmentfund.org.uk.
- Officers to share the evidence presented around sports programmes with the LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board.
- Officers to connect the YEF with the DCN and CCN.

6 Children and Young People's Mental Health - review of think pieces and plan on Board focus

The Chair invited Flora Wilkie, Adviser, to introduce the report which outlined that the LGA is considering its existing lines regarding children and young people's mental health and how to continue to effectively influence in this area following the 10-year mental health plan was replaced by the Major Condition Strategy. As part of this, the LGA has developed a series of [think pieces](#) to bring different voices into this field and to consider how to tackle the rising demand in children's mental health that councils and partners are seeing.

Members comments:

- A focus on early help and prevention is needed, with focus on mental wellbeing initially not just mental health.
- A member described the complex landscape of third sector work in mental health and encouraged mental health support to be accessible to all children and young people which means going further than the work being done in partnership with schools.
- It was highlighted that a holistic approach from Government is needed, with consideration of the data (with reference to YEF), and of wider issues, such as poverty.
- A member commented on the importance of the work with schools, particularly the evaluation of pre and post pandemic provision in schools. Encouragement to review the positive learnings from the [HeadStart programme](#) funded by the National Lottery – with note that this was pre-pandemic.
- It was raised that initiatives that are being rolled out need to be emphasising the importance of mental health, namely, family hubs and development of integrated care strategies.
- A concern was raised regarding the emphasis being on the responsibility of schools, and that teachers and educators are severely fatigued.
- The importance of partners in health and education to delivering provision was emphasised.
- It was mentioned that identity issues and social media are factors contributing to poor mental health.
- Young people that were teenagers during the pandemic have suffered disproportionality than others, particularly the lost work experience opportunities.

Decision

The Board considered existing activity to date on children and young people's mental health and how it would like to refine and prioritise the policy approach on children's mental health going forward.

Actions

- Officers to review if a Children's Mental Health task group can be established and work with Lead Members on next steps.
- Officers to consider Member comments in policy position and work going forward.

7 The LGA and Corporate Parenting

The Chair invited Louise Smith, Senior Adviser, to introduce the paper which highlighted that the Chair of the Local Government Association (LGA), Councillor Shaun Davies, had announced that one of his priorities for 2023-24 is corporate parenting, in particular support for care leavers. The Children and Young People will oversee work on this priority, as the responsible board for this policy area.

Members comments:

- There was discussion around recognising care experience as a protected characteristic, including the ways in which this could support further work and what councils could do already, for example considering care leavers in equality impact assessments.
- It was requested that work should be explored with the District Councils Network (DCN) to understand what councils can do to help care leavers, such as in housing and leisure, and exploring the potential to waive council tax.
- It was highlighted that best practice should be shared across the country with a recommended set of minimum standards to support a coordinated approach to providing care leavers with help.
- It was raised that corporate parenting is everyone's responsibility and encouragement is needed for the broader public sector to partake.
- A member highlighted that the LGA provides a package around corporate parenting peer reviews, with a diagnostic tool, a review and return visit after 6 months.

Decision

The Board commented on the current plans for this programme of work and suggest any additional ideas, including those based on their own councils' work.

Actions

- Officers to continue discussions with relevant contacts in regards to providing guidance to councils who have declared care experience as a protected characteristic.
- Officers to use evidence from Children's Commissioner survey on care experience as a protected characteristic to inform policy.
- Officers to provide updates to each Board.

8 RAAC Update

The Chair invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the paper on RAAC. The identification, remediation, and management of RAAC has been subject to substantial public and media concern in recent weeks, following the Department for Education's change in approach to managing the risks associated with RAAC. The paper set out a brief background to the LGA's work on RAAC, recent developments, and the

current key areas of interest to the Children and Young People Board.

Members comments:

- A concern was raised regarding all funding going to remediation of RAAC, and the worry that other repairs needed on schools were being overlooked or slowed down as a result. Emphasis needed on supporting all repairs needed on the school estate.
- A member discussed their experience of RAAC in an area which is highly effected, including school closures, transport issues, hiring of other venues and providing blended learning.
- It was highlighted that a risk-based survey system should be used to prioritise certain buildings.
- A member discussed their lived experience of successful local partnerships in helping tackle RAAC.

Decision

The Board:

- Noted recent developments relating to the identification, remediation, and management of RAAC.
- Provided views on the LGA's next steps in its work related to RAAC.

9 Local Government White Paper

The Chair invited Clive Harris, Senior Adviser, to introduce the paper which outlined the work within the LGA to develop a Local Government White Paper that was announced as an LGA priority at its annual conference, and a process for providing the Board's input to it.

Decision

The Board:

- Noted the work in the LGA for developing a Local Government White Paper; and
- Agreed the process outlined in paragraph 13 for developing the Board's contribution to the White Paper.

Action

- Officers to coordinate a Local Government White Paper Workshop.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Jon Hubbard	Wiltshire Council
Members	Cllr Victoria Cusworth Cllr Adam Ellison	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council South Tyneside Council

Cllr Imran Khan	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Garry Bridges	Manchester City Council
Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
Cllr Tony Ball	Essex County Council
Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
Cllr Laura Mayes	Wiltshire Council
Cllr Annabel Wilkinson	North Yorkshire Council
Cllr Cordelia Law	Torbay Council
Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Anne Dorrian	Boston Borough Council

Apologies

Cllr Fiona Venner	Leeds City Council
Cllr Phillippa Williamson	Lancashire County Council
Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City Council

In Attendance

Jon Yates	Youth Endowment Fund
Gail Gibbons	Youth Endowment Fund
Cllr Mark Sutton	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Rachel Massey	Rochdale Borough Council