

19 March 2018

Update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board are asked to note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Update paper

National FGM Centre

1. Since receiving further funding over the summer the National FGM Centre (NFGMC) has continued to provide direct services to local authorities by combining social work services and community outreach, sharing this learning nationally through a knowledge hub, consultancy, practice development and training. The Centre's remit has expanded to include not only FGM but also child abuse linked to faith or belief and breast ironing/flattening. Since expanding their remit the Centre has continued to work with three low prevalence areas and is also working to bring three high prevalence areas in London, into the work of the Centre. As partners with Barnardo's in the Centre the LGA is keen to ensure that the wider remit and work of the Centre is well known and that the offer of the Centre to councils is being taken up.
2. The Centre has received 254 referrals (between Sept 2015 – Jan 2018), involving over 300 girls from 46 different nationalities, from the six pilot sites in the East of England and 13 from other Local Authorities in England. They have supported the application of 14 FGM Protection Orders over this time. See infographic attached at **Appendix A**.
3. Sustainability is a key goal for the NFGMC both for the immediate and longer term. Over the next few months the NFGMC will be working towards developing a strategy and marketing plan. The Centre's grant from the Department for Education to 2020 has built into it a requirement to generate income from the outset, with a significant tapering of the grant element of the funding over time.
4. Funding from local authorities for the social work service provided is projected to be the largest single source of income. Other sources of income include training and professional development, and statutory funders such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Police and Crime Commissioners.
5. The Centre can be commissioned by councils to provide social work intervention on their behalf and bespoke pieces of work e.g. family assessment and court reports. This is particularly beneficial as councils will benefit from expertise and experience built up over a number of years working in this field.
6. For this wave of funding the Centre is being evaluated by the University of Bedfordshire. The aim is to have the evaluation completed by March 2019 and to promote it to local authorities as evidence of the Centre's impact.

Developments at the Centre

7. The Centre's new website was launched on 11 January 2018. There has already been an increase in the number of users and users are spending more time on the site. The 'Commission Us' section of the site has been revamped to include the new areas of focus and a commission us video.

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Assessment Guidance

8. The NFGMC developed a FGM Assessment Tool and accompanying Guidance to support social workers to assess a FGM case. It was piloted and independently evaluated. It comprises of three main parts:
 - 8.1. A good practice document on what to consider when assessing a FGM case.
 - 8.2. Questions to consider asking when meeting a family.
 - 8.3. An Online FGM Assessment which calculates the risk of FGM to a girl, on the basis of the information provided.
9. Cllr Anita Lower Chaired the launch of the assessment tool and guidance on 5 February in London. The tool was well received and there were 61 delegates in attendance. There was a second launch event in Manchester on 5 March, which was also Chaired by Cllr Lower.

Training

10. The Centre has delivered training to over 1000 delegates, as well as providing specialist school training and learning seminars. Most recently the Centre has also completed training on its new FGM Assessment tool.

Commission for Counter Extremism

11. In February, Cllr Blackburn met with the new independent Counter Extremism Commissioner, Sara Khan. The Commission for Counter Extremism has been established following a statement in the Queen's Speech last year, with Sara's appointment announced in early February.
12. The role is for a period of three years, and will be supported by a small secretariat. The work of the Commission is expected to be shaped by the Commissioner, but the Home Office has stated that it will include:
 - 12.1. Identifying extremism and advising the Government on new policies to tackle extremism, including whether there is a need for new powers.
 - 12.2. Supporting communities and the public sector in confronting extremism wherever it exists.
 - 12.3. Promoting British values and community cohesion – including ensuring women's rights are upheld.
13. Initial objectives for the Commission have been announced as:
 - 13.1. Engaging widely and openly on extremism and Britain's values across the public sector, communities, civil society, and with legal and academic experts.

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- 13.2. Producing a strategic assessment of the threat faced from extremism, and the current response.
 - 13.3. Advising Ministers on the Commission's future structures, work programme and the appointment of further commissioners.
14. Sara is very keen to hear further from councils as her work develops, and we will be represented at an initial Commission stakeholder roundtable at the end of March.

BASS Protocol

15. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have appointed a new provider of the Bail Accommodation and Support Service (BASS), replacing Stonham Homes. The BASS protocol has been in place since approximately 2009, and provides the basis for working arrangements between the BASS contractor and each local authority in whose area the Director of Offender Management has determined a need for BASS accommodation with support. The MoJ has redrafted it following the change of provider and is keen to agree the new draft with the LGA as soon as possible because while most of the existing stock will transfer to the new provider, some new stock acquisitions are expected in the run-up to the new contract commencing on 18 June.
16. An introductory meeting between the MoJ, the new provider, the SSCB Chair and an LGA officer took place on 6 March.

College of Policing meeting

17. Following the last Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting, where members discussed the College of Policing's draft consultation on modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines, Cllr Simon Blackburn met with the College to outline the LGA's views on the guidelines. During the meeting, Cllr Blackburn highlighted the Board's concerns about a decline in community engagement – both with local government and neighbourhood police officers. We agreed to work with the College of Policing to ensure local councils are engaged with the guidelines when they are published, to ensure there is good communication with the local police and also our residents. We have asked for further information about how the guidelines will be implemented and how progress is measured in local communities.

