



Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Thursday, 23 March 2023
11.00 am

Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith
Square, SW1P 3HZ

There will be a meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **11.00 am on Thursday, 23 March 2023**.

LGA Meetings

[Please see guidance for Members and Visitors to 18 Smith Square here](#)

Catering and Refreshments:

If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:

Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: labgp@lga.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

Attendance:

Your attendance will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:

Jonathan Bryant
jonathan.bryant@local.gov.uk | 07464652746

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Membership

[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Cllr Lewis Cocking (Vice-Chair)	Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr Eric Allen	Sutton London Borough Council
Cllr Bill Borrett	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Louise McKinlay	Essex County Council
Cllr Julia Lepoidevin	Coventry City Council
Cllr Lois Samuel	West Devon Borough Council
Cllr Arnold Saunders	Salford City Council
Substitutes	
Cllr John Riley	Hillingdon London Borough Council
Cllr Paul Findlow	Cheshire East Council
Cllr James Gartside	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Chair)	Enfield Council
Cllr Jas Athwal	Redbridge London Borough Council
Cllr Tracey Dixon	South Tyneside Council
Cllr Jeanie Bell	St Helens Council
Cllr Amanda Chadderton	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Asher Craig	Bristol City Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr James Swindlehurst	Slough Borough Council
Cllr Carleene Lee-Phakoe	Newham London Borough
Cllr Tamoor Tariq	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Heather Kidd (Deputy Chair)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jake Short	Sutton London Borough
Independent (2)	
Cllr Clive Woodbridge (Deputy Chair)	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Karen Lucioni	Isle of Wight Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Paul Hilliard	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Chidi Nweke	Epping Forest District Council
Cllr Patricia Patterson-Vanegas	Wealden District Council

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Thursday, 23 March 2023

11.00 am

Smith Square 1&2 - 18 Smith Square

Item	Page
1. Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest	
2. Notes of previous meeting	1 - 8
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION	
3. National Protective Security Authority Update	9 - 12
4. Surveillance	13 - 20
5. Modern Slavery	21 - 30
6. SSCB Work Projects	31 - 38
ITEMS FOR DECISION/UPDATE	
7. Independent Review of Prevent	39 - 50
8. SIGCE Annual Review	51 - 60
9. Gambling Licensing Position Paper	61 - 66
10. Update Paper	67 - 76

Note: ASB Action Plan and CSP Review are due to be published before the pre-election period, however if published before the Board, this will be circulated for discussion at the Board.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 15 June 2023, 11.00 am, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: 23 March 2023



Modern slavery: recent developments and LGA work

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

At the Board meeting in January, Board members emphasised the importance of not treating modern slavery solely as an immigration/asylum issue, and of safeguarding victims. This paper follows up recent developments and considers next steps for the LGA in this area.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation

The Board 1) agree whether to write to the Home Office regarding modern slavery issues, and consider the draft letter provided, and 2) agree to undertake further work to understand why some councils/local areas are further ahead on modern slavery work than others.

Contact details

Contact officer: Ellie Greenwood

Position: Senior Adviser

Phone no: 07795 413660

Email: ellie.greenwood@local.gov.uk

Modern slavery: recent developments and LGA work



Background

1. The Board meeting in January discussed modern slavery in the context of recent asylum/immigration issues (specifically, the modern slavery risks that have been highlighted in relation to the Homes for Ukraine refugee scheme), noting that the Government is increasingly perceived to be treating modern slavery as an immigration/asylum issue. A copy of the relevant sections of the Board paper is attached as an annex to this paper.
2. During the discussion, several members of the Board raised concern about viewing modern slavery solely through an immigration/asylum lens, noting that British nationals make up a substantial proportion of modern slavery victims.
3. It was suggested that the Board could write to the Home Office seeking assurances that whatever changes they proposing to the modern slavery framework, the safeguarding approach to victims will not be compromised.
4. At the lead members meeting in February, officers were asked to bring a further paper to the Board, including suggested text for a letter to the Home Office and outlining a suggested area of work for the LGA on modern slavery. As discussed at the previous Board and recent lead members' meeting, officers have developed a draft letter to the Home Office reflecting the points discussed at previous Board meetings. This has been circulated alongside the meeting papers as a separate attachment.
5. This paper actions these two requests, as well as providing an update on developments since the previous Board meeting.

Draft letter to the Home Office

6. Since the Board meeting in January, officers have attended a meeting of the 'First Responders Forum' (representatives of organisations/sectors which can submit National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals about suspected victims of modern slavery, and heard further information about changes made with effect from Monday 30 January, under Part 5 of the Nationality and Borders Act.
7. As set out in the previous Board paper (see paragraph 9 of the Annex), these changes were to amend the threshold for a reasonable grounds definition for suspected victims of modern slavery, and introduce scope for public order and bad faith disqualifications to prevent people receiving modern slavery support in specified circumstances. Victims whose referrals are accepted (via reasonable grounds and then conclusive grounds decisions) are entitled to a period of support provided under the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC).

8. The Government has also stated that *'[it] is committed to ensuring that the National Referral Mechanism effectively supports genuine victims to recover and to support the prosecution of their exploiters. That is why we have made clear for the first time in primary legislation, that where a public authority, such as the police, is pursuing an investigation or criminal proceedings, confirmed victims who are co-operating in this activity and need to remain in the UK in order to do so, will be granted temporary permission to stay for as long as they are required to be in the UK to support the investigation. This is supported by the introduction in the October 2022 of Appendix Temporary Permission to Stay for Victims of Human Trafficking or Slavery (VTS in the Immigration Rules).'*
9. The First Responder Forum provided confirmation that under the Nationality and Borders Act changes, decision makers will now seek objective evidence regarding whether an individual is a victim of modern slavery; and that the relevant competent authorities would expect to receive more information than simply an individual's account that they have been a victim of modern slavery.
10. However, the Home Office has clarified that the professional judgement of somebody working with a suspected victim and making an NRM referral, who believed there were indicators of modern slavery, would be likely to be considered as objective evidence. This appears to be a helpful clarification. While LGA officers have heard concern from some local government officers about this position, including how the Government intends to publicise it, as a policy position it does not appear to be a significant change from what would always have been considered to be a good quality NRM referral with supporting information.
11. The Government is now updating its NRM referral forms to reflect the new policy.
12. More recently, on the 7 March, the Government's Illegal Migration Bill was introduced to the House of Commons to underpin the Prime Minister's [priorities on illegal migration](#) outlined in December 2022. The Bill's intent is to ensure that anyone arriving illegally in the UK will be promptly removed to their home country or to a safe third country to have any asylum claim processed. It also proposes to set an annual cap on resettlement through safe and legal asylum routes.
13. Given the politically contentious nature of asylum and immigration, as well as the forthcoming election 'purdah', the LGA's current focus has been on identifying the specific impact on councils and monitoring the early debates. The key potential impacts on councils of the Bill as it currently stands include:
 - The fact that provisions in relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking children do not resolve concerns about who has corporate parenting responsibility for children placed in hotels by the Home Office. The Bill strengthens the government's powers to direct councils to accommodate and support lone children, and remove them. The LGA continues to raise concerns about the safeguarding of those children and to work with government to try end use of hotels for lone children.

