



Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Thursday, 18 January 2024
12.00 pm

Hybrid Meeting - Victoria Room, 8th Floor, 18
Smith Square and Online

There will be a meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **12.00 pm on Thursday, 18 January 2024** Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online.

LGA Hybrid Meetings

All of our meetings are available to join in person at [18 Smith Square](#) or remotely via videoconference as part of our hybrid approach. We will ask you to confirm in advance if you will be joining each meeting in person or remotely so we can plan accordingly, if you wish to attend the meeting in person, please also remember to confirm whether you have any dietary/accessibility requirements. 18 Smith Square is a Covid-19 secure venue and measures are in place to keep you safe when you attend a meeting or visit the building in person.

[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, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:

Abigail Benari
abigail.benari@local.gov.uk | 07789937675

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme, a Carer's Allowance of National Living Wage and/or 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 2023/24

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

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (6)	
Cllr Sue Woolley (Deputy Chairman)	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Bill Borrett	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Bobbie Dove	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Priti Joshi	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Cllr Liam Bones	North Tyneside Council
Cllr Arnold Saunders	Salford City Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Simon Bennett	Wolverhampton City
Cllr James Gartside	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Chris Pillai JP	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Labour (6)	
Cllr Jeanie Bell (Vice-Chair)	St Helens Council
Cllr Brenda Dacres	Lewisham London Borough
Cllr Anthony Okereke	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Cllr Kelly Middleton	Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Asher Craig	Bristol City Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Sara Conway	Barnet London Borough
Cllr Kevin Dodds	Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr David Welsh	Coventry City Council
Liberal Democrat (3)	
Cllr Heather Kidd MBE (Chair)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
Cllr Jake Short	Sutton London Borough
Substitutes	
Cllr Jacqui Taylor	St Albans City and District Council
Cllr Majory Millum	Richmond upon Thames London Borough
Independent (2)	
Cllr Clive Woodbridge (Deputy Chair)	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Karen Lucioni	Isle of Wight Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Chidi Nweke	Epping Forest District Council
Cllr Paul Hilliard	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Matt Edwards	Bradford City Council
Cllr Andrew Walters	Salford City Council
Cllr Mandy Ewings	West Devon Borough Council

Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Thursday, 18 January 2024

12.00 pm

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

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Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 19 March 2024, 12.00 pm, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Local authority food standards and safety capacity

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Summary

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) will present to the Board on workforce and capacity issues in local government food standards and safety.

LGA Plan Theme: **Support to the LG Workforce**

Recommendation(s)

That the Board considers:

- (a) The proposals set out in paragraph 17; and**
- (b) How the LGA works with the FSA going forward on workforce issues of mutual concern.**

Contact details:

Contact officer: Charles Loft

Position: Senior Adviser

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Local authority food standards and safety capacity

Background

1. The Food Standards Agency's role, as set out in the Food Standards Act 1999, is to protect public health from risks arising in connection with the consumption of food and to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food and animal feed.
2. Local authorities deliver food and animal feed standards through their Trading Standards teams (upper tier/unitaries) and Food Safety through their environmental health teams (lower tier/unitaries).
3. One of the roles of the Food Standard Agency (FSA) is to gain assurance that Local Authority performance meets the minimum standards set out in the Food Law Codes of Practice issued under the under Section 40(1) of The Food Safety Act 1990, Regulation 6(1) of The Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009 and Regulation 26(1) of The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. Therefore local authorities must deliver the requirements set out in in the Food Law Codes of Practice and as such makes food safety regulation a statutory service.
4. The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities Implements FSA powers under the Food Standards Act to influence and oversee local authority enforcement activity, supported by data monitoring and a programme of audits.
5. The National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) for animal feed and for food hygiene at the level of primary production are developed annually in consultation with local authority representatives and others.
6. Prior to the Covid pandemic local authorities were required to annually upload data generated from their systems to the FSA's web-based platform called Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS). During Covid as a result of needing to obtain more timely data a quarterly survey was introduced, this data collection is now undertaken bi-annually. This is the data the FSA use for annual reports and performance monitoring.
7. During the Covid pandemic local authorities moved Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff to other areas to help manage the response. This resulted in many food hygiene interventions being stopped. As a result, in 2022 the FSA issued the Local Authority Covid recovery plan with specific targets regarding food hygiene inspections to be met. This plan finished in March 2023 and local authorities are expected to have returned to "business as usual".

