

## CYPF Scrutiny Committee

### Policy Update

OCT/NOV 2012

#### **1. Repeal of the duty on Ofsted to conduct an annual Children's Services Assessment of each local authority in England**

- a) Ofsted will no longer be required to produce an annual assessment of each local authority's children's services, following the repeal of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- b) The local authority assessments, which were drawn from relevant findings from Ofsted's inspection and regulation of education, care and skills, and published performance data, were abolished as part of wider changes to local authority accountability arrangements across government. The repeal of section 138 will remove an unnecessary bureaucratic burden from both local authorities and Ofsted
- c) Across local authorities there has been a concern that the children's services assessment is a bureaucratic exercise that adds little understanding of children's services in an area over and above the individual inspections that underlie it. It is seen to make little, if any, contribution to driving service improvement. Ending the annual children's services assessment generates a cost saving to Ofsted of approximately £1.6 million per year
- d) Following an 8 week targeted consultation exercise, the draft Legislative Reform (Annual Review of Local Authorities) Order was laid before Parliament on 10 May 2012. After scrutiny by the relevant parliamentary committees, and a short debate in the House of Lords, the Legislative Reform Order was approved and has been signed by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, Tim Loughton, who originally announced the Government's intention to repeal the relevant legislation in December 2010. The repeal takes effect immediately and, as a result, Ofsted will not be undertaking a children's services assessment process this year
- e) The annual children's services assessment provided, for each top tier local authority in England, a summary of the outcomes of the inspections of services and settings carried out by Ofsted during the year and an analysis of the performance data related to each authority. Ratings are awarded on a 4 point scale:
  - Performs poorly
  - Performs adequately
  - Performs well
  - Performs excellently
- f) The 2011 ratings were:
  - Performing poorly – 15 local authorities
  - Performing adequately – 33 local authorities
  - Performing well – 76 local authorities
  - Performs excellently – 28 local authorities

- g) Ending the annual children's services assessment will have no impact on Ofsted's other inspection activity. Ofsted has already put in place a new, universal, child focussed inspection regime for local authority services for the protection of children. A new inspection regime for local authority fostering, adoption and looked after children's services will be introduced early in 2013 and a new, multi-inspectorate child protection inspection framework (developed in partnership with the Care Quality Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Her Majesty's Inspection of Probation and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons), which fully implements the inspection recommendations from Professor Eileen Munro's Review of Child Protection in England, will follow in mid 2013. Ofsted launched consultation exercises on their proposals in these areas on 11 July

## **2. Record numbers of men teaching in primary schools – but more still needed**

- a) Latest data from the Teaching Agency (TA) shows more men are becoming primary school teachers. The number of male trainee primary teachers has increased by more than 50% in the last 4 years and has grown at 5 times the rate of women
- b) More top male graduates are being encouraged to follow suit and take advantage of the great opportunities a primary teaching career provides. The same pay scales apply to all teachers, regardless of whether they teach primary or secondary, and career progression opportunities are excellent. Teachers are twice as likely to be in management positions, than graduates in comparable professions after 3.5 years. The average starting salary for teachers now stands at £23,010 and the current average after 4 years is 30% higher. Training bursaries of £5000 are available for those with a 2:1 degree applying to primary teaching, and £9000 for those with a First

## **3. Prime Minister: More new Free Schools than ever before to raise standards and increase choice**

- a) The Prime Minister and Education Secretary Michael Gove recently announced that 102 new Free Schools have been approved to open in 2013 and beyond. This is more than a 50% increase on the number of schools that were approved last year, and means that the number of Free Schools set to open each year is rising rapidly. In September 2011, the first 24 Free Schools were opened and this September around 50 are due to open
- b) The announcement paves the way for thousands of excellent new school places where there is clear demand, raising education standards and giving parents more choice. The majority of schools will be based in areas of deprivation, or where there is a need for new school places
- c) More than half of the approved applications are from teachers, existing schools or educational organisations. They include a secondary school to be run by the highly successful teachers behind the Cuckoo Hall Academy chain, based in a deprived area of north London, and a primary school in Manchester led by the group responsible for the Big Issue in the north of England, which also runs a children's centre

