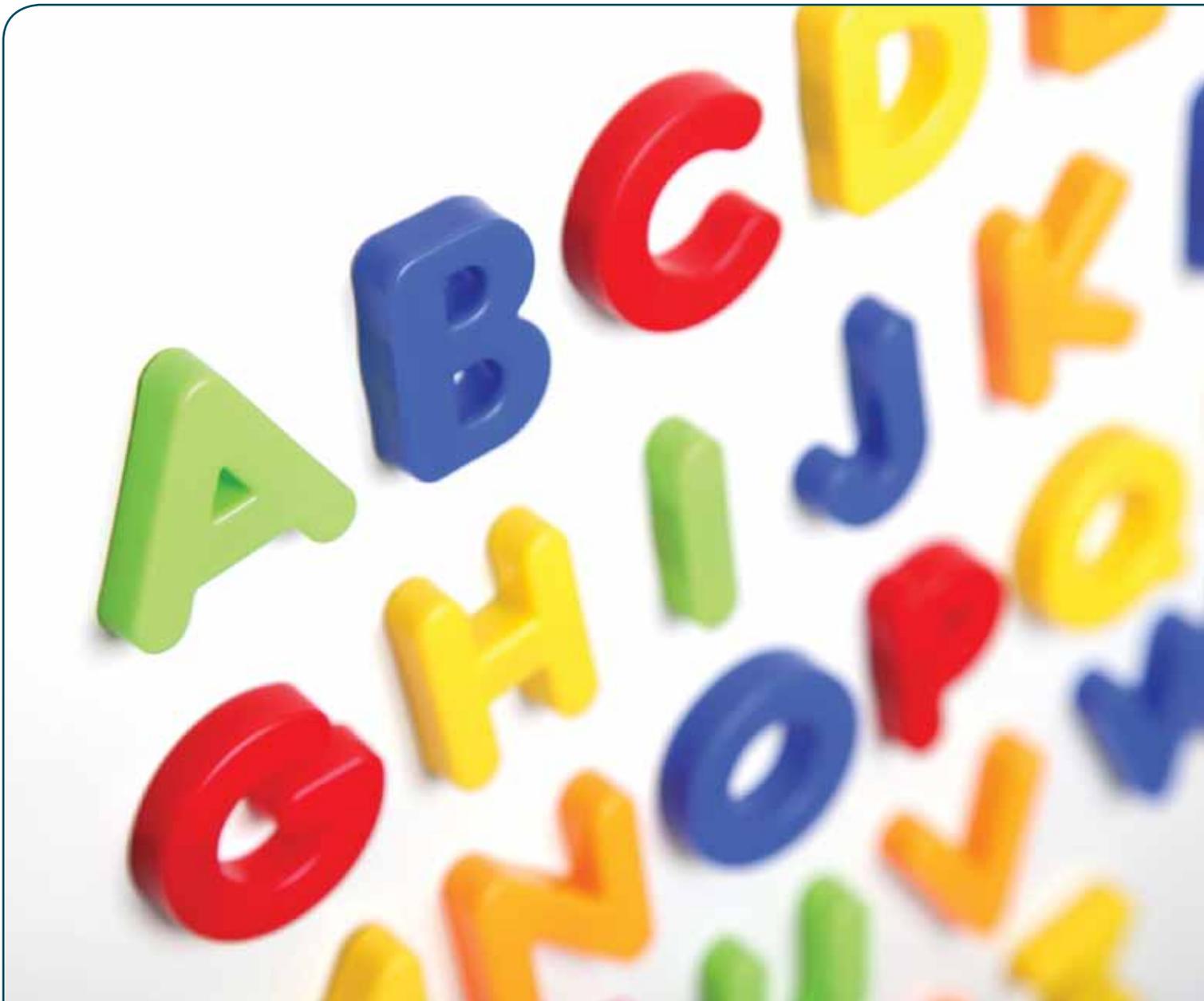


A-Z guide to the Children's Improvement Board





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What is the Children's Improvement Board?

The Children's Improvement Board (CIB) is the leadership body for sector-led improvement in children's services. It brings together the Local Government Association (LGA), the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). These partners believe that sector-led improvement is an effective and sustainable way of building better services for children and young people. Improvement is most effective when it is owned and led by councils themselves.

