

A NEW DEAL FOR COUNTIES:

Children's Services & Education



Preventative Children's Social Care

Caring for the elderly is only part of the social care story; for upper-tier councils safeguarding vulnerable children and providing services to improve the life chances of all children is a priority.

While the public perception of children's services remains negative, CCN member councils have consistently delivered some of the highest quality children's social care services. The services they provide form the foundation of every child's life from before they are born until they reach adulthood. Whether protecting the most vulnerable, supporting young carers, or providing early years services and school nurses, counties deliver a range of care, support and development opportunities for every child.

Despite not receiving the same level of national debate, children's social care is faced with unrelenting financial and demand pressures, in many cases as acute as those facing adult social care.

Counties have seen referrals to children's social care increase against a backdrop of reductions in other local authority areas. CCN member councils have been subject to the largest increases of any local authority type in the number of children subject to a child protection plan; of Looked After Children (LAC); and a significant increase in the total number of Children in Need (CiN).

These pressures have resulted in a number of counties being left with little choice but to divert funding towards crisis intervention activities, rather than preventative services such as children's mental health.

Preventative action and services are essential if the life chances of children are to be improved. Evidence suggests that children in need may have their life chances impacted as a result of family instability, with CiN much more likely to be not in education, employment or training as they progress into adulthood.

Early years and pre-school place provision are key to improving life chances and outcomes amongst the disadvantaged and those from all social backgrounds. High quality Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are essential if children and young people are to access timely support to address mental health issues and build resilience. Without such support children may be subject to an increased chance of social exclusion, reduced education and employment opportunities.

As we look ahead to this Parliament, it is now essential that national and local government brings greater attention to the future of children's social care and those services that support young people.

It is imperative that Government recognise and address the growing pressures in the system, including delivering a sustainable long-term funding settlement for local government that follows need.

Like adult social care, funding alone will not lead to better outcomes.

Government has rightly utilised senior professionals from high performing county authorities to lead and support interventions in those local authorities that have received 'inadequate' ratings from Ofsted, through both independent trusts and peer support.

Government must consider prioritising partnerships between local authorities to improve 'failing' children's services departments and maintain democratic accountability. Partnerships, such as Hampshire County Council's with Isle of Wight's Children's Services, have transformed safeguarding services and outcomes without the need to create a new organisation at significant cost.

On mental health, a priority for the incoming Government, new impetus should be given to reforming CAMHS as part of a wider drive to improve preventive measures in children's social and mental health services.

And, in early years provision, implementation of extended pre-school provision needs to be supported by adequate funding to ensure a sustainable provider market is maintained.

“Children's social care is faced with unrelenting financial and demand pressures”

PREVENTATIVE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Referrals increasing



CCN member councils have seen the largest increase of any local authority type in the number of children referred to children's social care per 10,000 population (0-17) from 2010/11-2015/16:



Percentage rise in Looked After Children since 2010



76% - Counties



56% - Mets



21% - London

CCN member councils have seen the largest increase

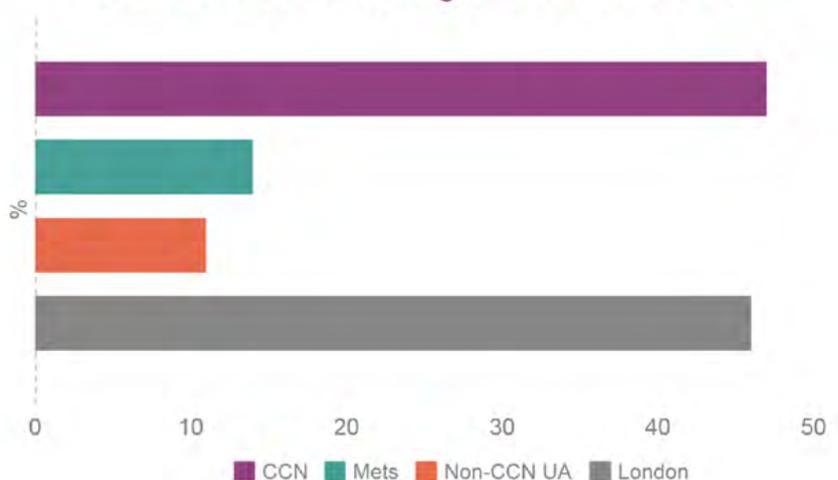
27%

in child protection plans over the last six years

CCN ANALYSIS

As we look ahead to this Parliament, it is now essential that national and local government brings greater attention to the future of county children's social care and those services that support young people.