Proposal

8. The FSA is concerned that despite the expectation for local authorities to have returned to business as usual, the reduced local authority capacity in food standards and safety means that many are still struggling to undertake planned inspections. There is also an increase in the number of registered food business that have not yet been inspected. This is highlighted in a report to the December 2023 FSA board. A copy of the report can be found [here](#).
9. In December 2023 the FSA also published [Local Authority Capacity and Capability research](#) which found that not enough people are going into the environmental health and trading standards professions and those who do are not necessarily choosing food as a career. If they do, then low pay and lack of career progression in councils makes retention harder. The report also contains some useful additional findings about a lack of alignment between the education system and what councils need to train staff.
10. Further concerns about the local authority workforce picture for food safety regulation can also be found in [Our Food 2022 An annual review of food standards across the UK](#)
11. These reports closely align to the work the LGA is undertaking around workforce capacity issues. In July 2023 the LGA's Executive Advisory Board agreed that Environmental Health would be one of eight priority service areas facing the most severe workforce capacity challenges to be prioritised in the LGA's local government workforce capacity plan.
12. The LGA's Workforce Capacity Action Plan agreed by the LGA's Executive Advisory Board (and which progress against is reviewed by the Economy and Resources Board) covers:
 - 12.1. Gaining greater insight on the issues facing councils through surveys and other sources of data and through engagement with senior regulatory services professionals to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and scale of the recruitment and retention challenges facing the sector. This includes reviewing the findings of FSA research.
 - 12.2. Attracting candidates to work in priority occupations including through the National Graduate Development Programme and a new national recruitment campaign to attract people into local government which is currently being piloted in the North East of England.
 - 12.3. Continuing to promote the use of apprenticeships and T levels in the sector.
 - 12.4. Launching a skills hub programme in July 2023 targeting five occupational skills shortages including environmental health. There are hubs for each

occupation with each hub led by an individual council, and are designed to map skills and qualification pathways as well as sharing practice.

12.5. Providing advice guidance and bespoke support to councils on good recruitment and retention practice, health and wellbeing support, workforce planning and organisational design.

12.6. Developing resources aimed at engaging and promoting local government to young people.

Implications for Wales

13. The FSA has a 3-nation remit covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland has their own body Food Standards Scotland (FSS). Food standards and safety is dealt with in the same way in England and Wales, but there is a dedicated team in Wales who focus on engagement with Welsh local authorities, funded by the Welsh Parliament. The report on local authority performance to [the FSA board in December 2023](#) gives a 3-nation breakdown. The FSA's work on resourcing covers Wales, although Welsh authorities did not take part in the survey. Research undertaken by the Directors of Public Protection Wales (DPPW), was included.

Financial Implications

14. Any work identified by members will be taken forward within existing resources.

Equalities implications

15. Job seekers are looking for diverse workplaces: addressing equalities considerations is a crucial part of work to maximise the potential pool of local government workers and aid retention: support to councils to consider equalities good practice is an important part of the workforce provided by the LGA. This is important in terms of culture and career aspirations, but also means consideration of flexible working and doing more to support the health and wellbeing of staff.

16. By working with councils and with relevant professional bodies, the LGA is targeting its policy and improvement work to address workforce capacity challenges towards those service areas where it is most needed, being mindful of equality, diversity and the impact on local communities.