The work of the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) is only one part of a wider effort on sector-led improvement in local government. Councils are supporting each other to improve in many areas and there is a significant programme of work underway for adults' services.

Children's services support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. This is therefore an area of high risk and intense media interest. This is also a time of severe pressure on services in terms of reduced budgets and significant national policy changes. Getting sector-led improvement in children's services right is therefore particularly challenging but it is also vital for the wellbeing of children and young people.

This brief guide gives a snapshot of work being led by CIB in 2012/13. Sources of further information are provided below (p26).

Overview of sector-led improvement supported by CIB

Sector-led improvement depends on councils being open to external challenge. All councils have committed to opening up their self-assessment to challenge by other councils and in turn to offering their time to challenge others. All councils will have engaged in a "peer challenge" by the end of 2012. This peer challenge is complementary to the established programme of safeguarding peer reviews. There is no prescribed format and a number of different models are being developed by councils themselves. CIB will be bringing together the learning from peer challenge at the end of 2012/13.

An important part of the way CIB works is its support for sector-led improvement that is organised in regions. While it makes sense to develop some programmes of support nationally, sector-led improvement also needs to be close to councils and responsive to regional differences. Activity is not restricted to regional boundaries, though, and councils often organise themselves into groups within regions or challenge each other across regional boundaries. This guide includes information about support offered nationally but also gives highlights of work underway in regions.

Each region has nominated a lead director of children's services, lead member for children and chief executive to champion sector-led improvement in their region. CIB also brings these leads together several times during the year to network, share learning and input to planning the CIB work programme (see p24).

All regions are working on “early support” – stepping in to support councils at the first signs of difficulty and trying to prevent government intervention. Where councils are in intervention, support is offered by the national CIB team of children’s improvement advisers who work closely with contacts in the region and with the LGA’s principal advisers.

In the context of both national and regional support, CIB has set itself four priorities for 2012/13 which are:

- reducing the number of councils in intervention
- establishing an effective system of peer challenge and support
- better engagement of stakeholders in sector-led improvement
- supporting councils to manage the impact of policy changes.



What have we learned so far?

One of the challenges facing councils is developing a better understanding of what good looks like and, conversely, knowing what might put good performance at risk or hold back improvement. Councils will rightly have their own ambitions for the children’s services in their area but experience of sector-led improvement so far suggests some broad factors that might support or undermine performance.

“Good” councils welcome external challenge – whether this is a new director of children’s services coming in with a ‘fresh pair of eyes’ or peer challenge provided by other councils. Good workforce planning and a good system for picking up the views of families and children themselves are also essential.

Risk factors might be significant changes and turnover in political and officer leadership, major reorganisation which impacts on children’s services, a lack of external scrutiny, poor development opportunities for staff and a lack of focus on continual improvement.

Whatever else, CIB has found that it is not possible to stand still; there is no single moment in which change does not happen. Expectations constantly change about standards and what ‘good’ looks like; keeping up with the highest standards in services is a real challenge for councils.

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
			
Adoption	<p>Following the publication of adoption scorecards in 2012, CIB commissioned an adoption diagnostic assessment jointly with the Department for Education (DfE). The purpose of the assessment is to tell the story behind the adoption scorecard data. A number of councils have taken part in diagnostic assessments and have been offered support for improvement of their adoption services by CIB. The diagnostic assessment toolkit will be made available to individual councils and regions who may wish to use it to improve their understanding of performance on adoption.</p> <p>The North East and West Midlands have both begun to analyse the adoption scorecards to look at the implications for councils and their regions, while Yorkshire and the Humber has produced a regional variation on the adoption scorecard which shows adoption performance against a broader range of indicators than the DfE scorecard.</p>	<p>Alison Miller (CIB)</p> <p>Linda Mason (North East)</p> <p>Karen Marcroft (West Midlands)</p> <p>Rob Mayall (Yorkshire and the Humber)</p>	<p>alison.miller@local.gov.uk</p> <p>linda.mason@northtyneside.gov.uk</p> <p>kmarcroft@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk</p> <p>rob.mayall1@gmail.com</p>
			
