

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date: Monday 14 January 2019
Venue: Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
8	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and noted the apologies that were received. This included the guest Speaker Louise Baxter, who was due to present to the Board during item two. No declarations of interest were made.	
9	National Trading Standards Scams Team: Councils' Work to Tackle Fraud - Louise Baxter in attendance Rebecca Johnson, Adviser, presented item two, and updated members on the work of the National Trading Standards Scams Team (NTSST). Rebecca stated that scams cost around £5-10 billion each year, however, the exact figure is not known due to people unaware of being scammed, or too embarrassed to report the incident. Rebecca went on to state that the Scams Team have been setup to work with banks, and realise the importance the role of councils can play – to raise awareness amongst residents, including sign-posting victims to relevant services. As a result, the Friends Against Scams (FAS) initiative was launched to provide tools and resources to educate individuals, with currently 54 councils signed up. Rebecca then asked Cllr Judith Wallace – the Board's Scambassador – gave the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The FAS initiative is aimed at communities to build up resilience against scams.• The FAS aim to sign-up one million friends against scams.• Victims of scams do not want to admit it they are a victim of this crime, as they often feel stupid.• Part of the work to raise awareness of scams and for victims not to feel ashamed.• Cllr Wallace encouraged members for their authorities to sign-up to the initiative.• The e-learning tool will be circulated following the Board.	

- Alongside Banks, the FAS is working with the Royal Mail, as postal scams make up the majority of this work.
- The FAS initiative is also working with young people, during universities fresher's week.

Following the update members discussed how scams can play on peoples greed and victims generosity, giving examples of fake charity collections in towns and highstreets, as well as via post and on the internet. Members agreed that this is an incredibly important issue.

Members also discussed the importance of the Scambassador role, and praised the Member Champion for their work on this. Members went on to state that it is worrying only 54 councils have signed up to the initiative, and that the NTSST need to push harder, but admitted that initiatives such as these takes a while to gain traction.

Members agreed that this work should be included at an education level as some young people are just as unaware of scams as some of the elderly. Members also commented that this is a cross-boundary issue.

Members agreed that this is a significant issues that costs the taxpayer and economy too much, and as a result to tackle this, local government should be at the forefront to tackle scams.

Some members stated that they were not aware of the FAS initiative, and raised questioned over who funds it, as well as how realistic the target is to get one million friends to sign-up to the initiative?

- Cllr Wallace stated that the National Trading Standards Body currently funds the initiative, and agreed that the target is hugely ambitious, but agreed that this was an eye catching figure.

Members reported that some of the Trading Standards in their own authorities had received a significant increase of reporting of scams.

Member raised issues over the perpetrators of scams, who want direct immediate money transferred via banks, as once money has been transferred from one account to another, it has gone for good. Members discussed the idea of a time lock to delay transfers of money.

Members raised awareness of a recent event for the elderly at an elderly village, which was well attended by both residents and stakeholders, such as banks, HMRC and the NTS.

Members greed that working with the Post Office on this issues is key.

Members requested the list of the 54 members who had signed up to the FAS initiative.

- Rebecca stated she would seek clarification from the NTS regarding circulating this list.

Member raised the issue of cuts to trading standards, as well as the need to recruit young people for NTS Officers. The Chair agreed with this, and went on to stated that there was a serious demographic problem of NTS Officers as many in his area are due to retire. Members agreed that this could be an area of consideration by the LGA.

Members also discussed the impact of Brexit, and how consumer law and scams legislation may fall under the radar following the UK's departure from the EU.

10 Appendix A: Case Study Mr and Mrs A's Story

11 Protective Security Issues - Government Security Advisor, CPNI

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board received a confidential update from a government security adviser.

12 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings

Mark Norris, Principle Policy Adviser, introduced the item. Mark's update included numerous developments since the previous meeting, including:

- Progress has been made on remediating buildings with ACM cladding, particularly in the social housing sector; of three quarters of social housing blocks, dangerous cladding is now being removed.
- The bigger issue however is with private sector buildings, and Government has made a number of announcements on this since the last meeting. The Secretary of State has announced changes to operating guidance, which will come into effect in a couple of weeks and will aid local authorities in taking enforcement action against owners who are not taking off cladding as fast as they need to.
- In the same statement, the Secretary of State also said that where councils want to take action to remove cladding themselves (given that they already have powers to strip cladding off), MHCLG will make money available to support this, although councils will have to make a case for funding on a case by case basis.
- The issue relating to risk indemnity insurance for the joint inspection team has been resolved, with HM Treasury agreeing to cover unlimited indemnity for the year the team operates and six years afterwards. Once this is in effect the team will be better placed to go and advise authorities; a lead officer is now in post and there is a list of local authorities the team is expecting to talk to.
- The ban on combustible cladding came into effect on 21 December 2019.
- The Government's implementation plan for the Dame Judith Hackett proposals has been published. The LGA is heavily involved in discussing with this with MHCLG, and there will be a consultation, so we have two attempts to influence this.
- The LGA has been sharing information with authorities about possible risks relating to buildings with concrete roofs, following the collapse of a concrete roof at a school in Kent. The speed between the issue being noticed and the roof collapsing was a particular concern.

Following the update, members discussed the Approved Document B consultation, which seeks views on whether the scope should be expanded. Members discussed that there is a case for looking at lower buildings with vulnerable residents. The Chair agreed with this point, and stated that his area has lots of buildings that are at a lower level – hotels

for example – where lots of people reside. The Chair also made the note that managers of these buildings often test the fire alarm at the wrong time.

13 Update Paper

Member Champions of the Board fed-back their recent work during item five:

Member Champions for Licensing attended the BACTA meeting, the trade body for amusement arcades. Members reported that BACTA are pleased about the reduction in Fixed-Odd Betting terminal (FOBT) stakes, but feel there are similar products on the market they felt would be appropriate for regulation and campaigns.

Members discussed the impending Cllrs' guide to tackle Modern Slavery. The member Champion to tackle Modern Slavery also updated members that is still no Commissioner. The Member Champion also discussed the recent meeting with Vernon Cocker MP, Chair of the APPG on Modern Slavery. The member Champion concluded by thanking officers of the recent conference that took place at the LGA – making specific reference to paragraph 12 in the Update Paper.

Members questioned if there had been any further news or assurances around future funding of the National FGM Centre? Deputy-Chair Cllr Anita Lower stated there had been no assurances from the government yet, but ideas are being formulated by Sarah Champion MP.

Members, Deputy-Chair Cllr Dalton, and the Chair, all praised officer for the announcement that Just Eat will now include the official Food Hygiene Rating of each of its UK restaurant partners.

The Member Champion for Water Safety thanked officers for their submission into the MCA review, as well as officers work to get incident data released by the Home Office.

14 Note of last Safer Stronger Communities Board meeting

Members agreed to the notes of the previous meeting on Monday 19 November 2018.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Eric Allen	
	Cllr Keith McLean	Milton Keynes Council

Cllr John Pennington
Cllr Colin Spence
Cllr Judith Wallace
Cllr Katrina Wood
Cllr Nick Worth
Cllr Jim Beall
Cllr James Dawson
Cllr Kate Haigh
Cllr Farah Hussain
Cllr Alan Rhodes
Cllr Jeremy Hilton

Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Suffolk County Council
North Tyneside Council
Wycombe District Council
South Holland District Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Erewash Borough Council
Gloucester City Council
Redbridge London Borough Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Gloucestershire County Council

Apologies

Cllr Carole Burdis

North Tyneside Council

In Attendance

LGA Officers