Next steps

17. Members are invited to consider whether the Board recommends the LGA's Workforce Capacity Action Plan includes additional support from the LGA around

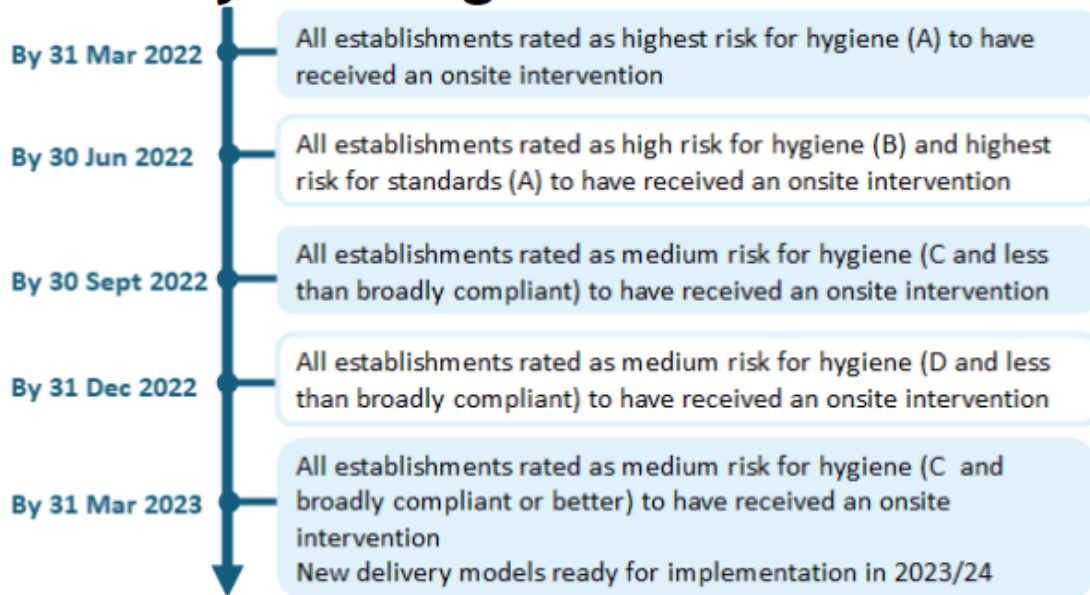
the recruitment and retention of environmental health officers. In addition to the points in paragraph 12 above, such support could include:

- 17.1. Lobbying government for funding for a programme to attract graduates into the environmental health profession similar to the Pathways into Planning programme.
 - 17.2. Continued engagement with senior regulatory services professionals to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and scale of the recruitment and retention challenges facing the sector.
 - 17.3. Further exploring different funding models for councils' food safety enforcement activity to provide additional resources to increase the workforce capacity in the sector.
 - 17.4. Raising awareness within government and among elected members of the important role that food and feed teams carry out.
18. Alongside such activity members are also invited to consider how the LGA works with the FSA going forward on workforce issues of mutual concern.
19. Officers will then proceed on the basis of the steer from members.

Annex 1

Food Standards Agency Covid recovery plan targets

Recovery Plan targets





Food
Standards
Agency
food.gov.uk

Food Safety Update

Health

One dead following cheese recall over E. coli

29 December 2023



Coroner calls for UK anaphylaxis register after Pret a Manger deaths

Families of customers who died after eating food containing allergens welcome report urging reforms



EXPRESS



Home Bargains recalls popular protein drink as it contains 'too much caffeine'

Home Bargains issued a warning over one of its most popular protein powders because of dangerous "high levels of caffeine".



Batches of Nutramigen LGG Stage 1 and stage 2 have been recalled (Image: Reckitt)

- NEWS
- POLITICS
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- CELEBS
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- ROYALS

'Do not feed' warning issued to parents as baby milk recalled from store shelves

The Food Standards Agency has advised the public that Nutramigen LGG stage 1 and stage 2 Hypoallergenic Formula powders have been recalled. This is because of the possible presence of Cronobacter sakazakii which can cause fever and diarrhoea

McDonald's in East London fined £475,000 after mouse dropping found in cheeseburger wrapper

Leytonstone McDonald's ordered to pay £475,000 over food hygiene failings

A branch of The Range has been fined £640,000 for "failing to control" a rat infestation.