Best practice	<p>A bank of materials of validated local practice is available on the C4EO website, covering a breadth of areas including family support models, use of common assessment frameworks, preventative work in drugs/alcohol, additional needs, obesity, social care thresholds, service redesign, integrated service delivery and workforce development. "Emerging practice" examples of service redesign are also available, particularly in relation to youth services (14-19 years) and around child protection/early help.</p>		<p>http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/general/localpracticeexamples.aspx?themeid=10</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
			
Child poverty	<p>An East Midlands group of child poverty leads has been working with a sector specialist to produce support materials and a set of workshops in the region. There is support for joint commissioning on child poverty, a system of peer challenges, and a comprehensive approach to workforce reform including briefings for staff on welfare changes.</p> <p>The West Midlands region has carried out an analysis of the links between deprivation and safeguarding rates in an area predicting the expected rates of looked after children and child protection plans for each council according to their levels of child poverty.</p>	<p>Peter Chilvers (East Midlands)</p> <p>Karen Marcroft (West Midlands)</p>	<p>peter.chilvers@sdsa.net</p> <p>kmarcroft@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk</p>
Child sexual exploitation	<p>CIB offers support to individual authorities in dealing with the issue of child sexual exploitation. This currently includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific media support in the aftermath of the publication of particular cases delivered through the LGA • pairing up DCS colleagues with recent experience of operating child protection in the context of police covert operations to act as a sounding board • helping colleagues seeking to take a review of their whole policy and practice in this area. • understanding best practice in safeguarding children out of borough • using learning on child sexual exploitation from peer reviews of serious case reviews. 	<p>Mark Cairns (CIB)</p>	<p>mark.cairns@local.gov.uk</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Children's centres sufficiency	<p>Serco was commissioned in 2012/13 to provide direct support to councils who were looking to reorganise their children's centre services and to share best practice on commissioning services.</p> <p>This work is now complete.</p>		
Commissioning and value for money	<p>CIB has developed a number of products designed to support commissioners in developing markets and ensuring quality in the commissioning process. These include materials on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • market facilitation • monitoring outcomes and quality assuring SEND provision • quality assurance for semi-independent living provision for looked after children • commissioning services for young people — training the trainer materials • commissioning for families with complex needs, and • a directory of providers of support for commissioning • an overview of regional and sub-regional communication on services for children in care. <p>These materials can be found on the Knowledge Hub.</p> <p>Given the importance of good commissioning to many aspects of children's services, commissioning has now been integrated into CIB's work programme and is no longer a separate strand.</p>	Dave Smith CIB	<p>dave.smith1121@live.co.uk</p> <p>https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensimprovementboard/grouphub</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Communications	A bulletin is circulated after every meeting of the Children's Improvement Board to all directors of children's services (via ADCS) and lead members for children. It is also circulated by SOLACE to its members. There is a "Children's Improvement Board" group on the LGA's Knowledge Hub which holds key documents. The group is open to anyone who registers on the Knowledge Hub. CIB bulletins are posted on CIB's website.	Alison Miller (CIB) Mark Cairns (CIB)	alison.miller@local.gov.uk www.local.gov.uk/CIB mark.cairns@local.gov.uk https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensImprovementBoard For help and advice on Knowledge Hub email knowledgehub@local.gov.uk



Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
			
Data	<p>CIB has developed a data tool for councils which draws on a range of indicators for children’s services and is currently available on the Knowledge Hub. It can be used by councils to support their self-assessment and peer challenge. CIB is working with colleagues in the LGA to develop a more comprehensive data tool which will be part of LGInform.</p> <p>A number of regions are working to improve the availability and use of data for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance leads from councils in the East Midlands region have worked together to review self-assessments, inspection and performance profiles to contribute to the region’s annual Peer Challenge Summit process. • The North East region has set up a group of performance and data leads to support peer challenge and improvement activity. They will be working on “at risk” indicators, self- assessment, the data profile and local qualitative and quantitative data. • The North West region has analysed inspection data for councils in the region to identify common needs. Work is underway to identify “at risk” indicators. 	<p>Andy Hughes (CIB)</p> <p>Peter Chilvers (East Midlands)</p> <p>Linda Mason (North East)</p> <p>Howard Cooper (North West)</p> <p>Richard Tyndall (South East)</p> <p>Rob Mayall (Yorkshire and the Humber)</p>	<p>andrew.hughes@local.gov.uk</p> <p>peter.chilvers@sdsa.net</p> <p>linda.mason@northtyneside.gov.uk</p> <p>howard@howardcooperconsulting.co.uk</p> <p>richard.tyndall@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</p> <p>rob.mayall1@gmail.com</p> <p>https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensimprovementboard/grouphub</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South East region has been working on a tool called “the modern canary”, which brings together a range of data to give indications of risk and resilience in children’s services. More information on the modern canary is available on the Knowledge Hub. • In Yorkshire and the Humber, a regional performance group is analysing existing data sets as part of self- assessment activity and will be making recommendations to DCSs on the core data needed to understand organisational performance and health. 		
Development demonstrators	<p>27 councils are participating in our development demonstrator programme. They are sharing their learning as they respond to the challenges of tackling the Munro reforms to children’s social care, and narrowing the gap at the early years stage. There are 15 sites representing authorities of different types and locations, and at different stages of their journey. Some are working in partnership, whilst others are doing so individually. They form a national observatory network, working as an action research project, and each of the 15 sites will host ten events (of various sizes and formats) for peer councils to learn from by March 2013.</p> <p>Further information on learning events led by the development demonstrators will be posted on the Children’s Improvement Board Group on the Knowledge Hub (see the Knowledge Hub entry below).</p>	<p>Amanda Hatton, CIB</p> <p>Christine Cassell, CIB</p> <p>Mark Cairns, CIB</p>	<p>sectorledsolutions@gmail.com</p> <p>christine.cassell@gmail.com</p> <p>mark.cairns@local.gov.uk</p> <p>www.tinyurl.com/demonstratorssummary</p> <p>https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensimprovementboard/forum</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
	<p>The Demonstrator sites for the Munro reforms are:</p> <p>North West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire West and Chester Council (working with partner authorities in its Best Practice Network) <p>West Midlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stoke-on-Trent City Council • Warwickshire County Council • Staffordshire County Council <p>Eastern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luton Borough Council • Thurrock Council <p>London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Borough of Barnet <p>South East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampshire County Council • Portsmouth City Council in partnership with Medway Council <p>The Demonstrators for early years provision are:</p> <p>North West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (working with partner authorities in its Best Practice Network) <p>Yorkshire and the Humber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Riding of Yorkshire Council • Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council • Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council <p>East Midlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All authorities in the East Midlands region in partnership <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloucestershire County Council 		

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
			
Early and foundation years	<p>London has commissioned research into the sufficiency of the two year old entitlement and will be looking at solutions across the region.</p>	<p>Martyn Cockram, London</p>	<p>martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk</p>
Early support for councils	<p>CIB regions are establishing local arrangements for identifying performance risk and offering timely and effective early support to individual councils. This is facilitated by CIB’s children’s improvement advisers, who help in the commissioning of support. The regions are agreeing key risk factors and performance information which are to be used to identify councils at risk (eg the South East’s “modern canary” – see section on “data”).</p> <p>The Eastern region has ringfenced funds for early support for councils and has a protocol for accessing these.</p> <p>The London region has established a mechanism to request additional support for authorities likely to be inspected this year, and feedback from a meeting with Ofsted on what “good” looks like will be disseminated in the region. It has commissioned an early support offer which includes tailored support from sector specialists and an optional safeguarding practice challenge (see separate entry).</p> <p>The West Midlands region has reviewed inspection and performance trends across the region to look at which councils may be at risk and common themes for early support.</p>	<p>Frances Woodall, Eastern</p> <p>Martyn Cockram, London</p> <p>Claire Burgess, West Midlands</p>	<p>frances.woodall@norfolk.gov.uk</p> <p>martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk</p> <p>claire.burgess23@gmail.com</p>