- Provisions for detention raise questions about where people would be detained and what would be the process for identifying those locations: the LGA would want advance consultation with potential local areas.
 - The Bill sets an intention to consult local authorities on numbers to be resettled in the UK. While it is helpful that councils are expected to be consulted on the impacts on their services, other service providers (health and education) will need to be engaged too.
14. Clauses 21 – 28 of the Bill concern modern slavery and introduce new measures intended to deter what the Government believes is the abuse of the Modern Slavery Act by those arriving in the UK illegally. Alongside the Bill, the [Government published statistical information showing the extent to which NRM referrals made by people detailed for return have increased as small boat arrivals have increased](#). The statistics do show a significant increase; just 6% of detentions ending in 2019 involved a referral, rising to 53% in 2020, and to 73% in 2021, before falling back to 65% for detentions ending between January and September 2022. However, they also show that the vast majority (92%) of people referred to the NRM while detained for return received a positive reasonable grounds decision, which typically leads to an individual being confirmed as a victim of modern slavery.
 15. Clause 21 of the Bill provides that the public disorder disqualification from modern slavery support, introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act, will be applied to an illegal migrant if the Secretary of State is required to make arrangements for their removal¹ and they have received a reasonable grounds decision that they are a potential victim of modern slavery. The disqualification removes the prohibition on removing a potential victim from the UK, as well as any requirement to grant limited leave to remain to a confirmed victim. An exception to this automatic disqualification can be made if the individual is cooperating (for example with the National Crime Agency) in connection with an investigation relating to the positive reasonable grounds decision.
 16. Further clauses in the Bill: disapply the duty on the Secretary of State to provide MSVCC assistance and support during the recovery period to potential victims who are illegal entrants; make provision for the suspension (and reinstatement) of the modern slavery measures if they are no longer justified; and amend the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to reflect the changes to entitlement to support introduced by the Bill.
 17. It is not anticipated that the changes proposed in the Bill should have a significant impact on councils in terms of their work on modern slavery, as they aim to amend the Government's framework of support for suspected victims of modern slavery, rather than any support provided by councils to victims of modern slavery.
 18. As outlined at paragraph 13, there may be other implications for councils arising from the fact that individuals not eligible for the MSVCC are required to be detained somewhere. These wider asylum and immigration issues are the responsibility of the

¹ Under section 2 of the Bill, this is a person who entered the UK irregularly; entered or arrived in the UK on or after 7 March 2023; did not come directly from a country in which their life and liberty were threatened; and who requires leave to enter or remain in the UK, but does not have it

LGA's Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Force (which comes under the remit of the Community Wellbeing Board) rather than the Safer and Stronger Communities Board; however, as the SSCB's remit includes cohesion and counter extremism issues, the Board has a clear interest in the impact of asylum issues on community tensions and local cohesion.

19. Therefore, viewed through a local government lens there are no council specific points for the LGA to make in relation to the Bill's modern slavery provisions. It would however be helpful to understand if there is a consensus view on whether the Board should comment on the modern slavery provisions more generally and to share this with the LGA governance structures leading on any response.
20. In addition, as the outline of letter from the Board was agreed ahead of publication of the Illegal Migration Bill, members' views on the points to be included in the letter, and the timing of it, would be welcomed. Officers will then ensure that any correspondence is coordinated with other engagement with the Government on this issue.

Further LGA activity on modern slavery

21. At their recent meeting, lead members requested that a proposal for further research on modern slavery be considered by the Board. As the Board are aware, the LGA recently updated its modern slavery guidance and developed a maturity matrix enabling councils to benchmark their work on modern slavery.
22. Lead members have suggested that it would be useful to undertake more work to understand why some councils/areas are performing significantly better on modern slavery than others. While we already know that the effectiveness of council's modern slavery work is largely shaped by whether it is prioritised and the resources available to support it (for example, through the creation of dedicated modern slavery lead officer roles or teams, or funding for dedicated modern slavery support services), there is also scope to build a more nuanced understanding of why practice differs. Qualitative research on this could help us understand why councils do, or do not, have modern slavery strategies, and why partnership working on modern slavery is more effective in some areas than in others. We believe that research of this nature would be of interest beyond the LGA and to other partners, who may be interested in supporting it.
23. Board members are asked to provide their views on undertaking more work on this issue.

Implications for Wales

24. Modern slavery is a reserved issue, although the structures for dealing with it in Wales differ to those in England. We will therefore engage with the WLGA to ensure officials are aware of next steps on this issue.

Financial Implications

25. None. Any research undertaken on modern slavery would be expected to be undertaken by LGA officers, unless additional funding became available.

Equalities implications

26. There are a number of equalities implications linked to modern slavery. People with disabilities can be more likely to become victims of modern slavery, and some groups with protected characteristics are disproportionately likely to become victims of some forms of slavery.

Next steps

27. Officers to take forward as directed.

Annex 1: modern slavery extract of January 2023 SSCB paper

Modern slavery

1. Several concerns have been raised about the risks of modern slavery and exploitation among individuals and communities newly arriving in the UK.
2. In particular, there has been a significant focus on the risk of exploitation amongst refugees from the war in Ukraine arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. As the scheme was being developed, the LGA and other partners highlighted the possible safeguarding risks arising as people made matches with hosts, and the importance of ensuring procedures for vetting/checks (and that these could be resourced). From the outset of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, we have been engaging with partners in the anti-trafficking sector to share intelligence about risks for refugees on the Ukraine border and transiting Europe, the emerging picture in the UK and good practice approaches by councils in overseeing the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
3. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), which oversees the Homes for Ukraine scheme, recently undertook a series of safeguarding deep dives to understand the threats relating to the scheme. Confidentially, we understand that on modern slavery issues, the threat panel concluded that the scheme carried a relatively low level of threat from modern slavery and human trafficking. This may in part due to be people within the scheme having visas and a legitimate right of passage to the UK (therefore meaning they are less likely to be debt bonded from their travel to the UK) and have access to welfare benefits and housing, meaning they are less likely to be destitute. This therefore removes two risk factors that can make individuals more likely to be exploited.
4. While there have been cases of modern slavery under the scheme – and evidence of some businesses in the agricultural sector in particular using the scheme to try to recruit workers – councils' responses to this, working on a multi-agency basis with local partners to address issues, have been praised by the officials we have spoken with. Government officials have emphasised the importance of councils following their normal processes for responding to modern slavery in the event that they identify issues of concern, and have brokered peer support between areas with more or less experience of this.
5. Councils have however flagged wider concerns about the risks of people on other refugee/asylum pathways being exploited. There have been many anecdotal reports of people placed in hotels going missing from them, and while not all of those cases will involve exploitation, it is clear that there are safeguarding risks, particularly in relation to children.
6. The LGA recently published comprehensive, updated guidance for councils on modern slavery, supported by a maturity matrix enabling councils to assess their work and progress on this issue. Following a positive recent meeting to discuss partnership working on modern slavery, we are also now establishing a national network of council officers working on modern slavery to share learning and best practice and discuss common challenges of working on this issue, based on the model of our community safety advisers network.

7. We are continuing to engage with the Home Office on the development of the delayed updated modern slavery strategy, and officers in the LGA safer communities, community wellbeing and children and young people's teams work together to share information and updates about these cross-cutting issues.
8. In relation to modern slavery and asylum/immigration, it is also worth highlighting so the Board are aware the increasing links being made by the Government between modern slavery and the immigration system. This is a concern to many organisations within the anti-trafficking sector, who perceive immigration enforcement being prioritised over victims of modern slavery and have general concerns about linking modern slavery and immigration.
9. This has been the direction of travel for some time; the [2021 New Plan for Immigration included a chapter on modern slavery](#). Although the chapter focused on clarifying the support available to victims of modern slavery, it also included provisions intended to 'distinguish more effectively between genuine and vexatious accounts of modern slavery' and [tackle alleged abuses of the modern slavery framework](#), but which were perceived by the anti-trafficking sector to potentially restrict support being made available. Provisions now enacted through the Nationality and Borders Act have, or will in due course:
 - Introduce new procedures for 'slavery of trafficking information notices' issued to individuals subject to immigration control to require them to provide information about trafficking within a specified timeframe.
 - Amend the threshold for the reasonable grounds decision, the first decision individuals receive after being identified as a possible victim of modern slavery, to make the assessment more robust and evidence focused.
 - Reduce the minimum length of support available to victims with a reasonable grounds decision from 45 to 30 days to bring it into line with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT). In practice, victims receive support for much longer periods.
 - Disqualify from modern slavery victim support, on public order grounds, individuals who have served certain custodial offences or been prosecuted for specific offences.
10. More recently, Ministerial responsibility for modern slavery within the Home Office has been switched from the Minister for Safeguarding to the Minister for Immigration, under the heading of illegal migration and asylum. Again, the anti-trafficking sector have expressed concerns that this treats modern slavery as an immigration enforcement issue rather than seeing it through the lens of victims and ignores the fact that many victims are UK nationals or not otherwise involved in illegal migration/the asylum system.
11. At the end of last year, the Government amended the statutory guidance on modern slavery to reflect changes to victim support, and to suspend the multi-agency assurance panel process whereby negative conclusive grounds decisions (the final assessment of a suspected victim's case) were automatically reviewed, on the basis that this is adding to decision making time.

12. There has also been significant media reporting of the potential link between arrivals of asylum seekers in small boats and alleged abuse of the UK's modern slavery laws as a means to avoid deportation.
13. The LGA has not taken a position on the developments within the modern slavery framework, nor these wider stories. As with our work on wider asylum and immigration, given the politically contentious nature of some of these issues, our focus has remained on the impact on councils. It is not clear at this stage that changes to Ministerial portfolios, or even to thresholds/victim support, will substantially impact councils given that this relates to support provided through the national victim care contract rather than by councils. However, given our broad work on modern slavery, it is important to be aware of the wider, increasingly politicised context of this issue at the current time.