Percentage of council Children's Services rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' as of Feb 2017:





CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

A fully-funded and prevention focused service to provide every child with the best start in life

A PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT

HOW COUNTIES CAN WORK WITH GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE & REFORM CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

1) SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING



Deliver sustainable and fair multi-year funding settlements to counties in Children's Social Care, with a particular focus on delivering preventative services.

2) PREVENTION FOCUSED CARE

The services and support that Children in Need receive should be reviewed by Government, in partnership with local government and the public sector. Reforms to these services must prioritise preventative interventions to improve the life chances and outcomes of Children in Need.



3) SECTOR-LED IMPROVEMENT



Recognise local authority-led partnerships as the first form of intervention to improve 'failing' children's social care services, rather than placing them under the control of democratically unaccountable independent trusts.

4) MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Delivery of child and adolescent mental health services should be urgently reviewed, with a focus on preventing escalation from tier 1 & 2 services to more costly tier 3 services. Place-based and multi-agency services shaped around children and young people should be prioritised, accessed through the NHS, local authority or schools in the most efficient and effective manner possible.



5) EARLY YEARS PROVISION



Government should provide adequate funding to ensure that the extension in free childcare does not destabilise the provider market or create market polarisation and cross-subsidisation, as seen in the adult social care market.

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COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Download our research on children's services by visiting
www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/childrens-services-education/

A Modern and Fair Education System

County schools, in partnership with their local authorities, have worked hard to deliver some of the highest levels of quality and attainment. Counties have a long and proud tradition as education authorities. But, for counties and our schools, maintaining this has not come without challenges.

Chief amongst these are the historic inequities between the highest and lowest funded schools. The current formula, dating back to 2005, has led to county schools being underfunded for a number of years, with an inexplicable gap of 47% between the average per pupil funding received by counties and Inner London. Previous Governments have acknowledged these inequalities exist, but reforms to date have fallen short of providing a truly fair funding formula.

The sustainability of small rural schools, not just those classified as 'sparse' by DfE, is of particular concern; with most of these schools in our areas. These schools face particular challenges in achieving financial savings compared to their urban counterparts as a result of their geographical dispersal and smaller pupil numbers.

Beyond fair funding, counties have been forthright in defending their wider remit as education authorities in recent months.

CCN strongly welcomed Government's abandonment of full academisation. This was an acknowledgement of the value county authorities can bring in providing rigorous oversight of school performance, ensuring the provision of sufficient school places, and delivering support services that allows a mixed economy of schools to flourish. This is supported by that fact that a large proportion of academies choose to purchase school improvement services from county authorities.

Despite our best efforts, councils have faced new barriers in ensuring all young people get a quality education and local school place. For instance, the ability of councils to deliver sufficient school places is hindered by the lack of existing powers to require academies and free schools to expand. County authorities have limited input into the location and type of new schools being opened in their areas and limited influence over planning decisions for medium-size developments that impact upon pupil intake in county council areas.

This has unintended consequences, particularly in rural areas, with the limited availability of school places in locations where they are most needed, meaning that pupils may be forced to travel further afield. This has led to additional and significant transport costs for local authorities, on top of already stretched home to school transport budgets.

As we enter this new Parliament, the need to deliver a modern and fair education system remains. Firstly, Government must be bold and deliver revised proposals for a school funding formula to place schools in county areas on a fairer and more equitable footing, with no school losing funding. The baseline of funding must be set at a sufficient level for county schools to maintain acceptable teacher pupil ratios, operate sufficiently and to be sustainable for the foreseeable future, particularly our rural schools.

The weightings for additional needs funding must be targeted to address significant differences in performance between counties and other parts of the country, in particular for LAC and pupils in receipt of free school meals. It is imperative that Government does not just simply provide an uplift in basic per-pupil funding. Whilst this would be welcome, it would not address the long-standing inequity in schools funding that currently exists.

The leadership and delivery role of counties in the provision of home to school transport and school place planning should not be underestimated. Councils need greater powers to compel academies and free schools to expand and oversight powers over admissions policy and performance. Counties should also be enabled to continue to play an active role in school support and improvement services.

The role and track record of delivery by county education authorities must be harnessed by Government. This will ensure that pupils have the tools to thrive in a mixed economy of schools.