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<p>Family Justice Review</p>	<p>CIB is producing a web-based toolkit of examples of local practice from around the country that are delivering promising results, and are able to raise awareness, facilitate dialogue and cooperation between authorities. CIB will also be working on a joint programme of learning sets and workshops with the Family Justice Board.</p> <p>Sub regional work has been carried out in the North West region to improve working between councils, CAFCASS and the Cheshire and Merseyside Family Court.</p> <p>The South East region is carrying out a project exploring successful and cost effective legal services. This includes research into models and practices that are successful in challenging court directed costs.</p>	<p>Alison Miller, CIB</p> <p>Howard Cooper, North West</p> <p>Richard Tyndall, South East</p>	<p>alison.miller@local.gov.uk</p> <p>howard@howardcooperconsulting.co.uk</p> <p>richard.tyndall@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</p> <p>https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensimprovementboard/grouphub</p>
			
<p>Health</p>	<p>The North West has been collating and analysing emerging models of relationships with the health sector.</p> <p>Yorkshire and the Humber is carrying out a regional audit to identify progress and perceptions from a range of stakeholders on the new health commissioning arrangements.</p>	<p>Howard Cooper, North West</p> <p>Rob Mayall, Yorkshire and the Humber</p>	<p>howard@howardcooperconsulting.co.uk</p> <p>rob.mayall1@gmail.com</p>

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Integrated working between agencies	<p>Tools and guidance documents previously developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council are now held and made available by CIB on the Knowledge Hub. A number of case studies will be published here shortly. CIB has also carried out a consultation through regional workshops and on line with local authorities and partner agencies to get a better understanding of their support needs in this area.</p> <p>The East Midlands region has an action learning process underway to investigate the underpinning principles and approaches for integrated working between agencies to improve early intervention.</p> <p>London is supporting the development of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH). Two hubs are now live with more expected this year.</p> <p>The South East region is carrying out research into successful delivery models which have led to a reduction in looked after children or child protection.</p> <p>In Yorkshire and the Humber, groups of councils are working on CAF (common assessment framework) and intensive family support.</p>	<p>Alex Walters CIB</p> <p>Peter Chilvers, East Midlands</p> <p>Martyn Cockram, London</p> <p>Richard Tyndall, South East</p> <p>Rob Mayall, Yorkshire and the Humber</p>	<p>alex4.walters@btinternet.com</p> <p>peter.chilvers@sdsa.net</p> <p>martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk</p> <p>richard.tyndall@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</p> <p>rob.mayall1@gmail.com</p>
			
Knowledge hub	<p>The Knowledge Hub is the main source of learning and resources from CIB. There is a dedicated Children's Improvement Board Group which is open to all. Registering for the Knowledge Hub is simple and gives access to a wide range of documents and discussions on CIB and more widely on children's services and improvement. For further information on the Knowledge Hub contact: knowledgehub@local.gov.uk</p>	<p>Mark Cairns, CIB</p>	<p>mark.cairns@local.gov.uk</p> <p>https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensimprovementboard/grouphub</p>

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Leadership	<p>The development of a pool of talented and knowledgeable leaders is essential to sector led improvement and the Virtual Staff College supports national and regional programmes to support the development of such a pool. CIB and the Virtual Staff College (VSC) have been working closely together to ensure that leadership provision for directors of children’s services is aligned with sector-led improvement. CIB also sponsors LGA support for lead members: the leadership academy, induction for new lead members, support for regional networks of lead members.</p> <p>Leadership programmes for DCSs and those aspiring to be DCSs help build a network of colleagues who are able to offer challenge and support to each other when needed.</p> <p>London has been looking at the relationship between corporate changes in the council and children’s services. It has produced a set of “top tips” for chief executives to help the council prepare for Ofsted inspections. The top tips are available on the Knowledge Hub as part of the notes from the CIB regional leads meeting held on 10 September 2012.</p> <p>The South East region is training new coaches and mentors including skills in peer challenge.</p> <p>See also entry on “succession planning”.</p>	<p>Virtual Staff College</p> <p>Martyn Cockram, London</p> <p>Richard Tyndall, South East</p>	<p>anton.florek@virtualstaffcollege.co.uk</p> <p>martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk</p> <p>richard.tyndall@bracknell-forest.</p>
LGInform	<p>LGInform hosts data for councils on children’s services from a range of sources including DfE, Local Area Interactive Tool (LAIT), Children in Need Census (CIN), Ofsted, and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).</p>	<p>Andy Hughes, CIB</p>	<p>andrew.hughes@local.gov.uk</p> <p>www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Local safeguarding children boards (LSCB)	<p>The Eastern region is engaging LSCB chairs and business managers in sector led improvement. A workshop and a self-assessment tool are planned.</p> <p>The South East are scoping out a framework to support LSCBs in their ensuring effectiveness role.</p>	<p>Frances Woodall, Eastern</p> <p>Richard Tyndall, South East</p>	<p>frances.woodall@norfolk.gov.uk</p> <p>richard.tyndall@bracknell-forest.gov</p>
			