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: 23 March 2023



SSCB work projects

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper summarises a series of additional areas of research for officers to focus on and seeks direction from members about which they would like to prioritise.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation

The Board are asked to decide which two to three projects they would like officers to prioritise.

Contact details

Contact officer: Mark Norris

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 020 7664 3241

Email: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

SSCB work projects



Background

1. At its meeting in September, the Board agreed its annual work plan. However, members emphasised their desire to remain agile and respond to emerging issues and developments as they arose.
2. In their meeting in February, lead members asked officers to prepare a list of potential research projects for the Board to focus on in the coming months.
3. Officers have prepared a short list based on initial suggestions from lead members, other issues previously been identified by Board members/officers, and recent developments. Board members may have other suggestions they would wish to add
4. The Board are asked to provide their views on which of these items they would like to explore further, taking note of the resource availability identified in paragraph 6.

Issues

5. An outline of the suggested projects is set out below:

Issue	Further information	Resource requirement	Indicative timing
Modern slavery	Understanding how and why councils are able to progress their modern slavery work, and what factors help to ensure local partnerships.	Qualitative research to be undertaken within the team; report presented to Board with potential for public report and recommendations.	Interim report to the Board in June; final report in September
Reducing reoffending: a local government position	It has been several years since the SSCB considered it's position on reoffending. This work would review the LGA's previous policy position in the context of changes to the probation landscape since then and seek the Board's view on an updated position.	Desktop research to be undertaken within the team; paper presented to the Board for discussion and approval.	To inform a June Board paper (any follow up work to be identified)
Mental	The impact of the police's work	Initial review of	Scoping

health impact on policing	<p>with people going through mental health crisis on their capacity for other police work, and therefore on community issues, has been identified as an area of interest.</p> <p>The Home Secretary recently published a letter acknowledging this issue and highlighting work across the Home Office, DHSC, NHS England and NPCC to address this issue.</p> <p>The LGA's Community Wellbeing Board has been consulted on the draft National Partnership Agreement between the police and health to reduce police involvement in mental health and welfare activity, and which based on the 'Right Care, Right Person' model adopted in Humberside.</p>	current issues and activity would be undertaken within the team, in conjunction with CWB team.	report could be developed for next lead members/ Board meeting to identify current position and options for further work.
Police capacity and impact	<p>Lead members expressed an interest in looking at community safety issues linked to police capacity and the balance of recruitment between PCSOs/police officers, including the split of officers between rural and urban areas.</p> <p>A linked area of interest is understanding the effectiveness of community safety outcomes of placing police officers in schools.</p>	The team could undertake council focused qualitative research on this issue, but is likely to need additional support for any quantitative research.	Scoping report could be developed for next lead members/ Board meeting.
Cohesion impact of court case	<p>This research would explore the medium/long-term cohesion implications in Barrow of the Ellie Williams case, which was heavily exploited by right wing extremists following false allegations of rape, grooming and trafficking.</p>	<p>This work is likely to require some external support, which could be funded through the SIGCE budget.</p> <p>The work may take place in phases over time.</p>	This would be a longer term piece of work tracking the lasting impact of the case.

Drugs issues and community safety	Board members have previously suggested exploring the impact of drug use/supply on community safety. This work could look at the drugs strategy and best practice work in this field.	Research to be undertaken within the team.	Report could be developed for next lead members/ Board meeting to identify current position and options for further work.
-----------------------------------	---	--	---

6. In terms of capacity to undertake this work, the safer communities team has access to the following resources:
 - The team's own capacity. While two senior adviser and two adviser posts in the team are funded through our DLUHC grant and subscription funding primarily to support work on building safety, fire services and cohesion, counter extremism and counter terrorism, there is greater flexibility within the remaining capacity (one senior adviser, two advisers and a graduate trainee) to focus on a range of different work areas.
 - A share of the team's policy budget. Although the team is expected to have access to a reasonable budget for 2023-24 (c £80,000), this is expected to support a number of ongoing commitments, including our training provision (licensing and fire leadership essentials courses) and our comprehensive SIGCE programme of work. Therefore, the resources expected to be available for other projects is in the region of £10,000.
 - The LGA's research team, who are able to undertake surveys and polling work. However, there is high demand for this limited capacity, and requests for support from the research team must be approved by the LGA's Senior Management Team based on overall corporate priorities.
7. The Board are asked to set out their views on the issues they would like to prioritise, taking into account the resources available and provisional timing identified.
8. Subject to the Board's views about any areas of research it would like to take forward, the team will consider the resources available and how best to deliver them.

Implications for Wales

9. Officers to engage with the Welsh LGA as required.

Financial Implications

10. As set out in paragraph six above.

Equalities implications

11. Officers to consider the equalities implications of all agreed work themes.

Next steps

12. Officers to take forward as directed.

Proposed SSCB work programme 2022/23
<i>Counter-terrorism, counter-extremism and cohesion</i>
Continue to lobby Government on the importance of retaining investment in measures to prevent extremism and build resilience
Deliver a programme of support to councils on tackling extremism through the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of roundtables and webinars for practitioners to share emerging challenges and facilitate support • Case studies and guidance on tackling extremism and hate (such as antisemitism, Islamophobia) to capture good practice • Facilitating academic support to councils on tackling extremism
Provide training for elected members on delivering the Prevent duty, tackling extremism and building cohesion
Lobby around the Online Safety and draft Protect Duty Bills, and the CONTEST strategy and hate crime action plan reviews, to ensure they reflect sector views.
<i>Community safety</i>
Publish updated council guidance and maturity matrix and develop a further round of awareness raising events on modern slavery
Influence the development of the Modern Slavery Bill and help support the implementation of the new modern slavery strategy
Continue to support councils on the implementation of their domestic abuse duty (outlined in Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021)
Lobby on the draft Victims Bill as it passes through Parliament, and provide support to local authorities on any proposed new duties.
Support councils with the implementation of the forthcoming serious violence duty and Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews, outlined in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

Continue to hold best practice sessions on tackling anti-social behaviour, and support 2023 ASB Awareness Week.
Provide good practice case studies on community safety issues, such as VAWG, domestic abuse, serious violence – to help support councils with the forthcoming duties.
Engage with the Home Office and partners on tackling serious and organised crime – continue working with the APCC on any joint work related to the Government’s SOC strategy.
Respond to the Government’s forthcoming Community Safety Partnership review and ensure local government views are fed-in throughout each stage of the process.
Work with the Department for Health and Social Care on the implementation of the 10 year Drug Strategy, and provide support on the implementation of proposed drug partnership arrangements.
Continue engaging with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the Travellers Site Fund – making the case for increased funding to help councils improve current transit sites.
<i>Blue light services and civil resilience</i>
Respond to the Fire Reform White Paper and the outcome of inquiries such as those into the Grenfell Tower fire and the attack at Manchester Arena.
Respond to the publication of the national resilience strategy and help shape future pilots and activities on local resilience work
Support members and officers to strengthen council activity on resilience, including approaches to community resilience
<i>Licensing and regulation</i>
Respond to the Gambling Act Review White Paper and update the LGA’s guidance on gambling harms, working with the APCC on joint local work on this issue.
Continue to make the case for localisation of alcohol licence fees.
Work with the Department for Transport on taxi licensing reform and with DLUHC on pavement licensing provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

Work with the LGA workforce team and professional bodies to make the case for dedicated support to boost regulatory services capacity and the professional pipeline
Support councils by sharing best practice on a range of issues involving fees and charges, structures and reorganisation
Hold two further leadership essentials in licensing courses
<i>Crematoria, coroners and registrars</i>
Respond to press and related media work related to the death management processes including crematoria and registrars' service.
Conduct further research into the provision of public health funerals
<i>Voluntary and community sector</i>
Influence the development of the Community Spaces and Relationship Strategy currently being drafted by DHLUC
Deliver a programme of support for councils to improve community engagement practices and partnership working with the voluntary and community sector

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: 23 March 2023



Independent Review of Prevent

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The Independent Review of Prevent was published in February, alongside the Government's response and plans for implementing the report's recommendations. This paper provides a summary of some of the key elements of both documents, and some initial concerns from councils in response.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendations

That the Board notes the update on the review report and Government response and considers whether the LGA should write to the Home Office to reflect councils' feedback.

