

Community Wellbeing Programme Board – report from Cllr David Rogers OBE (Chair)

Smith Square debate on social care / launch of our publication on care and support.

1. Early in April, the LGA held the third of our spring Smith Square Debate series: this time focusing on Adult Social Care reform. I was joined on the panel by Victoria Hart, Social Worker Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, Caroline Abrahams, Director of External Affairs, Age UK and Matthew Young, Founder and Director, Public Policy Projects.

Children and Young People's Health Conference

2. Local Government House also hosted the LGA's Reducing Health Inequalities for Children and Young People Conference on 22 March 2012. This was jointly chaired by Cllr Liz Green and myself. 40 delegates attended and learnt about the latest policy e.g. children's health outcome strategy and School nursing programme. The conference was an opportunity for professionals and Cllrs to share knowledge, including on local authority approaches to children's trust arrangements. Key speakers included Mr Mark Davies, Department of Health, Prof Terence Stephenson, RCPCH, Margaret Carney, Sefton Council and Cllr Paul Lakin and Joyce Thacker, both Rotherham MBC.

Alzheimers's Strategy Launch

3. The LGA was invited to the Launch of the Prime Minister's Alzheimer Strategy on Monday 26 March. I attended the launch, which reinforced the co-operation between Alzheimers' Society and the LGA on the Ageing Well and Adult Social Care reform agendas.

APPG inquiry into social care

4. On 17 April Cllr Gareth Barnard gave evidence to the social care inquiry being undertaken by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Local Government. Cllr Barnard stressed the importance of funding and reform going hand in hand to secure a sustainable future for care and support, and the crucial role councils play in coordinating a range of local services to support individuals and help them remain independent at home. Cllr Barnard was also clear on the need to invest in prevention and early intervention and take forward the integration agenda; not just in terms of health but also broader thinking about the key role of housing in individuals' wellbeing.

Alcohol Conference

5. Also on Tuesday 17 April I chaired the successful Alcohol Strategy Conference against the backdrop of continued media debate about the merits of minimum pricing. 80 participants and delegates attended. We continue to argue that Alcohol related problems can most effectively be addressed by giving councils

the powers and flexibility to tackle them locally, and that focusing solely on the price of alcohol will not go far enough to address the root causes of problem drinking and the associated anti-social behaviour and health problems it creates.

Obesity Review Group

6. Cllr Linda Thomas represented the LGA at the Department of Health's Obesity Review Group on 19 April. The group examines progress against the Government's aims for reducing Obesity using statistics and expert analysis and advises on future direction.

Final meeting of Commission for Dignity in Care

7. The Commission on Dignity in Care met for the final time in mid-April. The commission has highlighted the need for dignity to be built in to the ongoing and future reforms of the NHS and Britain's Social care system. With the media maintaining a welcome spotlight on this dignity for those in care, the focus should now shift to concrete actions to achieve the change we need. The Commission's Final report and action plan will be released in June.

National Sharing Event – Learning Sets

8. On 24 April, Cllr Gareth Barnard chaired sessions at a joint Department for Health / LGA event in Hammersmith, London. There were 225 delegates in total. Objectives for the day were to share the existing learning from regional networks/learning sets; to bring together stakeholders and partners; to explore what collective leadership of the system would entail; and to update on the latest national policy thinking related to health and wellbeing boards. There were also a number of exhibitors including LGA Health & Wellbeing Board Leadership offer, NHS Confederation, DH Knowledge Hub, NHS Leadership Academy plus demonstrations of the work of each of the Learning Sets.

National Inclusion Health Board

9. On 02 May Cllr Gareth Barnard attended the National Inclusion Health Board on behalf of the LGA. The board is the national level strategy board which looks at ways to improve the health of some of the most easily ignored groups in society. Set up under the last government, and continued with the support of this government, its membership includes Anne Milton MP, the Public Health minister and Steve Field, the Chair of the NHS Future Forum.

Widespread Media Coverage of the Adult Social Care Campaign

10. A joint letter submitted by Sir Merrick Cockell to the leaders of the UK's main political parties, with the support of all political groups of the LGA, called for urgent action over adult social care reform. Adult Social care was the subject of the Telegraph front-page story as a result on 27 April. The letter, which received cross-party support, stated that the proposals set out by Andrew Dilnot's Commission on Funding of Care and Support offer the only real solution to securing sustainable funding for care. In support of the Adult Social Care Campaign, Sir Merrick was also interviewed on Radio 4's Today programme.

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