

Later Life: National Indicator Set; Information, Advice and Advocacy services

Summary

Councils are working to improve services for older people and also to transform social care to meet the ambitions of the Putting People First concordat. The LGA and IDeA are supporting councils to meet the National Indicator Set, particularly in the key area of information, advice and advocacy.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note and endorse the LGA Group work to date
- Note the work of Leeds City Council
- Agree a position on the issues in paragraph 9

Action

As determined by the Board

Contact Officer: Trish O'Flynn
Phone No: 020 7664 3129
Email: trish.oflynn@lga.gov.uk

Later Life: National Indicator Set; Information, Advice and Advocacy services

Background

1. Public Service Agreements (PSAs) set out the key priority outcomes the Government wants to achieve in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period 2008–2011. The Department for Work and Pensions leads on PSA 17 'Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and wellbeing in later life'. Councils and their partners have a key role in contributing to the success of PSA 17 through Local Area Agreements.
2. PSA17 has five key indicators:
 - the employment rate of those aged 50–69 and the difference between this and the overall employment rate;
 - the percentage of pensioners in low income;
 - healthy life expectancy at 65 (National Indicator 137);
 - satisfaction with home and neighbourhood among the over-65s (National Indicator 138);
 - the extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home (National Indicator 139).
3. In considering how councils are engaging with later life issues, an Audit Commission report - Don't Stop Me Now, July 2008 – suggested that 28% of councils had meaningful engagement with the older community, well developed strategies and a coordinated range of services, while 45% of councils had started to make progress but were at an early stage of strategic development. However, 27% of councils focused solely on social care and made no other provision for older people.

National Indicator Set

4. The LGA/IDeA have commissioned Deborah Klee to research how councils can deliver on the later life indicators in the National Indicator Set by undertaking some detailed work in a small number of authorities. A briefing on the project will be circulated at the meeting and **Deborah Klee** will be present at the Board meeting to outline the findings so far.
5. As well as the research the IDeA held a workshop in December 2008 with a range of authorities to explore how they are working on this agenda through their Local Area Agreement (LAA). The research with local authorities and the workshop outcomes will lead to a short, easy to read report for local authorities to be published in early 2009.

Information, advice and advocacy

6. Information, advice and advocacy are essential for all adults who need, or may need, services and support in order to lead their everyday lives. This includes people with the full range of needs and means. The Putting People First Concordat (December 2007) sets out an ambition for universal information, advice and advocacy for those in need of support from councils and other local agencies. National Indicator 139 (the extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home) promotes the development of information, advice and advocacy services for all older people. **Leeds City Council** will attend the meeting to showcase the work they have been doing to achieve NI 139.
7. In 2007 CSCI carried out a mystery shopper exercise (Hello, how can I help? – October 2007) and concluded that while on the phone council staff generally gave good information and inspired confidence, the quality and relevance of written information varied considerably. Since then the LGA has worked with CSCI to deliver regional seminars for council information teams and a good practise report is due in Spring 2009.
8. With Department of Health funding, the LGA, IDeA, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the charity Counsel and Care have commissioned research on information, advice and advocacy services in local authorities. **Cathie Williams**, the independent consultant who led the work, will attend the Board meeting and slides on the interim findings are attached as Appendix 1.

Issues for discussion

9. a) The relationship between national advice sources and local services

There has been a growth in the number of telephone lines and websites run nationally by the public, private and third sectors. For example: Directgov, NHS Choices, Carers Helpline, Counsel and Care, Carers UK all provide advice at a national level. This can be about nationally provided support e.g. benefits or provide signposting to further sources; for some people national advice fills a local gap. Proposals for further national resources continue to come forward, including top slicing money off council funding.

Members are asked to consider

- the need for the mapping of existing resources to inform future funding;
- how local services can interact with national resources to promote individual wellbeing;
- how the LGA Group can promote a coherent approach to national advice.

23 4

b) Local approaches to commissioning information, advice and advocacy

The research highlights that the interpersonal dimensions of information, advice and advocacy (together with facilitating assessment, support planning and brokerage and support with the ongoing management of services) are essential components of the transformation agenda. Where councils commission these services externally they should support the effectiveness of the other activities councils undertake in relation to personal budgets, direct payments, resource allocation systems, the application of eligibility criteria and safeguarding responsibilities.

There are additional issues with an externalised approach:

- although independence from the council may be helpful, there may be other conflicts of interest or issues around quality control of information
- to ensure continuity of support for individuals, sufficient arrangements for advice, advocacy, support planning, brokerage, support with the ongoing management of services and safeguarding should be in place before councils divest themselves of staff with these skills.

Members are asked to consider:

- the need for some kind of national accreditation scheme, consistent quality standards or standard templates for information, advice and advocacy services;
- whether, for those on Individual Budgets/Direct Payments or who are self funding, the services commissioned should encompass all aspects of care management
- the need for guidance for authorities to minimise the risk of service disruption.

Financial Implications

None identified

Implications for Wales

None identified

Contact Officer: Trish O'Flynn
Phone No: 020 7664 3129
Email: trish.oflynn@lga.gov.uk