

Other Business Report

Summary

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

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note updates on the Health Bill, Asylum and Refugee Task Group and good practice in closing or changing care services.
- Receive update from the IDeA.
- Feed back from meetings attended since the last Board meeting

Action

Secretariat to take necessary action.

Other Business Report

1. Health Bill

We expect the Health Bill announced in the Queen's Speech to be introduced into Parliament and published in mid-January. The main focus of the Bill is likely to be a new duty on providers and commissioners to have regard to a new National Health Service Constitution. The constitution will set out the core principles of the Service and the rights and responsibilities of patients and staff. The Bill will also implement elements of the Darzi Report to give patients greater personalisation and control of health care services by involving them directly in the commissioning of services. We expect two elements of the Bill to be directly relevant to Local Authorities:

- the Bill will extend the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman to enable him to consider complaints from people who have arranged their own adult social care. This will place these users on a similar footing to those adults whose social care is arranged and/or funded by Local Authorities; and
- the Bill will include measures to protect children and young people from the harm caused by smoking.

The Public Affairs team will lead on our response to the Bill and lobbying efforts, closely supported by the Community Wellbeing Team and LACORS. We would welcome any views from Board members.

We suggest supporting the extension of the Local Government Ombudsman's remit. As councils provide advice and support to all their residents and as people increasingly have more control over funding and the services they use, local government will have a wider responsibility for the quality of local services, regardless of whether they are accessed by people paying for them themselves, or by people who are having their services paid for by the council. We intend to ensure that the resource and wider implications of this change are properly considered during the passage of the Bill

It is not yet clear what smoking prevalence reduction measures will make the Bill. As council trading standards services play a frontline role tackling underage sales this section of the Bill will be a major focus. We intend to ensure any measures are practical, funded and likely to be effective. LACORS has been engaged in much pre-consultation discussions on these aspects with DH. We have previously called for a total ban on the sale of coin-operated vending machines (to be replaced with token-operated machines).

2. LGA Asylum and Refugee Taskgroup

The LGA has negotiated an agreement with the Home Office and individual authorities to ensure that outstanding shortfalls in asylum funding relating to special circumstances and leaving care grants for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) can now be paid. Now that the funding issues have been successfully concluded, it is hoped that the UK Border Agency's (UKBA) UASC Reform Programme will be given fresh impetus. The LGA support the general principles of the Reform Programme and have been attending regional UASC Reform Programme workshops to encourage local authorities to engage in the programme.

The LGA Asylum and Refugee Taskgroup has submitted a response to the EU Green Paper consultation on Education and Migration and is also expecting a UKBA consultation paper on asylum support for the Immigration and Citizenship Bill (2009). The asylum support consultation paper is due out early in 2009 (UKBA have not confirmed the date as yet). The new Minister of State for Borders and Immigration, Phil Woolas, has also agreed to attend the next Asylum and Refugee Taskgroup meeting on the 15th January 2009.

3. Closing or changing care services - good practice

Following a suggestion from Susan Woodward, LGA and ADASS are developing some good practice guidance on the steps to take when reconfiguring services, to safeguard both service users and council commissioners.

If Members are aware of any instances of good practice or bad experiences in this that could improve the usefulness of such a guide please let Anne McDonald know.

4. Update from the IDeA

IDeA and LGA recently hosted an event for council officers on Outcomes Based Accountability and Older People. The event considered how councils might "turn the curve" on outcomes relating to their Local Area Agreement priorities on older people. A write-up of the event will be available in the new year.

IDeA has published a web cast of Mark Friedman's Master Class event on Supporting Better Outcomes, held in London on 5th November. The web cast link sends users directly to the web cast, along with copies of speakers' presentations and biographies. Access the web cast site here:
<http://www.lga.ukcouncil.net/site/player/index.php?a=19255>

23 4

IDeA has published “Person Centred Commissioning – Now” – a report which explores what currently works well in commissioning learning disability support. The report outlines a pathway approach to commissioning support, and is available from the IDeA website.

5. Feedback from meetings attended

Cllr Susan Woodward attended the IDeA Leadership Conference on 19 November and took part in a session on Leadership in social care and health.

Cllr David Beechey attended the NICE Partners Council on 12th November during which the issue of most interest to the CWB was the introduction of an NHS Evidence Database. Initially its contents will be confined to evidence of the effectiveness of clinical interventions and I suggested that this was too restrictive, citing the example of POPPs pilots, in particular, which are providing evidence that resources devoted to preventative measures can produce significant savings in emergency bed days. I was assured that the scope of NHS Evidence would be extended in the future and this may well merit some discussion at our meeting with NICE representatives following the forthcoming Board meeting.

Cllr Beechey also attended an NHS consultation event on 24th November at Merry Hill in the West Midlands relating to a review of Health Overview and Scrutiny and a conference on Tackling Health Inequalities on 9th December at Aston, Birmingham.

Contact Officer: Paul Ogden
Phone No: 0207 664 3277
Email: paul.ogden@lga.gov.uk