

## About this consultation response

This submission is provided on behalf of the Department for Education's overarching strategic partnership for voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations that serve children, young people and families. The partnership is led by Children England and includes Community Matters, NCVYS, NAVCA, the Race Equality Foundation and Social Enterprise UK. For more information please [click here](#).

If you have any questions about this submission please contact Nick Davies, Policy and Information Officer at Children England, on 020 7833 3319 or [nick@childrenengland.org.uk](mailto:nick@childrenengland.org.uk).

## Response

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the statutory guidance for Directors of (DCSs) and Lead Members for children's services (LMCS).

Overall the revised guidance is clear and comprehensive, and provides useful clarification on the statutory obligations of these two roles, for those undertaking them and for other agencies, such as VCSE organisations working alongside the local authority, with a concern for the wellbeing of children and young people. In particular we welcome;

- The continuation of the clear links between education and wider services for children and young people in providing a holistic basis for the promotion of, and accountability for, the wellbeing of all children and young people in a local area.
- The requirement that the DCS is a Chief Officer post and should report directly to the Chief Executive and the LMCS should report to the Council Leader or elected Mayor.
- The advice that the particular responsibilities of the DCS and LMCS roles should be protected and careful consideration given before combining elements of these roles with other responsibilities; although we would still advocate for the full implementation of Professor Munro's recommendation that these roles should stand alone and not be combined with other functions within the local authority.
- The inclusion of the principles underpinning the UNCRC and particular reference to Article 2 in ensuring full equality and meaningful participation for children and young people in the decisions which affect their lives, in the development of services and the appointment of the DCS.
- The requirement that locally appropriate assurance processes should be put in place covering all the elements listed in paragraph 16. Although this paragraph does state that transparency for local communities is integral, with the ending of the requirement to publish a Children and Young Peoples Plan, this would be strengthened by inclusion of the requirement to publicise the local assurance process on the council's website and in other communications with communities and with children and young people.

- The emphasis on the inclusion of the voluntary and private sectors, children, young people and families in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services in paragraph 18.
- The emphasis on prevention and early intervention in Paragraphs 25 and 26, in narrowing the gap in life chances between vulnerable and disadvantaged children and their peers.

We have concerns about paragraph 27, and offer suggestions as follows;

- We endorse the revised wording within paragraph 27 suggested by ADCS ; *“...put in place arrangements to monitor local demand for school places and actively promote a diverse supply of strong schools to meet that need, including seeking proposals for new academies and free schools where new schools are required.”*
- We propose the addition of *“children”* alongside young people in bullet points 5 and 6, since play is fundamental to the wellbeing of young children and their positive development and children below the age of 13 have much to contribute to service development and public decision making i.e. *“ must secure access for children and young people to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities and facilities....”* and *“....should promote children and young people’s involvement in public decision making...”*
- We propose an additional bullet point under paragraph 27; *“should publish a local youth action plan, produced with young people, demonstrating how the Government’s vision Positive for Youth will be implemented locally.”*