Contact details

Contact officer: Rachel Duke

Position: Adviser

Phone no: 07464 652612

Email: rachel.duke@local.gov.uk

Independent Review of Prevent



Background

1. The UK's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST comprises four strands: Pursue (catching terrorists before they carry out an attack); Protect (making infrastructure and similar targets less vulnerable); Prepare (planning responses in the event of an attack) and Prevent (stopping people from becoming terrorists or support terrorism).
2. The overarching aim of the Prevent strand is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, with three core objectives to:
 - tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism
 - safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support
 - enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.
3. The Prevent strand is underpinned by a statutory Prevent duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which places a duty on specific authorities, including councils, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
4. Alongside the legislative duty, statutory guidance outlines the responsibilities of local authorities in further detail. This includes:
 - risk assessment and action planning to address those risks
 - ensuring referral processes are in place for those at risk of radicalisation
 - establishing multi-agency Channel panels to produce and deliver a plan of support to individuals at risk of radicalisation (this might include theological support through an intervention provider, mental health provision or eg support in finding employment, housing, education etc)
 - training for staff to ensure those at risk can be identified and referred for support
 - policies to ensure local authority venues and IT networks are not used by radicalising influencers or to access extreme content
 - working alongside other partners and engaging with communities and civil society groups about the duty.

Independent Review of Prevent

5. An Independent Review of Prevent was announced as part of the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019. Its Chair, William Shawcross, was appointed in January 2021, after the original lead had to stand down, and a call for evidence ran until June 2021, which the LGA contributed to in December 2019.
6. After some significant delays throughout the course of the review and much media speculation on the findings, [both the review and Government's response](#) were published on 8 February. A summary of the recommendations of most relevance to councils, and the Government's response to them, is attached as an annex.
7. There is currently a separate Government review of the wider CONTEST strategy under way, which is expected to report this autumn.

Report findings and Government response

8. The report makes 34 recommendations, which the Government has accepted in full. The report is broadly positive about Prevent's overall objectives, endorsing the strategy overall, and recognises the crucial role of local partners in its delivery.
9. The recommendations fall broadly under the following main themes:
 - A refocusing of Prevent on the counter-terrorism space - ensuring that it deals with individuals who are 'susceptible' to radicalisation (changing from 'vulnerable'), rather than broader concerns which the report concludes should be managed elsewhere (eg as part of mental health service provision). Alongside this however there is a recognition of the importance of wider counter-extremism work, and the report proposes that more should be done in the counter-extremism and disruptions space, particularly in tackling Islamist extremism, to disrupt 'chronic radicalisers and influencers'.
 - The importance of ideology reaffirmed as a driver for terrorism - those being managed as part of Prevent must have some form of ideology, and a belief that terrorism is the means to achieve this. This includes consideration of whether Prevent is the most appropriate place to handle cases categorised as 'mixed, unclear and unstable' (which currently make up the majority of Prevent referrals). Government has committed to commissioning research to explore this further.
 - The report also proposes a reset of thresholds to ensure consistency across Prevent workstreams, and which is commensurate to the threat; more should be done to explore the ideological underpinning of Islamist extremism in particular. (Media coverage of the report's publication has largely focussed on Shawcross' conclusion that Prevent has a 'double standard' when dealing with the Extreme Right-Wing and Islamism).
 - Changes to Prevent delivery at local and national levels - the Government has committed to the further rolling out of a regional model of delivery, which will see

some councils lose direct funding for Prevent in favour of support and guidance being provided by Home Office regional advisers, and support surged into local areas when needed. A new hybrid model for Channel arrangements is also proposed, which picks up elements from the Dovetail model previously piloted, giving local authorities a larger role in handling referrals

- Proactive communications that rebut some of the criticisms of Prevent, particularly from ‘anti-Prevent’ campaign groups. The report also proposes a new standards and compliance unit which will consider accusations around the mishandling of Prevent referrals or cases, and failures to adhere to the Prevent Duty.

10. The Government has committed to reporting on progress with the recommendations within 12 months, with work against many of them already underway.

Councils’ response

11. Following the publication of the report and Government response, the Home Office has held a number of briefing sessions for local authority Prevent leads, Chief Executives and Channel Chairs (LGA officers have attended some of the sessions). We have also provided a briefing at the LGA’s Community Safety Advisers’ Network and held a SIGCE roundtable for practitioners in early March to hear further reflections.

12. Feedback from councils has included concerns on the following themes:

- The community impact of the report, including considerable concerns from Muslim communities that they have been unfairly targeted by the report; regarding the continued use of terminology such as “Islamist” extremism; that Islamophobia is not sufficiently recognised in the report alongside other forms of prejudice; and an indication some previously cooperative groups may no longer be willing to engage with councils around Prevent.
- Ideological concerns are complex and the threats will inevitably vary in different areas for a number of reasons; more needs to be done to understand this, including reflecting on the evolving threat picture, and with local flexibility retained in response.
- The change in language from ‘vulnerability’ to ‘susceptibility’ and how this contrasts with current framing and other safeguarding issues/language. There are further specific concerns about how neurodivergent individuals are managed.
- If cases currently managed within Prevent/Channel are no longer deemed appropriate for this space (for instance, those cases classed as having “Mixed, Unclear or Unstable” ideology, or where Prevent thresholds have not been met), this is likely to place an additional burden on already overstretched services elsewhere (for instance social care or mental health), and/or there is a risk that people who need support or intervention could fall through the gaps.
- Resource implications for undertaking additional work in the disruptions and counter-extremism space.

- The implications of the extended roll out of the regional model for Prevent delivery (particularly, but not only, from councils in London), which will see many boroughs lose dedicated funding, and could see a loss of local insight and expertise as local authority staff numbers are subsequently reduced.

Implications for Wales

13. Prevent and counter-terrorism are reserved issues, however some wider matters, which may form part of the solutions to the issues raised in the report, are devolved.

Financial implications

14. At present just over 40 areas receive dedicated funding for Prevent officers and local delivery, with further opportunities to bid for project funding for 'non-funded' areas. These (upper-tier) areas have been identified as having the highest risk and threat following an annual prioritisation exercise, with funding levels provided relative to risk. Posts funded may include Prevent Coordinators and Prevent Education Officers as a minimum in each area, with additional posts in higher risk areas (for instance specialist engagement or social work roles).
15. Areas which sit outside of the priority list do not receive any additional funding. Unfunded areas also have access to guidance and support from Home Office regional advisers (although this is an advisory rather than operational role).
16. The total number of unfunded areas is expected to reduce by around half for the year 2024-2025, with an ambition to reduce further in future years as the regionalisation model continues to be rolled out.

Equalities implications

17. As noted above, a key issue reported by councils has been around community perceptions about the report and how it has been reported on in the media – namely to provide greater focus on Islamist extremism.
18. Whether or not these are justified by the report and the response, the concern as noted in paragraph 12 is that perceptions about the report's content and response will impact on community relations, and deter Muslim communities from working with Prevent in future, including potentially impacting on Muslims' engagement in Channel (where participation is voluntary).

Next steps

19. Members are asked to note the update and concerns we have received from councils about the report's impact to date.
20. The review supports the importance of work in the counter-extremism space, and several of its recommendations dovetail with elements of our planned workplan for the

SIGCE, and wider counter-extremism/Prevent work (which sit alongside Government commitments in the review response for providing further training and guidance on several areas). We have already held a SIGCE roundtable on the review, with requests for further sessions to follow; and our future plans include proposals one or two leadership essentials courses; sessions at our three regional member networks, to support elected members to understand the outcomes of the review and how this will affect local delivery in future; and various workstreams on tackling extremism, including a dedicated workstream on Islamist extremism.

21. Members are invited to consider whether the LGA should write to the Home Office reflecting councils' feedback and concerns.

Annex: Summary of IRP recommendations and Government Response

Recommendation 1: Revise Prevent objective to clarify and emphasise the importance of tackling extremist ideology as a terrorism driver.

Gov response: We will change the first objective of Prevent to clearly specify the need to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism. We will ensure that the revised first Prevent objective is clearly reflected in the updated Prevent Duty Guidance and, where necessary, in legislation. We will also ensure that the training on ideology currently being developed by the CCE is mandatory for all Prevent staff and the frontline sectors.