## **5. Views sought on which 2 year olds should get free early education**

- a) Up to 300,000 babies born this year are set to benefit from 15 hours of free early education each week when they are 2 years old, as the Government announces plans to roll out free early education to more children across England
- b) Sarah Teather, Minister for Children and Families, launched a consultation calling for views on which 2 year olds should benefit. This is the second phase of the roll

out of free early education to around 40% of 2 year old children to help prepare them for school and give them the best possible start in life

- c) In the launched consultation, the Government said that 2 year olds from families who meet the criteria for free school meals will continue to be eligible. In addition, the Department for Education proposes that 2 year old children should get free early education if they:
- Are in low income families earning no more than £16,190 each year
  - Have special educational needs or a disability
  - Have been in care and been adopted
- d) From September 2013, under the first phase of the entitlement, the least advantaged 20% of 2 year olds will receive free early education. The Government is trialling the delivery of this first phase in 10 areas in England later this year. The new entitlement for 2 year olds builds on the universal free entitlement for 3 and 4 year old children across England
- e) The Government is currently examining childcare costs in a commission that was announced by the Prime Minister on 19 June. This is looking at the effectiveness of current support, wraparound care, best practice from home and abroad, and the impact of bureaucracy. It is also considering the findings of Professor Cathy Nutbrown's report, *Foundations for Quality – the independent review of early education and childcare qualifications*, which looks to enhance quality in the sector. The Government will report back on both issues later this year
- f) Children are entitled to free school meals if their parents receive any of the following benefits: income support; job seekers' allowance; employment and support allowance' or child tax credit with an income of less than £16,190 providing they are not receiving working tax credit

## **6. £10 million literacy catch-up programme for disadvantaged pupils**

- a) Children from poorer backgrounds who are behind in reading and writing at the end of primary school will have the chance to get extra catch-up lessons
- b) This comes as part of the Government's drive to narrow the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers
- c) Results from last year's Key Stage 2 tests show that around 100,000 pupils in England failed to reach the expected standard in English

## **7. Reform of the Office of Children's Commissioner**

- a) Children's Minister Sarah Teather has published draft clauses for forthcoming legislation to strengthen the role of the Office of the Children's Commissioner
- b) The proposals were included in the Queen's Speech in May
- c) A Children and Families Bill is expected to be introduced early in 2013
- d) It follows an independent review of the Office of the Children's Commissioner role, which reported in December 2010
- e) John Dunford's independent review concluded that there was a continuing need for a Children's Commissioner, who could act as a champion for children and young people, ensuring that their voices were heard and that new policies and legislation were designed in a way that took account of their rights. However, he said that the current legislative framework had prevented the Commissioner from fulfilling that role effectively, and that changes were needed to ensure that the Commissioner would, in future, have greater impact on children and young people's lives

- f) The draft legislation laid before the House would create a new role for the Children's Commissioner, focused on promoting and protecting the rights of children, in line with the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the Government are a committed signatory. In order to carry out the role effectively, the Children's Commissioner would have powers to:
- Carry out investigations
  - Carry out assessments of the impact of new policies and legislation on children's rights
  - Undertake research
  - Monitor the effectiveness of complaints and advocacy services for children and young people
  - Access places where children are cared for or accommodated away from home, so that their concerns can be heard
  - Request the information needed to carry out full and robust investigations
  - Require those to whom recommendations are made to set out how they intend to respond
- g) The draft legislation would make the Children's Commissioner more independent from Government and more directly accountable to Parliament, in particular through an annual report to Parliament that will allow for more effective scrutiny of the impact that the Children's Commissioner's activities have had on the promotion and protection of children's rights. The draft legislation also includes measures designed to make the Commissioner's business planning processes more transparent, by making it a requirement for the Commissioner to consult on his or her future priorities and to appoint an advisory board
- h) In line with John Dunford's recommendations, the draft legislation would also result in the functions of the children's rights director in Ofsted being incorporated within the remit of the Children's Commissioner, but with safeguards to ensure that the current levels of support provided to this vulnerable group of children were not diluted
- i) Under the draft legislation, the Children's Commissioner for England would retain responsibility for non-devolved matters, but would be able to delegate his or her powers of investigation to the Children's Commissioners in the devolved administrations. The Children's Commissioner for England would also be required to consult the Children's Commissioners in the devolved administrations before conducting an investigation on a non-devolved matter within their jurisdictions or across the UK