

Children and Young People Board: Review of the Year

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report sets out the Annual Review of activities of the Children and Young People Board for 2014-15.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the Review of the Year

Action

Officers to take forward as directed by members

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Media

1. Between May 2014 and May 2015, the Children and Young People accounted for almost a quarter (23 per cent) of all LGA media coverage with 340 pieces of coverage.

Education

2. Our campaign for adequate powers and funding to support councils in their education and school place planning role has continued to attract a high profile in the media and in Parliament. Shortly before the Election, we launched a policy and case study report: [*Making sure every child has a place at a good local school*](#) which called for an end to two-tier school accountability.
3. Our annual analysis of the looming shortfall in school places as a result of sharply increasing demand in many areas continued to receive widespread press coverage and highlighted the pressure that councils continue to face in meeting sharply rising demand for school places. A further year's allocation of £1.2 bn schools capital for new places for 2017/18 was announced to allow councils to plan ahead with 3-year budgets. This followed an LGA campaign for three-year allocations to councils.

Post 16 participation

4. Our Hidden Talents campaign has continued to put councils at the centre of debate for boosting youth engagement in work and learning, regularly gaining high profile coverage in the media, in parliament and among the sector. Activity has included a range of research, analysis and reports available at www.local.gov.uk/post-16.
5. The activity has helped create conditions for the devolution of youth skills and employment funding and powers through a number of city and devolution deals. However it has not yet led to a significant change in the overall direction of government policy, as discussed in more detail in the report on youth unemployment, education and training elsewhere on the agenda.

Children's social care

6. We published new resources to help councils tackle child sexual exploitation, including key lines of enquiry for councillors to pursue and case study examples from around the country. These resources were launched at a high level CSE seminar in January 2015, which brought together over 100 council leaders, chief executives, lead members and directors of children's services and representatives from central government, health, police and the third sector.
7. We secured a £2m grant from the DfE Social Care Innovation Programme to establish a National FGM Centre, working in partnership with Barnardo's. The

National Centre will provide a knowledge hub and practice advice and support to councils and partner agencies across the country. A small number of pilot authorities will also have the option to delegate full social work responsibility for FGM cases to the Centre, under a sliding scale of support that will provide pilot councils with access to specialist social workers following an FGM referral.

8. We published comprehensive research into the role of local safeguarding children boards, finding that the work of boards is at risk from inequitable funding arrangements and the confused expectations of Ofsted and others. We have secured the support of ADCS, Solace and the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs in our call for government to urgently clarify the role that LSCBs are expected to play and the way they are funded.
9. We have successfully lobbied against regulations which would allow private companies to run children's social care services at a profit, ensuring that only non-profit making enterprises are eligible to receive full delegated authority from councils, and are continuing to work closely with government on reforms to key services such as secure children's homes, residential care and adoption.

Improvement

10. For 2014/15, we have held one new lead member induction and 3 political leadership essentials course (formerly leadership academies) for lead Members for children's services.
11. Working directly with councils, we have delivered 7 children's services peer reviews, 5 safeguarding practice diagnostics, 3 care practice diagnostics and 8 Local Safeguarding Children Board diagnostics. We have delivered 4 nationally accredited and quality assured courses for practitioners and associates engaging in peer review, challenge or diagnostic activity providing 65 new peers recruited for the delivery programme.
12. Following continued lobbying from the LGA and partners, Ofsted has announced that it will replace the onerous and resource intensive Single Inspection Framework with 'short, sharp targeted multi-agency inspections' which will be piloted before the end of 2015.

Funding and implementation of 0-5 public health responsibilities

13. The LGA worked with the Department of Health (DH) and NHS England to establish the expenditure baseline for commissioning services for 0-5 year olds in 2014/15 in advance of the transfer of commissioning responsibilities in October 2015. We were successful in securing an additional £2 million to address the identified funding gap. We also secured a commitment that every local authority will receive at least £160 per head (0-5). The additional spend for 2015/16 is likely to be £36m higher than 2014/15 in order to pay for the costs of the government commitment to increase the numbers of Health Visitors and Family Nurse Partnerships.
14. The LGA led a light touch self-assessment process for the transfer, supported by nine local government-led regional oversight groups. The 100 per cent response

showed high levels of confidence from councils about the transfer and strong joint working with NHS local teams and providers. The LGA has delivered nine regional events to support councils and is also developing briefings for members and officers to update them on the transfer and the opportunities to join up and transform services, in addition to delivering further events to support councils.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS)

15. The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce was established in September 2014 to propose ways to make it easier for children, young people, parents and carers to access help and support and to improve how children and young people's mental health services are organised, commissioned and provided. In March, the DH and NHS England published the report of the Taskforce, which sets out the changes needed at both local and national levels to improve the system. CYP lead members made an important contribution to this work.
16. The LGA is keen to work with DH and NHS England to take forward work on CAMHS and are having early discussions to establish next steps.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

17. Real progress is being made and effective practice is emerging across key areas of the new legal framework to support children and young people aged 0 – 25 with special educational needs and disabilities. Parents, young people and practitioners are reporting positive experience of the new system, but it will take time to implement the changes fully and transition will not be complete until 2018. A regional peer learning approach to support implementation of the SEND reforms was agreed with grant funding from the Department for Education from 1 April 2015 so that councils are able to get support in ways that best meet local needs. At a Ministerial 'stocktake' the LGA raised concerns about the capacity of councils to deal with the volume of transfers of SEN statements to new Education Health and Care Plans, and the DfE has announced that they are extending the timescale for the transfer from 16 to 20 weeks, matching the timescale for new assessments. This will take effect from 1 September 2015.
18. A formal two-year review of dispute resolution for education, health and social care is also underway following LGA lobbying in Parliament for a single complaints and appeals process for parents and young people.

Early years education and childcare

19. The LGA gave evidence to the House of Lords Affordable Childcare Select Committee, and to the Education Select Committee's inquiry into Children's Centres setting out the case for early years' services to be determined locally and calling for a review of the early years funding system with the aim of reducing the complexity. The reports from both select committees reflect our concerns about the need for more coherent thinking on early years' funding. We also called for councils to be given a stronger role in improving the availability and quality of early education particularly in deprived areas.

20. A review of early years' funding was announced by the new Government in June 2015 to coincide with the publication of the Childcare Bill which proposes doubling free early education for 3 and 4 year old children of working parents. LGA's lobbying on the Bill in the House of Lords raised concerns about the aims, funding, eligibility and delivery of additional free childcare. We suggested an amendment to give councils more flexibility in providing childcare, particularly in deprived areas where there is little market interest and public sector provision may be the only viable option. Evidence shows that participation in early education remains lower for disadvantaged groups, even though they have the most to gain from early education and childcare

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