Munro and social work reform	<p>The East Midlands region is piloting a “Munro leadership” programme for managers, and all councils in the East Midlands region are involved in action learning sets to support reflective casework. The region is carrying out a review of post-qualifying social work training, in discussion with higher education institutions.</p> <p>The North East region will be holding two events on reflective practice in social work to be followed by a number of action learning sets.</p> <p>The West Midlands region held a regional conference on “Beyond Munro” with council led workshops sharing lessons learned. More sharing is taking place with the region having three development demonstrator sites.</p> <p>See also entry on “development demonstrators”.</p>	<p>Peter Chilvers, East Midlands</p> <p>Linda Mason, North East</p> <p>Karen Marcroft, West Midlands</p>	<p>peter.chilvers@sdsa.net</p> <p>linda.mason@northtyneside.gov.uk</p> <p>kmarcroft@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk</p>
			
New models of service delivery	<p>The London region has undertaken analysis of the impact of corporate structural changes on the effectiveness of children’s services, which is available as a “Knowledge Bite” article on the Knowledge Hub.</p>	<p>Martyn Cockram, London</p>	<p>martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk</p> <p>https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensimprovementboard/grouphub</p>

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Payment by results (PBR)	<p>CIB is currently supporting 27 councils to test the impact of payment by results related to children's centre activity. The local authorities in the trial are testing both a national reward system and local reward systems. The three national measures for reward are breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks, the gap at Early Years Foundation Stage between those on free school meals and those not, and two year olds in funded early education. The project has supported collaborative working with government in dealing with the complexity of PBR measures.</p>	Christine Cassell, CIB	christine.cassell@gmail.com
Peer challenge	<p>Peer challenge approaches have been developed in all nine regions and programmes agreed that will see every council engaging in peer challenge by the end of December 2012. Regions are already using the outcome of peer challenge to change and influence practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All councils in the Eastern region have received a peer challenge based on self-assessment. A regional summary of the peer challenges has been developed, with recommendations on how to enhance them. • In the East Midlands, all councils have carried out and submitted self-assessments and an agreed data set. First analysis and peer challenge was carried out by a performance leads groups. DCSs have all received an individual challenge conversation with a recent ex-DCS and have all participated in a one day peer challenge summit. In addition there is a rolling programme of peer challenge team reviews which involve visits to councils by a peer team and of safeguarding assurance visits. 	<p>Frances Woodall, Eastern</p> <p>Peter Chilvers, East Midlands</p> <p>Martyn Cockram, London</p> <p>Linda Mason, North East</p> <p>Howard Cooper, North West</p> <p>Richard Tyndall, South East</p> <p>Bronwen Lacey, South West</p> <p>Karen Marcroft, West Midlands</p> <p>Rob Mayall, Yorkshire and the Humber</p>	<p>frances.woodall@norfolk.gov.uk</p> <p>peter.chilvers@sdsa.net</p> <p>martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk</p> <p>linda.mason@northtyneside.gov.uk</p> <p>howard@howardcooperconsulting.co.uk</p> <p>richard.tyndall@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</p> <p>bronwenlacey@hotmail.co.uk</p> <p>kmarcroft@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk</p> <p>rob.mayall1@gmail.com</p> <p>https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/childrensImprovementboard/grouphub</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Peer challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An eWorkbook has been developed to support and archive documents from peer challenge team reviews, and the region has trialled the use of a lead member. Further information on peer challenge in the East Midlands and a discussion at CIB regional leads meeting on 10 September 2012 is available on the Knowledge Hub. • London has developed a handbook and guidance to support sector led improvement with a particular focus on peer challenge. Peer challenge pairings have been agreed for all London children’s services teams. • All councils in the North East and Cumbria have identified areas to be covered in peer challenge. All councils will receive a challenge by the end of December. A performance and data leads group is working on data to support peer challenge. A peer challenge handbook has been published including a self-assessment model. • The North West has grouped councils in “best practice networks” for peer challenge. Learning from the peer challenges in these groups will be shared across the group. 50% of peer challenges have now been completed and learning will be used to modify the next round. Each council who receives a challenge will receive a sector support offer based on the outcomes of their challenge. An evaluation of the effectiveness of peer challenge in the region will be commissioned. • The South East was an early adopter of peer challenge and some councils are undergoing their second or third peer challenge. 		