Rat droppings were found on shelves next to food in the public area of the Taunton branch of the retail chain, and food packaging had been gnawed into.

Somerset Council prosecuted the company for seven food hygiene offences over the "severe" infestation.

Warning over fake Wonka chocolate bars amid fears they could be unsafe to eat

• Fake bars were found last year to contain allergens not listed on the label

Listeria outbreak: contaminated sandwich at hospital 'probably' caused Derbyshire businessman's death

Terrified father claims his children's eyes 'were popping out of their heads' after eating chocolate 'laced with drugs' at a Christmas market - as woman, 63, is arrested

Manchester United under investigation after claims raw chicken was served at Old Trafford

Manchester United are under investigation after allegations that raw chicken was served at an event staged at Old Trafford for 275 people. Several people made complaints after the event which was staged last week.

Now, Trafford council has confirmed it is investigating the matter. It is understood the club, which has declined to comment, is carrying out an internal inquiry as well. The *Manchester Evening News* understands the club will have three weeks to respond to the council.



BristolWorld

News

Bristol Food Hygiene Ratings: Food Standards Agency releases first batch of ratings for 2023

Out of the 17 ratings published today, 11 scored five stars while one restaurant scored one star

MyLondon

The 48 Croydon restaurants with a food hygiene rating of 0 or 1

Wales247.co.uk

Record number of food businesses achieving top hygiene ratings across Wales

71% of Welsh food businesses now have the top hygiene rating of 5 – a jump from 44% from 10 years ago – making it the highest on record in Wales.

Shropshire Star.com

Latest food hygiene ratings in Shropshire with 47 top ratings but several ones

Hygiene ratings have been revealed for a number of pubs, bars and restaurants across the Shropshire region with 47 businesses handed the best rating of five out of five.

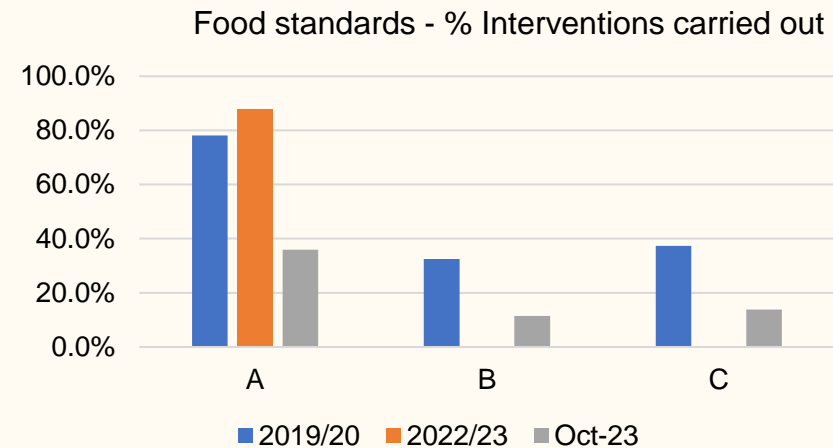
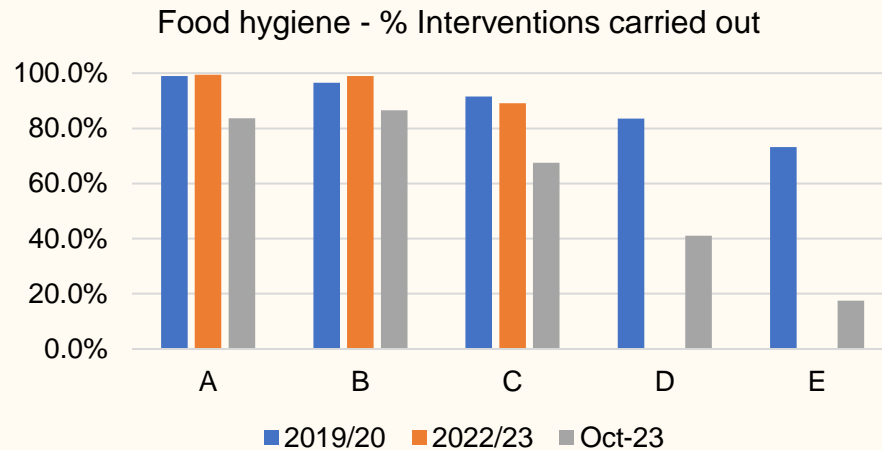
Figure 21: Percentage distribution of FHRs ratings based on data gathered on 31 December 2022 reporting the most recent inspection