Recommendation 2: Move away from 'vulnerability' language and towards 'susceptibility'. The Vulnerability Assessment Framework should become the Prevent Assessment Framework.

Gov response: We recognise that Prevent should be focused on tackling radicalising influences themselves, to which some are susceptible, rather than wider issues such as mental health. Prevent work must always be aware of the risk presented by the individual or group in question and recognise the agency of individuals in aligning with extremist groups. We commit to using the term 'susceptibility to becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism' where relevant and defining this language more clearly.

Recommendation 3: Reset thresholds to ensure proportionality across Prevent workstreams. Prevent must work to one bar across ideological threats. The bar should not be set so high as to only include concerns related to the most established terrorist organisations, nor so low as to capture mainstream politicians, commentators or publications.

Gov response: We accept this recommendation and agree it is important to have one, consistent and proportionate threshold across all extremist ideologies and workstreams. We will ensure designated Prevent leads have the training and support they need to provide effective advice on the threshold for referrals. Through our work to develop the new Prevent Assessment Framework, we will better define the criteria used to determine whether a case should be considered for Channel. We will also set out rigorous criteria to ensure that the proportion of funding allocated to civil society organisations to tackle specific ideologies is fully reflective of the threat we face.

Recommendation 4: Improve understanding of 'blasphemy' as part of the wider Islamist threat. HSG should conduct research into understanding and countering Islamist violence, incitement and intimidation linked to 'blasphemy'.

Gov response: DLUHC will lead on tackling blasphemy-related incidents and Prevent will focus on where this contributes to radicalisation or terrorism. We have requested that the CCE conduct research on violence associated with blasphemy and will then consider with partners how Prevent should adapt to address this.

Recommendation 5: Explore the prevalence of antisemitism in Channel cases and whether this is reflected in a breakdown of Channel referrals more widely. Feed these findings into work to disrupt radicalisers and counter extremist narratives.

Gov response: We will improve our understanding of ideologies that spread antisemitic narratives and take direct action to address this including taking steps to disrupt radicalisers that spread harmful views which explicitly target the Jewish community. We will continue to support DLUHC's work to counter other forms of racial and religious hatred and increase our pool of intervention providers that specialise in tackling antisemitism.

Recommendation 7: Keep current terminology to describe Islamist and extreme right wing (XRW) ideology and ensure use of terminology is consistent across products, guidance, and training materials.

Gov response: The government assesses that the existing terminology around Islamist and XRW ideology is accurate and fit for purpose and we will continue to use it.

Recommendation 9: Restrict Prevent funding to groups and projects which challenge extremist and terrorist ideology via counter-narratives and activities and not towards general youth work or community initiatives that do not meet these criteria.

Gov response: We recognise that Prevent project funding has focused too broadly and insufficient checks have been conducted. We also acknowledge the review's finding that there was limited evidence that Prevent and RICU-funded projects countered extremist ideology. We will refocus on projects that explicitly counter radicalisation and challenge extremist and terrorist ideology; strengthen our approach to moderating funding bids from local authorities for civil society projects; and provide clear communications to local authorities on the need for projects to challenge extremist and terrorist ideology and ensure appropriate oversight.

Recommendation 10: Ensure Prevent disruptions takes action to limit the influence of 'chronic' radicalisers and networks which sit below the terrorism threshold, that promote narratives legitimising terrorism and terrorists without breaking the law.

Gov response: We will commit to accelerating and strengthening our work to disrupt chronic radicalisers who seek to radicalise others into terrorism but operate below legal thresholds, by introducing a new partnership approach with local, regional and national partners, law enforcement agencies, other government departments, and wider counter-extremism experts. We will provide specialist training on the activities and harmful narratives of such radicalisers. We will work with DLUHC and the CCE to establish a cross-government mechanism to co-ordinate work on tackling non-violent extremism.

Recommendation 11: Move national Prevent delivery to a regionalised model that has consistent lines with the centre of Prevent in the Home Office.

Gov response: We will move to a regional Prevent delivery model directly overseen by the Home Office and significantly reduce the number of local authority areas of highest threat that we fund. This will increase join-up with CTP and other regional partners, ensure each local authority has access to expert Prevent support from Home Office regional Prevent advisers, and enable resource to be surged into areas to meet radicalisation risks.

Recommendation 12: Ensure high level decision-making within Prevent is informed by proper consideration of the terrorism threat picture to ensure that any action taken is proportionate.

Gov response: We acknowledge that Islamist terrorism is currently the primary terrorist threat and that this is not currently reflected in Prevent caseloads. We will introduce a security threat check process that is informed by the latest assessments from the JTAC, CTP, Home Office analysts, the CCE, DLUHC, and counterterrorism local profiles and ensure the process is outlined in the refreshed Prevent Duty Guidance.

Recommendation 13: Lengthen the Prevent funding cycle to between two and five years in order to better sustain positive local work

Gov response: We will explore options with HM Treasury for developing a multi-year plan for Prevent funding. This approach must be implemented in a way which provides value for money and complements our commitment to move to a regional delivery model and be accompanied by a comprehensive and robust evaluation plan.

Recommendation 15: Develop a plan to improve the quality of referrals around revised core objectives. Referrals should have an identifiable ideological element that is consistent across ideologies.

Gov response: We will clearly communicate that Prevent referrals should only be made where there are genuine concerns of radicalisation and that ideology is a critical consideration. We are also working to strengthen referral pathways and improve information sharing, through the rollout of a national Prevent referral form. We are improving the Prevent case management system to better record ideology.

Recommendation 16: Improve Prevent datasets by revising how referrals are categorised. HSG should consider all options, including delineating and/or removing the 'Mixed, Unstable or Unclear' and 'Other' strands, against Prevent objectives.

Gov response: We agree that we need to improve our understanding of the categorisation of referrals and have commissioned independent research to understand the types of MUU referrals and cases and use the findings to improve the categorisation of cases. We will also delineate MUU categories in annual published statistics.

Recommendation 17: The government should launch new initiatives to encourage referrals from friends, family and community cohorts.

Gov response: We will continue to test and develop our new accessible GOV.UK resource, which activity complements CTP's Act Early campaign and online resources. We will also increase work with non-statutory partners, the third sector, and with communities to build awareness of the signs of radicalisation and how to get support.

Recommendation 19: Streamline Channel case management process by testing a hybrid model for referrals, risk assessment and information gathering. The Police and local authorities would handle referrals simultaneously. Initial discussions with the referee would be carried out by either of these authorities, while the Police would complete risk assessments and information gathering.

Gov response: We will move to this model of delivery over the next 18 months.

Recommendation 20: The Home Office should investigate whether there is an imbalance, or disparity, in thresholds applied to Islamist and XRW Channel cases, and if so why. Examine whether Islamist referrals tend to be individuals much further along the trajectory towards violence compared to referrals where individuals present a susceptibility to radicalising influences or extremist exploitation.

Gov response: We recognise the need to ensure there is no disparity in thresholds and have commissioned an independent outcome evaluation of Channel that to increase understanding of the nature of the cohort, including across ideologies, how they progress through the Channel process, and of the impact that Channel has on counter-terrorism risk, and review the process by which cases are adopted by Channel.

Recommendation 21: CCE to review all Prevent advisory boards and panels to ensure membership includes necessary, credible and impartial expertise on extremist ideology. The relevant government minister should sign off all membership and terms of reference.

Gov response: We will seek the expertise of the CCE, DLUHC and wider government partners to ensure the membership and terms of reference of current and future Prevent advisory groups are robust and ensure products developed by advisory boards are rigorous. We will continue to ensure the membership and terms of reference of all Prevent advisory boards is agreed by ministers.

Recommendation 22: Develop a new training and induction package for all government and public sector staff working in counter-extremism and counter-terrorism, focussing on improving understanding of the ideological nature of terrorism, including: worldviews, objectives and methodologies of violent and non-violent extremist groups, grievance narratives and issues exploited by terrorist recruiters and extremists.

Gov response: We have recently launched updated training packages on GOV.UK on Prevent awareness, referrals, Channel, and a Prevent refresher course. We are also currently developing new courses that will allow users to improve their understanding of Prevent, terrorism, and extremism, and a new Prevent face-to-face training course for public sector workers will be rolled out nationwide in 2023. DLUHC are also developing and delivering wider counter-extremism training for government and stakeholders on the ideologies and harms which affect our communities.

Recommendation 23: Ensure Prevent training upholds a consistent and proportionate threshold across ideological threats.

