

Other Business Report - Decisions and Actions Required

Decisions

1. *Members are asked to:*
 - *receive policy updates on community cohesion, smoke free legislation the mental health bill, local government bill, and supporting people*
 - *feedback from meetings attended since the last Board meeting on 10 January 2007;*
 - *Note the Conference programme 2007/08*

Actions Required

2. *Secretariat to take necessary action.*

Action by: *Secretariat*

Contact Officer: Paul Ogden, 0207 664 3277, paul.ogden@ga.gov.uk

7 March 2007

Other Business Report

Summary

1. *This report provides a summary of other business relevant to the Board and also deals with issues relating Community Well-being Board representation on LGA groups. Members are also asked to feedback on meetings attended since the last Community Well-being Board meeting on 10 January.*

Other Business

2. Community Cohesion

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion was established in August 2006 "to explore how different communities and places in England are getting along and what might be done to bring people together". The Commission is chaired by Darra Singh, Chief Executive of Ealing, and is due to report in June 2007.

The LGA has submitted its input into the Commission consultation, 'Your chance to tell us what you think'. The LGA are also organising a conference for April 2007 on cohesion and integration that will discuss the findings from the Commissions interim report. The LGA believes that, whether dealing with settled communities or the sudden arrival of new migrants, local authorities have a central role to play in helping to promote cohesion and integration, based on strong leadership, a shared vision and values, active community engagement and clear communication at the local level.

3. National Councillor Network for Adult Social Care and Health

The first meeting of the National Councillor Network for Adult Social Care and Health took place on 6 February at the Strand Palace Hotel, London. A network for Lead Members for Children's Services has been running since 2005, and the IDeA felt that it would be valuable to start a network for councillors responsible for leading the Adults and Health portfolios. Councillor Gareth Barnard, chaired the launch of this event.

The network meetings bring councillors together to share experiences and learning, and provide an opportunity for members to hear from specialist speakers, IDeA advisers and local authority colleagues with good practice to share. The IDeA also propose to set up a dedicated web page to keep members of the network up-to-date with the latest relevant legislation and best practice.

The first meeting spent some time to considering what councillors want the network to provide, and your thoughts and ideas will inform how IDeA takes this network forward. There was also a presentation from Janice Shersby from the Department of Health who kindly provided an update on the White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say".

4. Working Together for Well-being: From Vision to Reality

A key report, entitled Working Together for Well-being: From Vision to Reality, was launched at an LGA conference on 28 February 2007. The paper looks at how local stakeholders could

implement the proposals around adult social care as outlined in the Department of Health's (DH) and the Department of Communities and Local Government's White Papers.

Published in partnership with the Inter Agency Group on Adult Social Care (IAG), a coalition of leading national social care agencies, the paper will also provide some practical ideas on how local structures and services could be reconfigured to better integrate health and social care, using examples from a range of local authorities.

5. Smoke Free legislation

A successful joint LGA/LACORS conference on the Smoke Free legislation took place in Local Government House, on 7th February 2007, with the Minister, Caroline Flint providing the keynote speech.

The Department of Health (DH) has published the first set of regulations in relation to the new smoke-free places legislation. The Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations were laid before Parliament on 18 December 2006 and include definitions of premises affected.

The Department for Health has confirmed that these regulations are final and will come into force on 1 July 2007.

6 Local Government Bill

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill was published on 12 December, following publication of the Local Government White Paper in late October. The Bill contains a wide-ranging set of proposals and Part 11 of the Bill which relates to the Health implications and includes provision for the creation of Local Involvement Networks (LINks) to replace the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health, to be commissioned and supported by councils. LINks have been designed to ensure the involvement of people in commissioning, providing and scrutinising health local care services. The Secretary of State can impose a duty on service providers to respond to requests for information from a LINk.

The LGA supports the creation of LINks. However the lack of statutory partnership for health and well-being, with a duty to co-operate, plan and work towards targets is a missed opportunity to ensure further integration between health and social care. The relationship between powers of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) and LINks is not clear – with the OSCs not covering NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts. The creation of LINks, with each council as the commissioning body and host organisation, means that councils must be adequately funded and provided with sufficient support. Where relevant we will pursue amendments to support these positions.