FHRs rating	0	1	2	3	4	5
England	0.2%	1.3%	1.4%	6.4%	15.0%	75.7%
Wales	0.2%	1.5%	1.3%	7.4%	18.1%	71.6%
Northern Ireland	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	3.2%	12.5%	83.4%

Taken from: [Our Food 2022: an annual review of food standards across the UK](#)

Interventions carried out

England, Wales and Northern Ireland totals



- For 2022/23 data was only collected for categories A to C where there was a COVID Recovery Plan target.
- For food hygiene the % interventions carried out has decreased in all risk categories from pre-pandemic (2019/20) levels with significant decreases for the medium to low-risk categories, C to E.
- In 2013/14 the total % of interventions carried out at establishments A to E and at new establishments was 82% compared with 86% in 2019/20. This decreased to 40% in October 2023.

- For 2022/23 data was only collected for category A where there was a COVID Recovery Plan target.
- For food standards the % Interventions carried out has decreased significantly in all risk categories from pre-pandemic (2019/20) levels.
- In 2013/14 the total % of interventions carried out at establishments A to C and at new establishments was 48% compared with 40% in 2019/20. This decreased to 15% in October 2023.

Establishment numbers

England, Wales and Northern Ireland totals

Risk category	Number
A	1,589
B	18,558
C	97,402
D	204,897
E	213,243
Unrated	42,012
Total	577,701

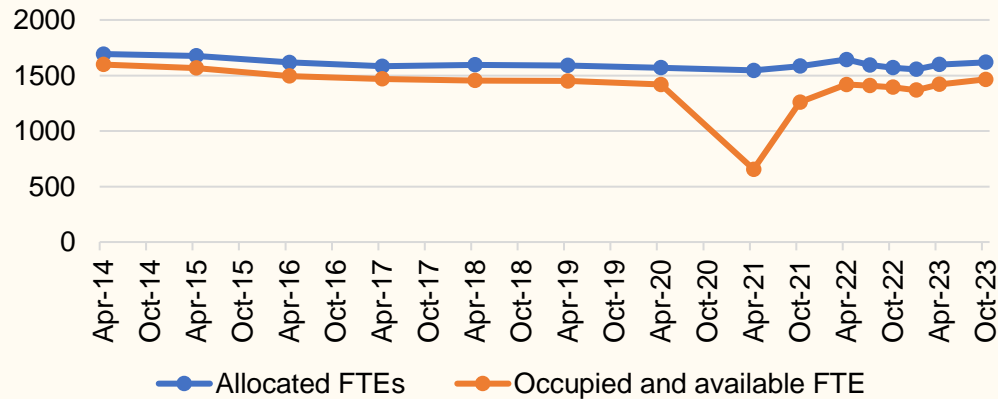
- Across all three nations, the overall number of establishments has increased from 548,000 in 2013/14 to 578,000. The increased number of food establishments has directly impacted on LA's who are struggling to meet growing demand
- The number of new business establishments awaiting a first inspection was over 77,000 in April 2021. Local authorities have gradually brought this number down. In October 2023 it was 42,000 which remains higher than pre-Covid levels of around 26,000.
- Anecdotal evidence from local authorities is that since the pandemic they are receiving more new business registrations each year.
- LAs are telling us pressures are exacerbated factors such as reported reduction in standards at food businesses, resulting in longer than anticipated engagement when conducting inspections.