Gov response: Accepted. Prevent training materials will clearly reflect the threat from both violent extremism and non-violent extremism.

Recommendation 24: Training for Prevent, Channel, and public sector staff subject to the Prevent Duty should include clear guidance on how and when to make appropriate referral decisions and clearly specify the requirement to ensure referrals have an identifiable ideological element and terrorism risk.

Gov response: We recognise that a more informed and muscular approach is needed to tackle the hesitancy and cultural timidity among some when considering referrals into Prevent. Significant work is already underway to overhaul and improve the training offer. We will also roll out a new face-to-face training package to frontline public sector workers.

Recommendation 25: Ensure Prevent does not fund, work with, or consult with extremism-linked groups or individuals, and applies the same thresholds for non-engagement across ideologies. Training should include engagement process and principles, and a due diligence function to assess risk attached to engagement decisions.

Gov response: Since April 2022, due diligence has been conducted through our team of internal expert analysts and we will work with partners to strengthen this. As part of updating training for Prevent staff, we will set out the requirement to not fund/work with extremist linked groups or individuals and will take further steps to ensure that organisations with whom we partner are aware of the behaviours and conduct expected.

Recommendation 29: The Home Office should implement a further due diligence procedure around the recruitment of intervention providers.

Gov response: We commit to further strengthening due diligence processes and to bolstering annual checks conducted on each intervention provider. This will include a more robust and extensive assessment of social media accounts and other public platforms. We will also issue new guidance for intervention providers to ensure there are clear expectations of the behaviours and conduct we expect.

Recommendation 30: Establish a dedicated unit within HSG to rapidly rebut misinformation about Prevent and challenge inaccuracies.

Gov response: We agree we need to take a more muscular approach to rebutting misinformation and disinformation. We will tackle inaccurate claims through a dedicated Prevent communications team and equip our partners and stakeholders, including civil society organisations, to challenge Prevent myths and related extremist narratives. We will create a standards and compliance unit which will fully consider accusations around the mishandling of Prevent referrals or cases, and failures to adhere to the Prevent Duty.

Recommendation 31: RICU should equip Prevent practitioners with better information about extremism-linked campaigns to undermine their work.

Gov response: We agree we must provide practitioners with the information they need to effectively challenge misinformation about Prevent. We will strengthen current work on this by providing additional analysis that outlines the activities of non-violent extremism-linked individuals, groups or organisations seeking to undermine the work of Prevent.

Recommendation 32: Prevent-funded civil society organisations and counter-narrative projects should take on extremism-linked activists who seek to demonise the scheme. Civil society organisations should be ready and able to challenge and expose groups which promote disinformation about Prevent.

Gov response: We agree we must support civil society organisations to better tackle misinformation and disinformation about Prevent, through additional support, resources and training.

Document is Restricted

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: Thursday 23rd March 2023



Gambling licensing

Purpose of report

For sign off

Summary

This paper provides an update on gambling licensing reform, and also outlines a set of principles (Appendix A) for Board members to reaffirm to inform the LGA's ongoing lobbying activity on gambling.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board reaffirm a set of principles to inform the LGA's ongoing lobbying activity on gambling licensing reform.

Contact details

Contact officer: Jade Hall

Position: Policy Adviser

Phone no: 07818577467

Email: jade.hall@local.gov.uk

Gambling licensing - update



Background

1. The Government launched the Gambling Act review in December 2020 and the [LGA submitted evidence in March 2021](#). The publication of the Gambling Act Review White Paper is now well overdue, and we are aware that officials are working with the recently confirmed new Minister, Stuart Andrew MP, and his team to publish it as soon as possible.
2. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board has been lobbying for reform of gambling regulation for many years. Historically, our focus has been on stronger powers for local decision makers to decide whether and where new gambling premises should open in their community and revising the aim to permit.
3. As we are expecting the publication of the Gambling Act review white paper imminently, Lead Members requested a discussion at the Board to reaffirm the LGA's core lobbying priorities on gambling. Lead Members have asked officers to develop a position paper (copied below) that, if agreed, will guide the LGA's lobbying.
4. The position paper focuses on powers for councils to make decisions on land-based (non-remote) gambling premises, as that is the most pressing issue within councils' area of regulatory responsibility. Examples of issues councils have experienced are listed under the draft position paper.
5. Subject to the principles in the position paper being agreed, Lead Members will write to the new Minister to share the LGA's position paper and offer the LGA's support with the outcomes of the Gambling Act review.
6. Separately, the DCMS Select Committee has recently launched an inquiry examining the effectiveness of gambling regulation. The LGA has submitted evidence to the inquiry in line with our evidence to the Gambling Act review and we will continue to monitor developments closely.
7. Officers are also in the process of [updating the LGA's guidance on taking a whole council approach to gambling related harms](#) and hope to have an updated version ready in the spring.

Implications for Wales

8. The Gambling Act 2005 applies in both England and Wales. The LGA will continue engagement with colleagues at the Welsh LGA on gambling licensing.

Financial Implications

9. N/A

Equalities implications

10. There are equalities concerns associated with gambling, with evidence showing certain groups are at a higher risk of gambling harms, and that clustering of gambling premises tends to occur in more deprived areas. In 2021 [Public Health England published a comprehensive gambling-related harms evidence review](#). The findings of this review will continue to inform the LGA's work on gambling.

Next steps

11. The LGA will share the Board's position paper with the Gambling Minister and continue to monitor developments with the Gambling Act Review closely.

Appendix A

Gambling licensing position paper

Introduction

The publication of the Gambling Act Review White Paper is now well overdue, and we are aware that officials are working with the new Ministerial team to publish it as soon as possible. Gambling licensing reform has been a priority issue for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board for several years, and the Board's Lead Members have asked to reaffirm a set of principles to inform the LGA's ongoing lobbying activity.

Context

Licensing authorities are responsible for overseeing gambling in land-based premises (such as betting shops, adult gaming centres and bingo halls) and do this by setting the local framework for gambling, making decisions on licence applications, and undertaking enforcement activity. Under the Gambling Act 2005, licensing authorities are bound by a statutory 'aim to permit' gambling, meaning they must accept gambling premises applications if they are made in accordance with the three licensing objectives: preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way, and protecting children and vulnerable people from harm. However, they can block new local casinos through a 'no casino resolution', meaning councils have a contradictory mix of powers under the Act.

Many councils have expressed frustration about their lack of powers to determine whether/where new premises open in a local area, whether that is a single premises opening somewhere inappropriate or preventing multiple gambling premises clustering in an area, particularly as evidence shows that clusters are typically located in more deprived areas, where the potential harm from gambling may be exacerbated. In 2021 Public Health England published a comprehensive gambling-related harms evidence review found that the annual societal costs of gambling related harm are likely to be in the region of £1.05-£1.77 billion and that the most socio-economically deprived and disadvantaged groups in England have the highest levels of harmful gambling and are most susceptible to harm.

LGA principles for land-based licensing reform

- The aim to permit goes against the principle of local democracy and the fact that councils are place makers. It fails to recognise that ultimately councils and the local community know best what is right for their community and should have the flexibility to decide whether and where to grant a gambling premises licence.
- Councils are not anti-gambling and betting shops but should be able to determine what is best for their local high streets and town centres, whether that means permitting, or not permitting, a new premises. There will be circumstances where councils prefer that premises should be used for shops, cafes or other leisure facilities to add to the economic vibrancy of town centres and high streets, or may consider that due to proliferation of existing betting shops or other gambling premises an

additional gambling premises is inappropriate; and these views should be given due weight in the licensing process.

- Whether through a cumulative impact assessment or other legislative tool, the Government should therefore bring forward a new legal power which in specific circumstances would allow licensing authorities to override the statutory 'aim to permit' and refuse to grant new premises licences, including where this reflects the wishes of local residents.
- The Government should consult on reforming the Gambling Act 2005 so that its objectives reflect a broader range of issues for councils to consider in reaching licensing decisions, for example the introduction of health as a licensing objective, or consideration of replicating the Licensing Act 2003 public nuisance objective.
- Gambling operators should make a mandatory contribution to contribute to the costs of research, education and treatment of gambling related harm, replacing the current voluntary contribution for this.

Case studies of issues

Leeds City Council

The council received an application for a betting shop licence which was located next to an independent toy shop and opposite a primary school. The local councillors, residents and licensing officers opposed this licence due to concerns about the proximity to large numbers of children and young people. However, when this went to review, the aim to permit was used by the QC the gambling operator had hired and as there was no direct evidence the premises would have an adverse effect on children and young people, the Licensing Committee was unable to refuse the licence.

