

15 October 2015

Children and Young People Board Priorities for 2015/16

Purpose

For discussion

Summary

This report sets out the priorities for the year ahead discussed by the Board at the meeting on 17 June and refined and agreed by the Board's Office holders on 14 September. It also gives details of four cross-cutting projects commissioned by the LGA Leadership Board. Members of the Board and Lead Members for Children's Services attending the Board meeting are invited to comment.

Recommendation

Members are invited to consider and comment on the priorities and identify the key areas of interest for the Children and Young People Board in the LGA's cross-cutting projects.

Action

Officers will develop a forward work programme to deliver the agreed priorities and input into the cross-cutting projects commissioned by the LGA Leadership Board.

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Children and Young People Board Priorities for 2015/16

1. At the meeting on 17 June the Board identified a number of priority areas for the year ahead, which were subsequently discussed, refined and agreed by the Board's Office Holders on 14 September. These are set out below for discussion by the wider group, which includes the Lead Members for Children's Services attending the Board meeting.

Education

2. A focus on the importance of excellent school leadership and classroom teaching in raising school standards, rather than changing school structures.
3. Stronger council powers to turn around failing and coasting schools without asking permission from the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted.
4. Continued work on the evidence base comparing the performance of schools.
5. A clear LGA stance on the employment of unqualified teachers.
6. A role for councils in making sure that new schools are fit for purpose, high quality and value for money, including a stronger role for councils in decisions about new free schools in their areas.
7. In the context of city deals and devolution, the important contribution that councils can make to improving local schools and skills provision to support local economies, including promoting best practice in improving careers advice.

Early years

8. A greater role for councils in joining up early years and childcare provision.
9. A focus on early intervention and support for parents to improve outcomes for children.

Children's services

10. Continued work to support councils to protect children and young people from child sexual exploitation and radicalisation and extremism.
11. Continued work to help councils maximise the benefits of the transfer of responsibility for children's public health services to councils.
12. Continued work around safeguarding and the role of Local Safeguarding Boards.
13. A continued focus on improving fostering and adoption outcomes.
14. An offer to coordinate multiple funding streams for early years, health, troubled families and safeguarding, as part of devolution deals.

Cross-cutting priorities

15. As part of the recent member-led review of governance, the LGA Executive and Leadership Board were asked to commission work from policy boards where there is a clear corporate priority or an important issue straddles more than one board. The Leadership Board met in July and agreed the following cross-cutting areas of work:
- 15.1. **Devolution and the future shape of local government.** This will be led jointly by the City Regions and People and Places Boards. At their last meetings in the 2014-15 cycle, these Boards suggested that more work needs to be undertaken on the models and mechanisms of future governance. The Leadership Board has requested that this work should be new, commissioned externally and have a practical application in “devo deals”.
 - 15.2. **Promoting health and wellbeing.** This work will be led by the Community Wellbeing Portfolio. It will draw on ongoing projects such as tackling child sexual exploitation, ageing and skills that already operate across Boards. It is suggested that this work should: draw on the wider role of other local services such as schools, children’s services, the fire service, public health, housing, transport and leisure; and play into promoting wellbeing across the life course and keeping people physically and mentally healthy, in work, and in their own homes. It should also consider the role of citizens and communities in supporting themselves and each other and promoting resilience and independence.
 - 15.3. **Housing.** This work will be led by the Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport Board, with support from an independent advisory board of experts. The focus will be on a place shaping agenda, including issues such as skills, welfare reform, community safety and an ageing population that are vital parts of delivering councils’ housing ambition. A clear steer from the LGA Leadership Board was that the focus on housing needed to be clear, rather than a wider debate on infrastructure.
 - 15.4. **Finance.** This work will be led by the Resources Board. Work will need to continue on the future funding outlook through the spending review and into an even more difficult financial era. This work is well-established in the organisation and it should be an important continuing priority.
16. Although not one of the lead Boards, the CYP Board has a clear interest in all these areas, as reflected, for example, in the early thinking about the health and well-being project and in the priorities relating to devolution that the Board has identified through its own discussions. Members are invited to comment on other areas where the CYP Board can make a contribution to the LGA’s cross-cutting priorities.