Moped and scooter crime roundtable

18. In January, Cllr Blackburn attended the moped and scooter crime roundtable, led by the Home Office. Discussions focused on parking security (primarily in London) and measures the manufacturing industry could take to help secure motorbikes from theft. There were also discussions about off-road bikes causing different issues in more rural areas, which the members would take into consideration as part of the strategy to tackle powered two wheeled vehicle crime.

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County Lines

19. In February, the Home Office held the County Lines working group session and updated members of the group on the upcoming Serious Violent Crime Strategy. The Strategy is expected to be published in the Spring 2018. It is expected to include proposed actions on knife crime, moped and scooter crime, acid attacks and other forms of serious violent crime. There will be a full update to the Board when this is published.

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsy, Roma & Travellers

20. Cllr Simon Blackburn met with Baroness Whitaker, co-chair of the APPG for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (GRT) to discuss a number of issues affecting the GRT community, including unauthorised encampments, council websites, offensive language and overall inequalities experienced by the group. During the meeting, we outlined recent discussions the LGA has had with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission about a toolkit to support elected officials seek out early interventions to address offensive speech in their work and communities, which we have referenced in our upcoming councillor's guide. We have agreed to update the APPG if we receive good practice case studies from councils, which are available to be shared with the group.

21. Cllr Blackburn also wrote to the Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee Maria Miller MP, as the committee are holding an inquiry into tackling inequalities in the GRT community, to offer to meet and discuss the issue in more detail. In the letter, Cllr Blackburn explained that engaging with and supporting GRT communities is very much a local issue, that different councils take different approaches on, based on local levels of need. As a membership organisation we have sought to provide practical support to local authorities in this area as appropriate.

National Oversight Group on Domestic Violence

22. The Home Office held its latest National Oversight Group meeting on Domestic Violence. There were discussions about the upcoming consultation, which has now been published. We also heard presentations on the DA Matters training, which some police forces had taken up, and the latest trends on referrals and prosecutions for domestic abuse- related crime and incidents.

Modern Slavery Regional Events

23. We have now completed all five of our modern slavery regional events. They were held in London, Newcastle, Manchester, Bristol and finished in Nottingham. We had good attendance across the events with over 300 delegates from over 100 councils joining us. The workshops provided some excellent case studies and learning from areas that had been working on the issue of modern slavery. We are now considering how we can best capture some of this learning to share more widely.

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Prime Minister's Tackling Modern Slavery & People Trafficking Implementation Taskforce

24. In February 2018, the Chairman of the LGA, Lord Porter, attended the Prime Minister's Taskforce on tackling modern slavery. The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister. A number of different organisations were present around the table including a number of different Government departments, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Crown Prosecution Service, the police and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. A range of issues were discussed at the meeting.

Cllr Alan Rhodes meeting with Vernon Coaker MP on Modern Slavery

25. On 8 March Cllr Alan Rhodes met with Vernon Coaker MP, co-Chair of the APPG on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. Cllr Rhodes highlighted the work of the LGA in tackling modern slavery including the joint work with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's office on the guide and the regional workshops.

26. Vernon Coaker MP outlined the work of the APPG. In particular, the APPG was seeking to increase its engagement with local government and to help foster joint working between the police and local government. The APPG's primary concerns were immigration, recognising the vulnerabilities of victims, garnering support for [Lord McColl's Bill](#), improving funding, county lines, pushing the Government to implement all elements of the Modern Slavery Act. The APPG meets regularly and includes a range of stakeholders including NGOs who work on this issue and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

Taxis/PHVs update

27. The Ministerial working group on taxi/PHV licensing has concluded its evidence gathering stage and is now in the process of drafting a report which will include a series of recommendations for new Minister for Taxis, Nusrat Ghani MP, to consider.

28. Work has continued on the development of the national register of taxi/PHV licence refusals and revocations, with initial user testing of the websites functionality now complete. All councils has received communications from the LGA about how they can sign up to the register and we are in the process of developing guidance setting out steps councils will need to take to update internal processes in preparation for the launch of the register in April.

29. A Private Members Bill tabled by Daniel Zeichner MP which aimed to build on the LGA's work and effectively put a statutory duty on licensing authorities to share information about licences they have revoked, refused or suspended on a register, and to check the register in respect of every new and renewal application had its second reading in Parliament on 2 February 2018. Unfortunately though, the Bill was unsuccessful and fell during second reading.

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Emergency planning and civil resilience

30. The LGA's first Councillor masterclass session on emergency planning and civil resilience is scheduled for Thursday 15 March, with twenty councillors from around the country due to attend the event at the West Midlands FRS. Councillor Sue Murphy, the Deputy Leader of Manchester council, was the keynote speaker at the event, giving a councillor perspective on the council's response to the Manchester Arena bombing last year.
31. Following the event, we will be reviewing the feedback and format with a view to holding further events around the country. There has been a very positive response to the event from our networks of emergency planning officers, who are very keen to support events in their areas. We will also be building on the event by revising our councillor guide on civil contingencies.
32. Emergency planning and civil resilience is one of the areas of support identified in the LGA-MHCLG MoU for 2018-19. Alongside the activities above, we also expect to work with SOLACE to look at support for senior leadership teams (including both politicians and senior managers) and on developing guidance on the lifecycle of an emergency.