In another example, one gambling operator wanted to open a new bingo premises in the Harehills area of Leeds. Leeds City Council takes a public health approach to gambling related harm, so therefore had information showing that this area has high levels of deprivation and many vulnerable adults and children. In particular, this area is home to large numbers of looked after children, children with lower education attainment and has high levels of youth offences. Additionally, this area also has significant amounts of alcohol related harm – with many problem drinkers, significant numbers of alcohol premises, and high levels of alcohol related crime, anti-social behaviour and alcohol related admissions to hospital. It was felt that this was an inappropriate area for another gambling premises to open in, particularly as there was already a significant clustering of gambling premises. Due to these factors, the council did not want to grant this licence and worked to refuse it. However, the application was eventually granted because the operator had argued they had provisions in place to mitigate against these challenges, and due to the aim to permit, it was difficult to refuse this application.

Worcestershire

One licensing authority in the Worcestershire area received an application for a bingo premises licence. The site the bingo premises is situated in is a former bank, so enjoys a prominent location near to the high street and close to a taxi rank. Licensing Committee members did not want this premises to open, as it was felt that there were already enough gambling premises in that location. Again, the aim to permit was problematic. Given that this was a new application with no evidence of gambling problems linked to the specific proposed premises, the lawyers at the hearing argued that the authority had to permit unless there was a good reason not to, and there was no evidence the authority could draw upon to block the application. As a result, the application was granted despite the misgivings of the authority.

Enfield London Borough Council

In 2021, the council received an application for a bingo licence to take over a betting shop on the high street. Initially the licence was granted as it received no objections as the application was made during the pandemic and residents had not seen the advertisements that this new premises would open. However, when renovations to the site started, local residents strongly objected to it. There was apprehension about the long hours that the premises would be open for, worries about anti-social behaviour, and concerns about the exposure to gambling children would face as it was next to a bus stop and opposite a McDonalds. As a result, the council submitted a review application given the strength of local opposition to this premises. However as there was no evidence that crime had arisen, the review had to be withdrawn and the premises is now open.



Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: Thursday 23 March 2023

Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation:

That members of the Board note and comment on the update.

Contact details

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3241
Email: Mark.Norris@local.gov.uk

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: 23 March 2023

Update Paper

Background

1. This report outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) – follow up to previous Board meeting

2. At the last Board meeting, officers were asked to clarify councils' responsibilities for RAAC roofs. We have not sought legal advice but understand the position to be as follows:
 - In schools, councils are responsible where the school is maintained; they may also have responsibilities for academy schools depending on any contractual responsibility for maintenance.
 - Employers have responsibilities, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, for anyone on their premises. This means they need to take reasonable steps to ensure people are safe, such as ensuring the roof is not likely to collapse.
3. The LGA has prioritised work on school roofs but has worked to raise awareness in relation to other buildings and has shared the [Office of Government Property's correspondence with duty holders on its website](#). LGA officers have raised issues around RAAC with workforce colleagues who run a group for councils as Health and safety duty holders.
4. As a regulator, we understand that a council's building control officers would have a responsibility if a building were to be reported as potentially hazardous or dangerous but they do not proactively seek out such buildings through for example a programme of inspections. Councils will also enforce the health and safety at work act in some workplaces (offices and shops).
5. Officers are continuing to follow up this issue with the Cabinet Office/Office of Government Property.

Online Harms Bill - follow up to previous Board meeting

6. Also at the last Board meeting, members sought an update on the Online Harms Bill. The LGA's policy work on this Bill is being led by the Children,

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board**Date:** 23 March 2023

Young People and Democracy Team in conjunction with our public affairs team.

7. The Bill had its second reading in the House of Lords at the beginning of February ([the LGA briefed Peers on the Bill](#)); however, it has not progressed since and the Government is applying for an extension to the previously agreed carry-over for the Bill, which would give until 20 July for passage of the Bill to be completed. We do not expect it to begin committee stage in the Lords ahead of the Easter recess.
8. The LGA has been using the Bill to highlight the online abuse experienced by councillors, calling for the Government and Ofcom to go further and adopt clearer and more robust provisions to manage the 'low level' abuse experience by councils that falls below the criminal threshold. We are seeking assurances from the Government that the democratic and journalistic protections set out in this Bill will not inadvertently protect perpetrators of abuse. We have also expressed regret at the removal of the harm-based communications offence by the government at committee stage in the Commons, which could have been an important tool in tackling this intimidation, harassment and abuse.
9. From the Board's perspective, we have been monitoring provisions in the Bill that relate, firstly, to terrorism content. We have argued that there is a need to tackle legal, but harmful extremist content, with extremists adept at remaining within the law; and that providers should work with extremism experts to identify and ban individuals/groups behind coordinated and/or repeated publication of extremist content. We have also commented on measures to tackle financial harm, with the Bill including duties to prevent and remove fraudulent advertising.

Licensing training

10. Cllr Woodbridge, Vice-Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, chaired the LGA's annual licensing conference in early February. The conference gave delegates an opportunity to reflect on some of the key developments that can be expected to affect councils' licensing committees and teams over the next year. There was a wide range of expert speakers who covered issues including licensing and counterterrorism, how to secure alignment between licensing and planning regimes and best practice in fee setting. Cllr Jeanie Bell, one of the Board's licensing champions, also delivered a presentation on how to link licensing into councils' priorities. This was an in-person, paid for conference, which attracted around 60 delegates.
11. Officers also hosted a licensing leadership essentials course in March. The course is aimed at chairs and vice-chairs of licensing committees and focuses on how a good committee is run. The course was attended by around 15 members and received excellent feedback.

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board**Date:** 23 March 2023*Gambling*

12. The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee is holding an inquiry into gambling regulation to investigate the progress the Government has made on addressing the known issues in gambling regulation. The LGA has submitted written evidence to the inquiry.
13. The LGA and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) hosted a roundtable on tackling gambling harms in early February. The meeting consisted of PCCs, the National Police Chiefs Council, councillors and council officers from public health and licensing. It sought to identify good practice and collaborative working between councils and PCCs on gambling harm. The outcomes of the roundtable will inform a refresh of the LGA's guidance on taking a whole council approach to gambling harms and the APCC's checklist on gambling.

Taxi licensing

14. The LGA has been advised that the information sharing provisions in the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act will commence on 27 April 2023. This will make it mandatory for councils to check the National Register of Licence Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions (NR3S) database when making licensing decisions.
15. In 2018, the LGA funded the development of what was then known as the National Register of Licence Revocations and Refusals, which is hosted by the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN), to address the issue of taxi drivers losing a licence in one area but then applying for a licence in another area without declaring their previous licensing history. Before the introduction of NR3, there was no central database of drivers' history of revocations and refusals, and local authorities had to rely on applicants to self-disclose this information. As a result, crucial intelligence could be missed, which could pose a potential risk to public safety.
16. The LGA is co-badging guidance to support councils to implement their new duties under the Act.
17. The Welsh Government has [recently launched a white paper](#) which sets out proposals for legislation to modernise the taxi and PHV sector in Wales and address the problems of cross border hire within Wales. The LGA will review these proposals and expects to submit a brief response to the consultation given proposed measures relating to English drivers wishing to work in Wales.

Alcohol licensing

18. The Home Office has launched a short [consultation on extending the scope of the late night levy](#), which allows councils to issue a levy on businesses in the night time economy to cover some costs associated with alcohol fuelled crime

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board**Date:** 23 March 2023

and disorder. A very small number of councils have the levy in place, but the LGA submitted a brief response to highlight some improvements we believe need to be made to the levy in order to make it a more useful tool for councils.

19. The Home Office has also [launched a regulatory easements consultation](#), which seeks to understand whether the changes around off-sales and Temporary Event Notices that were introduced by the Business and Planning Act 2020 should be made permanent. The LGA will be responding to the consultation on behalf of councils.
20. Separately, following sustained LGA lobbying, the Home Office will shortly be launching a consultation to understand the costs to councils when administering the Licensing Act 2003. Fee levels are specified in the Act but have not been increased since 2005 and as a result, councils incur a significant deficit when administering the Act.

Human trafficking

21. The Home Affairs Committee is [holding an inquiry](#) into Human Trafficking, which is looking into the scale of human trafficking in the UK; the support available for victims and the efficacy of current legislation in this space. The LGA has submitted written evidence to this inquiry.

Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS)

22. Before the end of March, the LGA and Locality will be launching a toolkit to help councils take a fresh look at how effective their strategic relationships with local VCS organisations are. Aimed at senior officers and councillors, the toolkit is based around a self-assessment tool which aims to help councils map their strategic relationships, understand their strengths, identify weaknesses, and plan ways forward.
23. The toolkit is an extension of the work by Locality to [produce a report earlier this year](#) on the state of strategic relationships between councils and VCS, which identified examples of good practice, the core foundational principles for effective joint working, and some of the key barriers to creating effective strategic working between the sectors. The report was presented to the Board at its meeting in September 2022.

Prevent statistics

24. In January, the Home Office released the [latest statistics on Prevent referrals](#), for the year ending March 2022. Headline findings included:
 - There were 6,406 referrals in total, which is a 30% increase on the previous year (most likely as a result of the lifting of pandemic restrictions)

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board**Date: 23 March 2023**

- Of those, 76% (4,848) were deemed not suitable for Channel. The majority of those were signposted to other services (3,754; 77%) most commonly to the Education (26%), or Health sectors (21%); 23% (1,486) were considered for Channel support; and 13% (804) were adopted as a Channel case
- 89% of those referred were male, with males making up 92% of those discussed at Channel; and 94% of adopted cases
- Where age was recorded, the highest proportion of initial referrals was for 15-20-year-olds (30%); 29% were for those under 15; and 16% for those aged 21-30. Under 15s were the highest proportion of case discussed at Channel (32%) and adopted as a case (37%)
- Of the 6,406 referrals, 'Vulnerability present but no ideology or terrorism risk' accounted for 33%; 20% for extreme right-wing (XRW) extremism; 16% for Islamist extremism; 2% for concerns re school massacres; 1% for Incel
- Of the 804 Channel cases adopted, 42% were for XRW extremism; 19% for Islamist extremism; 15% for Conflicted ideology; 13% for no terrorism risk or ideology, 5% for school massacre concerns; and 3% for incel-related concerns.

East Midlands regional Prevent and counter-extremism network

25. In February, working alongside the Home Office, we launched a new regional network in the East Midlands for elected members and lead officers on Prevent and counter-extremism. The aim of the network is to support local delivery of Prevent and counter-extremism work by providing elected members with an increased awareness of local, regional and national Prevent and counter-extremism policy and practice, and facilitating opportunities for local authorities to share approaches and learning.
26. This follows the establishment of similar networks in previous years in two other regions, the North East and Yorkshire & Humber.

Asylum cohesion issues

27. Councils have continued to raise concerns about cohesion and extremism issues linked to asylum seekers and refugees. Following the January Board meeting, the LGA held a webinar for councils and statutory partners to discuss some of these issues in more depth and share learning from areas who have encountered issues. The event also provided an opportunity for councils to share their experiences with senior Home Office and DLUHC officials.

Domestic abuse

28. In March, Cllr Lois Samuel, the Board's Domestic Abuse Champion, attended the fifth meeting of the National Expert Steering Group on Domestic Abuse. The Steering Group, jointly chaired by the Housing and Homelessness Minister Felicity Buchan MP and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board**Date:** 23 March 2023

England and Wales Nicole Jacobs, oversees the implementation of the statutory duty placed on local authorities to provide domestic abuse accommodation-based support and services to victims and children. The meeting focused on the proposed evaluation of the statutory duty, being undertaken by Ipsos Mori, as well as a presentation on the Respite Rooms pilot programme. Imkaan also highlighted a “by and for” services working group with local government officers, which the LGA and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are supporting. The next meeting is expected to take place in June 2023.

29. New measures on domestic abuse were also announced in February, as the Government confirmed the police and the probation service will start work immediately to ensure that offenders sentenced to a year or more for controlling and coercive behaviour are recorded on the violent and sex offender register. In addition, abusers could be fitted with a tag, prevented from going within a certain distance of a victim’s home, and made to attend a behaviour change programme, as part of a trial of domestic abuse protection notices and orders. Also, those at risk of, or suffering from, domestic abuse will be able to receive emergency help from 18 jobcentres across the UK. Further details of the measures can be [found here](#).

Serious Violence Duty

30. The LGA has been working with the Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and NHS England to ensure that communications relating to the serious violence duty are relayed to all partners/conveners involved. The LGA has circulated updated funding guidance, provided by the Home Office, which has also been made available to all partners involved in the duty. This follows feedback from our Community Safety Advisers Network and wider local government officer sessions seeking transparency and clarity on how the serious violence duty is expected to work at a local level, and how the funding arrangements will work. The LGA is holding a best practice session with local government officers to understand challenges, concerns and progress made so far in the implementation and delivery of the duty and will continue to liaise with our national partners to help share best practice.

UK Government Resilience Framework

31. The new [UK Government Resilience Framework](#) has previously been circulated to the Board, alongside a short summary of the key issues for councils and local places. Of particular interest is that fact that it commits to addressing the LGA’s concern about the absence of democratically elected councillors within the Civil Contingencies Act structures. The framework identifies three core pillars for strengthening LRFs, empowering them, local partners and leaders to consider, drive and improve resilience across their areas, including:

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board**Date:** 23 March 2023

- Piloting the creation of a permanent LRF chair role; effectively a chief resilience officer *accountable to executive local leaders*, who will have a clear role in ensuring the effective delivery of resilience activity.
 - Considering mechanisms for stronger assurance of LRFs collective delivery, as well as integrating assessment of resilience into the inspection/audit regimes of individual responders.
 - Integrating resilience into the levelling up and growth missions, and included as a key aspect of devolution deals (or, where no deals are in place, as a key component of community safety).
32. Officers are engaging with DLUHC officials, who have indicated that they intend to pilot three specific elements of these ideas:
- Linking resilience into devolution deals.
 - Accountability – shifting away from the current model of part time LRF chairs drawn largely from the blue light services to create a full time role focused on building resilience and preparedness (as much as response) and ensure accountability for this. DLUHC appear to recognise that a wider focus on building resilience fits more naturally with councils' broader place shaping role than with the blue light services.
 - Integrating this with other issues. It is notable that DLUHC are keen to think more widely than LRFs, with a focus on building resilience and civil resilience into wider activity rather than seeing this as something discrete or response focused.
33. It is encouraging that DLUHC are recognising the central role of councils in wider resilience issues as well as emergency response.
34. The Government hopes to run 5-8 funded pilots on these themes. Expressions of interest are expected to be sought in the coming months, with pilots confirmed in June and due to commence in January 2024. The LGA will ensure that these opportunities are publicised with councils, and a DLUHC engagement event for LRFs is also taking place on Wednesday 22 March.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan

35. In January 2023, the Prime Minister [outlined](#) plans for tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) through providing local authorities, police forces and mayors with additional tools to tackle ASB, and aiming to improve community confidence that crimes would be quickly and visibly punished.
36. On 16 January 2023, the Government held a private No.10 roundtable to discuss solutions and challenges related to tackling ASB, which our Chairman, Cllr Jamieson, attended alongside representatives from the police, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and ASB practitioners. We

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board**Date:** 23 March 2023

understand the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will be leading on the development of a Tackling ASB action plan, with input from wider government departments.

37. Following the No.10 roundtable, Cllr Jamieson wrote to the DLUHC Secretary of State outlining our LGA views on tackling anti-social behaviour, and our recommendations for the Government's Tackling ASB action plan. LGA officers have continued to feed views into departmental sessions held over the previous few weeks. This includes feedback received from the Safer and Stronger Communities Board on 19 January 2023.

38. We understand the Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Plan is expected to be published imminently, and LGA officers will provide an update to the Board once it is available.

Community Safety Partnership Review

39. In March 2022, the Government provided an update on Part Two of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Review, via a [written ministerial statement](#). The statement outlined that the Government intends to undertake a full review of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to initially improve their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, before assessing their position within the wider landscape of local partnerships across England and Wales.

40. The CSP review was expected to be launched in July 2022, however this was delayed due to changes within Government. We expect the CSP Review to be launched alongside the Tackling ASB Plan, which is expected to be published imminently.

Implications for Wales

41. Officers to work with the Welsh LGA as necessary.

Financial Implications

42. None.

Equalities implications

43. To be considered in relation to each individual policy area.

Next steps

44. Officers to continue progressing these issues as required.

