

Child of the North APPG: Education Evidence Key Findings Session 11 July 2023

Attendees:

In-person

Emma Lewell-Buck MP (Chair), Kim Johnson MP, Liz Twist MP, Peter Gibson MP, Mike Amesbury MP, Mary Glendon MP, Hannah Davies (NHS), Dr Megan Wood (University of Leeds) Rebecca Natton (Emma Lewell-Buck's Office), Rebecca Plummer (Office of Bishop of Durham).

Via Teams

Kate Pickett (University of York), Mark Mon-Williams (University of Leeds), Alexis Darby (NHS).

Apologies:

Mary Robinson MP (Co-Chair), Sharon Hodgson MP (Vice-Chair) Simon Fell MP, Rachael Maskell MP (Vice-Chair), Catherine McKinnell MP.

ELB opened the meeting and welcomed external speakers. Gave an overview of the education evidence session in May and introduced Hannah Davies and Dr Megan Wood to run through the key findings.

HD explained we are keen to engage with members of the APPG around the policy solutions in the report.

MW said that education can target some of the problems and this document offers solutions as to how we can do that through better-connected data for example. Megan gave an overview of Professor David Taylor-Robinson's research on school funding.

KJ asked about schools in disadvantaged areas and that many teachers are leaving the profession.

MMW explained that James Lauder, Assistant Vice Principal, Dixons Trinity Academy, Bradford will be leading a chapter about issues that are playing out in schools and Jim will back this up with data on recruitment and retention.

MW we have recommendations based on the evidence session and we are working with the education research in Bradford, the University of Bradford, the University of Leeds and York University – we are working in partnership with local authorities too. An example of how this works in Bradford is a project with optometrists and the NHS – we now have glasses for children in schools that need them and the academic outcomes increased.

LT have you also looked at children hearing as this is important?

MW This is why we must connect these services and give a well-rounded service so children can reach their potential.

MMW When schools and services shared information, we were able to support children in the class room, they now have a pair of glasses in the class room and at home. This is linked to the family support worker scheme.

MW The electronic developmental support tool can reduce the burden on our external services on autism services for example. We can identify needs in the class room and work with teachers to find areas where we need to target support. This tool means we can identify vulnerable children and target them in the class room so they aren't waiting months for support.

ELB If we want traction, we need to be clear about what we are saying and we need all the evidence to back it up. We need this to be a bit sharper.

MA I hear what you are saying about resources and early ID - tell me more about the funding.

HD London has done better as its had more money – there is a direct correlation and this funding hasn't gone to more deprived areas. Places in the North have been disproportionately underfunded.

LT Do we have specific themes for the funding? On what the money is being spent on?

MMW DTR showed the data that the better resourced you are the better attainment. There is a huge disparity. Chronic underinvestment in the North.

KP I would add that what London has shown is that if you do invest in an education system you can turn it around and London schools have seen turn around in these outcomes. London is a hopeful story even if it is a story of contrast.

HD This will be a hook for the media, our Children have been underfunded and that's why the levelling up outcomes are worse.

LT what about young children?

MW there is an argument that better connected services support the child. In lots of cases schools don't even know about these services.

PG I liked the point about comparing spending. This is key to depoliticise the argument. The conversation about SEN is a big issue in my constituency, lots of parents are waiting – I worry that when we talk about challenges in the North that it takes away some of the great work we are doing, and great work schools are doing. Some programmes are working really well and should be brought across the North. Want to acknowledge good work is going on.

MG SEN is so bad, and it is underfunded and ratings are inaccurate and the bar is so low. The system isn't good enough.

MMW We would like to show how much this will cost us in the long term, how modest investments early on in a child's life can save money downstream. We can stop NEAT and homelessness and health problems - we want to shine a light on this, invest early and decrease some of the pressures.

KP There are lots of good news and positive stories and things that can be scaled up and we can show how these interventions can work for children across the UK.

ELB Does anyone have any more comments, how do we feel about the layout? Would Maryam do the forward? And going back to the funding issue can we see how much we have lost and how much more funding London got? What are our recommendations?

MMW We definitely want to include DTR's numbers. And how and where we can use this funding to support the North.

HD We can do some modelling on what was given to London in funding and maybe we can do a comparison, there will be a caveat, but we could do it. Asking for parity sounds fair.

MG We need the parity and make sure we are being fair re: London weighting.

MA We have a London channel but do we need a Northern one – we need to invest – it is about powering up our children.

KJ Improving coordination- Sure Start did the early years and is there a correlation between demise of Sure Start and life chances? Can we look at this?

HD Yes, we have research on this – and we can bring it in. We need the Family Hubs up to the same level of funding as Sure Start.

PG Asked about Gypsy and Traveller communities and ethnic groups within the report.

HD touched on the possibility of an ethnic groups report in the future.

ELB This report is very Bradford heavy.

HD We are having that conversation and we are going to get voices from young people in Liverpool and from across the North East.

ELB When will report be ready?

HD September 11 is the report launch date and we will have a final draft at least two weeks before this so mid-august at the latest and we will share with APPG. There will be enough time to feedback.

PG Are we going to launch this wider, Parliament?

ELB We had planned to do a Westminster Hall Debate for the previous report and we had a list of PQs for members to ask.

HD Alexis will pull all that together for you.

PG And letters to Ministers?

ELB We sent letters but we didn't get anywhere.

HD This is something we can revisit for the launch.

KJL is the launch date in conference season maybe we would be better off looking at another date?

HD We can review the launch date.

ELB thanked all the experts for their work and ended the meeting.

ENDS