The Bill had its 2nd Reading on 22 January 2007 and entered Committee Stage on 30 January 2007. The LGA gave evidence to the Public Bill Committee at its first meeting on 30 January 2007 and was the first organisation to have offered evidence under the new system. The Committee has concluded its hearing of evidence. Committee Stage is scheduled to conclude on Thursday 8th March 2007.

7. Mental Health Bill

The bill is the government's third attempt in eight years to reform the 1983 Mental Health Act. The government first published proposals to reform the act in 1999. A draft bill followed in 2002 but was strongly opposed by mental health campaigners and psychiatrists. A second draft bill was published in 2004, but this was again widely opposed. After the second draft bill was heavily criticised by a parliamentary committee, the government abandoned it in March this year but announced its intention to press ahead with the most controversial aspects of the draft mental health bill in shorter, streamlined legislation. A third bill was published after the Queen's

speech in November 2006. The bill is expected to affect 14,000 of the 600,000 people who use mental health services each year.

On 20 February, Peers defeated the government over its plans to detain and treat people with mental health problems who have committed no offence. Conservative, Liberal Democrat, crossbench and rebel Labour peers voted by 186 to 115 to ensure that detention and compulsory treatment is permitted only if it is "likely" to help the patient. Opponents - including many medical professionals - say the Bill lacks proper safeguards and fear it could prove counter-productive, by deterring people with problems from seeking help.

Rosie Winterton MP has agreed to attend and speak at the LGA Mental Health Bill Conference on 1 March.

8. Supporting People

It is still unclear when the Supporting People strategy is likely to be published, though it seems likely that this will be at some point during March. As well as setting out the future direction of the supporting people programme, the document will set out how it is intended that future delivery will support more personalised services – in particular through linkage with the Individual Budgets pilots – and also set out intentions regarding procurement / commissioning of services in the context of the continuing efficiency programme. It is also understood that consideration is still being given to extending the statutory duties in relation to SP, though whether or not this will be included in the strategy is not clear.

In relation to efficiencies, CLG have established the Supporting People Value Improvement Programme which is intended to build nationally on the work of the eleven value improvement pilots – the lessons from pilot authorities being that through specific focus on commissioning and procurement and on service design authorities were able to make

9. LGA Asylum and Refugee Task Group

The Asylum and Refugee Task Group, chaired by Cllr Roger Lawrence of the Community Well-Being Board, agreed at its meeting on 25 January to indicate to the Board that it wishes to the undertake lobbying work around destitute asylum seekers, in cases where destitution is caused by problems within the asylum process. This issue is increasingly being highlighted as an area for concern for local and regional agencies, politicians and service planners, especially in relation to creating and supporting cohesive communities. The Task Group recognises that some asylum claims will be unsuccessful and will require removal proceedings but believes that creation of destitution as a deterrent to encourage compliance with asylum decisions has consistently failed. The Task Group wishes to work with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate within the Home Office to examine at the policy causes of destitution, with a view to exploring possible improvements to the asylum process.

10. Older People

Work on the shared priority programme focusing on improving quality of life for older people has now been completed with a number of documents being produced from the work of the action learning sets formed under the programme. The purpose of the programme was to bring together people working in communities to explore how services for older people might be developed and to shift the focus of services from prevention of illness and need for intensive support towards a more positive emphasis on well-being and engagement with the wider community. The guides and accompanying materials were launched at an LGA conference Facing the future: shaping services for older people held on 19 January 2007.

11. Conference Programme 2007/08

- *Working Together for wellbeing* 28 February 2007
- *Mental Health Bill: issues for Implementation* 1 March 2007
- *Engaging Communities* 26 March 2007
- *Learning Disabilities* June 2007
- *Joint Adult and Children Services Transitions Conference* June 2007
- *LAA's and Commissioning* July 2007
- *CDA Review Conference* July 2007
- *Impact of the Smoking Act* September 2007
- *Personalisation* November 2007
- *Adult and Children Services Conference* October 2007
- *Older People* January 2008

Feedback from meetings

12. *Members are asked to feedback from meetings they have attended since the last Community Well-being Board meeting on 10 January 2007.*

Implications for Wales

13. *There are no specific implications for Wales in this report.*

Financial/Resource Implications

14. *None*

Contact Officer: Paul Ogden, 02076643277, paul.ogden@ga.gov.uk