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Peer challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South West has produced self assessment and peer challenge guidance documents. A regional skills bank, with details of skillsets and expertise, is being set up to support mixed-authority teams to carry out peer challenge and early support, and to promote good practice and learning from self-assessments. • West Midlands region has delivered training on peer challenge including to lead members and chief executives. A number of peer challenges are underway or have been completed. • In Yorkshire and the Humber, a regional approach has been developed for self-assessment and peer challenge will be carried out during the autumn. Training will be provided for peer challengers. Lead DCSs have been identified, and a lead member skills bank is being developed. The region is also mapping other peer challenge across the region. 		
			
Quality and performance	<p>The West Midlands has a quality and performance group. They operate a quarterly post Munro regional benchmarking system and have been sharing quality assurance systems. They are currently working on a regional quality assurance framework.</p>	Karen Marcroft, West Midlands	kmarcroft@westmidlandsiep.gov
			
Safeguarding	<p>In Yorkshire and the Humber, groups of councils are working with an external researcher on the development of a common assessment framework and intensive family support.</p>	Rob Mayall, Yorkshire and the Humber	rob.mayall1@gmail.com

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Safeguarding peer reviews	<p>CIB supports the well established programme of safeguarding peer reviews which are available to councils free of charge. This year there are two new optional elements to the process: audit validation and case records review. CIB expects to support around 30 safeguarding reviews in 2012/13.</p> <p>The team supporting peer reviews would be very pleased to hear from colleagues who are interested in becoming peers and also suggestions of names from police, schools or health who have a good understanding of safeguarding.</p>	<p>Caroline Bosdet, LGA</p> <p>Paul Curran, CIB</p> <p>Pete Rentell, LGA</p>	<p>caroline.bosdet@local.gov.uk</p> <p>curran56@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p>peter.rentell@local.gov.uk</p> <p>http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/peer-challenges/-/journal_content/56/10171/3511045/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE</p>
Safeguarding practice challenge	<p>As part of helping councils to understand their performance on safeguarding and to be clear where they need to improve, CIB will be piloting a safeguarding practice challenge. The challenge includes three elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a check on how effectively the council uses case audit to assess and improve the quality of practice • a case record review assessing the effectiveness of frontline case management and practice plus either a “real time” review of current referrals and assessments or a social work practice observation • an inspection information health check – looking at the extent to which the council can meet the locally held information requirements in the Framework for Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children. <p>The London region will be piloting the safeguarding practice challenge between October and December 2012.</p>	<p>Martyn Cockram, London</p>	<p>martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk</p>
Schools and educational attainment	<p>The North East region is holding an event to discuss the role schools can play in regeneration within communities.</p> <p>In Yorkshire and the Humber two councils are working on behalf of the region to address issues around raising attainment at Key Stage 2 including the development of a self-assessment tool for schools.</p>	<p>Linda Mason, North East</p> <p>Rob Mayall, Yorkshire and the Humber</p>	<p>linda.mason@northtyneside.gov.uk</p> <p>rob.mayall1@gmail.com</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Serious case reviews assurance and learning project	CIB is working with the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs and the DfE to support learning from serious case reviews that effects real practice improvement. This will be done by trialling sector-led quality assurance at various points of the review process, supporting up to five sites to test out these approaches and share the learning through action research. This will take place between November 2012 and March 2013.	Mark Cairns, CIB	mark.cairns@local.gov.uk
Special educational needs and disability	CIB is carrying out a scoping exercise this year to clarify what support councils might need to respond to the major changes in assessment and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Support to councils may be offered as part of the 2013/14 work programme.	Alison Miller, CIB	alison.miller@local.gov.uk
