Update on adult social care funding

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report is to update members on the LGA's work on social care.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the update.

Action

Officers to continue to provide updates to members.

Contact officer:	Matthew Hibberd
Position:	Senior Adviser
Phone number:	0207 664 3160
Email:	matthew.hibberd@local.gov.uk

Update on adult social care funding

Introduction

1.   This paper updates members on key actions carried out by the LGA on adult social care since the last Finance Panel meeting in November.

Draft care and support bill

2.   A Joint Committee, chaired by former Care Services Minister Paul Burstow MP, has been established to provide pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft care and support bill. Cllr David Rogers OBE, Chair of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, gave oral evidence to the Committee on 10 January, alongside colleagues from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), and the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS).

3.   Cllr Rogers set out the LGA's position on the draft bill as follows:

   3.1.   For a number of years local government has been at the forefront of making the case for change in the way that care and support is commissioned and delivered. The sector wants to enable an approach to care and support that is based around preventing the onset or escalation of need, personalising support around the individual's needs, and supporting healthy and enabled communities.

   3.2.   Despite broad support for the proposals set out in the draft care and support bill the LGA has a number of concerns. Chief among these is the disconnect between the policy aspirations of the draft bill and the funding implications of those aspirations. Cllr Rogers was clear in his evidence that, without a clear commitment from Government on funding for social care, the policy direction set out in the draft bill will not be realised – this point was strongly endorsed by both ADASS and ADCS.

   3.3.   Cllr Rogers was also clear that the issue of 'funding' incorporated a number of points:

      3.3.1.   Funding the system itself and putting it on a sustainable footing to deal with mounting demographic pressures.

      3.3.2.   Funding reform – principally the Dilnot recommendation of a capped-cost model for individuals' contributions to care costs.

      3.3.3.   Seeing the bigger picture in terms of making the connections between care reform and the broader welfare reform agenda.

3.4. The discussion took in a number of other topics including the role of information and advice, promoting diversity within the care market, integration with health, prevention, the role of carers and safeguarding.

3.5. Following on from this oral evidence, the LGA will shortly be submitting written evidence to the Joint Committee. This will be done jointly with ADASS.

Show Us You Care campaign

4. On 20 November we held an excellent debate on adult social care reform as part of our Autumn series of Smith Square Debates. Expertly chaired by Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Executive of the Social Care Institute for excellence, the debate involved contributions from panellists Richard Humphries from the King's Fund, Naomi Snell from Partnership, Dr Samantha Callan from the Centre for Social Justice and Cllr Rogers. The debate was wide-ranging but there was consensus that reforming care and support was one of the most important public policy issues facing the country. However, speakers and audience members alike were clear that the Government needed to back up its vision with much-needed funding; both for the system itself and for the Government's reform proposals.

5. Campaign packs have been sent to all council Chief Executives and Leaders as well as Lead Members and Directors of Adult Services. The packs contain a copy of our guide to the care and support reform debate, a template press release which councils can use to highlight the importance of the subject locally, and a template letter which councils can send to their local MPs highlighting the importance of the issue.

6. In late November we launched the findings of our survey of councillors, showing that for the first time, adult social care tops the league table of important services that councils deliver. Caring for our rapidly-ageing population is now the number one priority for councillors, who rank it higher than potholes, bin collections and libraries, according to the research by ComRes.

7. An open letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, co-signed by the LGA and members of the Care and Support Alliance, received widespread coverage as part of the on-going debate on the importance of reform. The letter was featured by the Guardian newspaper and highlighted on BBC News.

8. The festive season saw the launch of the LGA's 'Show us you care' advent calendar which – through a series of key facts behind each calendar door – highlights both the immediate need to put adult social care on a sustainable financial footing and secure longer-term reform of the system to make it fairer, clearer and more transparent.

9. Before the Winter break we also polled the public on attitudes towards care and support and their plans for the future. The survey results demonstrated the true extent to which people are concerned about the negative consequences of ageing, with two in three people saying they are worried about having to pay for care as they get older.

The majority of people also told us that care and support for the elderly should be a top priority for central Government, with three in five selecting it as one of the three top priorities for local government policy. The story was picked up by the Telegraph.

10. A total of 16 Councils are now formally signed-up to the LGA's Show us you care campaign, with 10 further councils in the process of doing so.

Financial implications

11. This is core work for the LGA and is budgeted for within the 2012/13 LGA budget.