Schools Funding Formula

your
county
cares

Counties

- County authorities receive £4,366 per pupil
- 30% of Free School Meals Pupils in counties achieved 5 GCSE A*-Cs
- 15% of Looked After Children in counties achieved 5 GCSE A*-Cs

In 2016/17

47%
Funding gap
per pupil

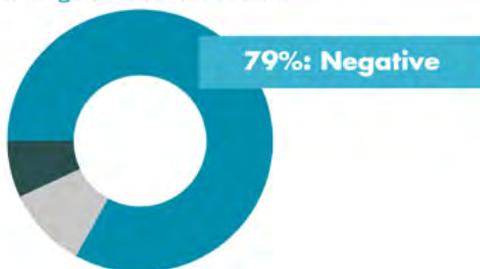
London

- Inner London councils receive £6,414 per pupil
- 47% of Free School Meals Pupils in inner London achieved 5 GCSE A*-Cs
- 24% of Looked After Children in inner London achieved 5 GCSE A*-Cs

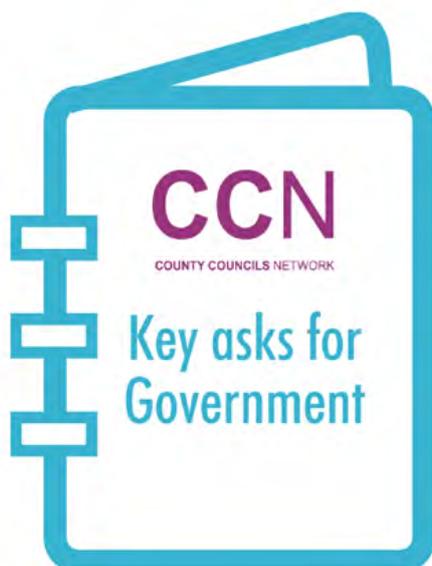
CCN Survey

of county education cabinet members

The overall impact of the new funding formula will be:



The funding formula will impact on small rural schools' viability:



- Deliver revised proposals for a school funding formula to place schools in county areas on a fairer and more equitable footing, with no school losing funding
- This must deliver a core baseline of funding that provides the conditions for every school to operate at a sufficient level to deliver a quality education
- Councils, in partnership with their schools forum, should continue to play a lead strategic role in the pooling and distribution of funding in order to address local pressures
- Greater protection for small rural schools, in particular those that do not benefit from sparsity funding



A MODERN & FAIR EDUCATION SYSTEM

Fair funding for all schools and enabling county authorities to support a mixed economy of excellent schools

A PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT

HOW COUNTIES CAN WORK WITH GOVERNMENT TO DELIVER A NEW FAIR FUNDING FORMULA & SCHOOL REFORM

1) A FAIR FUNDING FORMULA



Government must continue with planned reforms to the schools funding formula. A revised formula should set an adequate level for county schools to maintain acceptable teacher pupil ratios, operate sufficiently and to be sustainable for the foreseeable future.

2) ADDITIONAL NEEDS FUNDING

This funding must be in addition to the core baseline and target resources to support pupils in achieving their full potential. The weightings in the revised schools funding formula should target additional needs funding to close the attainment gap between looked after children and pupils in receipt of free school meals in county areas and those in other local authority types.



3) SPECIAL NEEDS FUNDING



CCN support the LGA's calls for sufficient funding to reflect the rising demand for support for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

4) HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT



Government should urgently undertake a consultation on home to school transport, examining the adequacy of the existing policy and funding envelope in an evolving education environment.

5) RURAL SCHOOLS

Government has committed to protecting small rural schools through the introduction of the national funding formula. These schools are at the heart of the communities they serve and this commitment must be delivered. The formula's proposed sparsity factor does not provide sufficient funding to rural schools and the weighting attributed to this should be revised. Small rural schools that fall outside of the Government's definition of 'sparsity' are at greatest risk due to lack of funding, as well as having the least scope to deliver savings through economies of scale.



6) SCHOOL PLACES



Government empower local authorities to be able to require free schools and academies to expand the number of school places they provide to meet local demand. Government should strengthen the role of local authorities in determining and signing off the final location of new free schools and academies to ensure that new provision is located where it is required most.

CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Founded in 1997, the County Councils Network (CCN) is a network of 37 County Councils and Unitary authorities that serve county areas. We are a cross party organisation, expressing the views of member councils to the wider Local Government Association and to central Government departments.

To discuss any of CCN's proposals in more detail, please contact:

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