Succession planning	<p>Regional leads on succession planning have been working with the Virtual Staff College (VSC) to develop a “maturity model” for succession planning which positions leadership development as an integral part of sector-led improvement. The VSC is planning a series of “Leadership in Practice” guides, focusing on issues such as ‘creating a coaching culture’ and authorities working together to use recruitment challenges as an opportunity for leadership development.</p> <p>The East Midlands region runs ALICSE (Advanced Leadership in an Integrated Children’s Service Environment), linking the succession planning work supported by the Virtual Staff College to the regional programme supported by CIB. ALICSE will engage 60-70 people in 2012/13.</p> <p>The South West region is setting up a skills bank across the region’s workforce which can help with early support and peer challenge. In the North West, aspiring senior leaders have been matched with improvement projects identified by DCSs across the region, while the South East has done the same in relation to priorities in their regional plan.</p>	<p>Anton Florek, VSC</p> <p>Peter Chilvers, East Midlands</p> <p>Bronwen Lacey, South West</p> <p>Howard Cooper, North West</p>	<p>anton.florek@virtualstaffcollege.co.uk</p> <p>peter.chilvers@sdsa.net</p> <p>bronwenlacey@hotmail.co.uk</p> <p>howard@howardcooperconsulting.co.uk</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
Succession planning	This has increased the confidence and knowledge base of the individuals (and their organisations) as well as reducing the need for consultancy and creating a network of expertise. The South East is funding further training in coaching and mentoring to build further capacity for change.		
			
Targeted sector support	CIB has a coordinated and quality-assured approach to support for councils which are subject to government intervention. It brings together the LGA's principal advisers and CIB children's improvement advisers (CIAs), and engages the corporate leadership of the council. The support consists of a swift and challenging diagnostic assessment of the underlying factors affecting poor performance, followed by focused commissioning of improvement support aligned to a single improvement plan. CIAs can respond rapidly to enable councils to make sense of their position, accept challenging messages and use the situation as a platform to promote transformational change. They also bring knowledge of practice in other councils. This builds confidence in the changes that councils have to make, reduces the sense of isolation, and can help drive rapid change.	Julie Smith, CIB	julie.smith@local.gov.uk
Troubled families	<p>The South East region is coordinating and sharing work on troubled families initiatives across the region.</p> <p>The West Midlands region has established a network of councils involved in the troubled families initiative. They have met with representatives of the region's police forces to encourage collaboration and mutual learning across the region.</p>	<p>Richard Tyndall, South East</p> <p>Karen Marcroft, West Midlands</p>	<p>richard.tyndall@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</p> <p>kmarcroft@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk</p>

Activity	Description	Contact	Email and web address
			
Youth offending	London heads of youth offending teams are working on sharing good practice and carrying out peer reviews.	Martyn Cockram, London	martyn.cockram@londoncouncils.gov.uk
Youth offer and Youth Innovation Zones	<p>Twelve Youth Innovation Zones (YIZs) are in operation with the purpose of identifying new and innovative ways of addressing the requirements of Positive for Youth and the statutory guidance with a focus on working with partners and developing and maintaining the involvement of young people in shaping and evaluating the services they receive. They are identifying learning points at present. The 12 YIZs are:</p> <p>North East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council <p>North West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salford City Council • Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council • Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council <p>Yorkshire and the Humber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of York Council <p>West Midlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shropshire Council <p>London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Borough of Barking and Dagenham • London Borough of Haringey <p>Eastern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk County Council • Bedford Council <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset County Council • Wiltshire Council 	Dave Smith, CIB	dave.smith1121@live.co.uk