Premises profile by risk category – October 2023 Based on data from food hygiene returns.

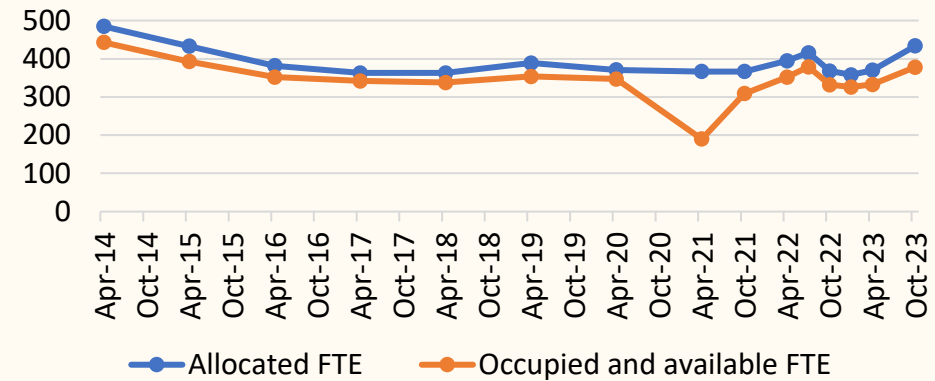
FTE resource

Professional full time equivalent (FTE) posts to undertake official food controls England, Wales and Northern Ireland totals

Food hygiene FTE posts, April 2014 to October 2023



Food standards FTE posts, April 2014 to October 2023



- We are very concerned that local authority food teams do not have sufficient resource to deliver food controls, given the backlogs they need to work through.
- Analysis of local authority staffing shows there are approximately 14% fewer food safety posts being funded across England, Wales and Northern Ireland compared to a decade ago – and even where these posts do exist, over 13% (1 in 7) are vacant.
- There has been a 45.1% drop in the number of food standards officer allocated posts from 2011/12 to 2021/22 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

LA Capacity & Capability research*

Multiple and complex reasons to a shortage of qualified and competent officers to deliver official food and feed controls and broader regulatory services.

Insufficient number of students starting qualifications to meet demand.

Local authorities perceive current qualification routes and training programmes do not provide early careers professionals who can competently deliver food controls.

Apprentices and early careers professionals require significant levels of support to get them to the required level of competency to deliver basic controls, LA's struggle to provide capacity.

Slowly losing capability to provide support by virtue of experienced officers leaving the profession through retirement or other means.

50% UK LA's report that they do not have sufficient expertise to cover the full range of trading standards responsibilities, the ageing trading standards workforce was a threat to future professional capacity.

* [Link to report: LA Capacity and Capability research](#)

What is the FSA doing?

We will address feedback about our competency framework, to ensure local authority staff spend less but better-quality time assessing and developing officer competency to free up resources for delivery.

We will consult with LAs to understand how we can use our limited training budgets to support officer competency or boost the supply of officers.

We will review our 'suitable' qualifications to develop more flexible or modular approaches to delivery, including endorsing the apprenticeship model, to support officers to deliver lower risk official controls before they are fully qualified or chartered.

We have started to collaborate with other government departments, relevant professional bodies and interested parties to discuss the findings and work together to shape and influence potential solutions.

How you can support us



We invite you to read our [LA Capacity and Capability research](#) in more detail to understand the extent and nature of the challenges faced across regulatory services.



We encourage you to ensure your food and feed services are appropriately funded.



We invite your thoughts on how the LGA can:

Raise awareness of the important role that food and feed teams carry out.

Ensure that food and feed teams are sustainably funded.

Encourage more people into the professions.



Q&A

DLUHC - Stronger Local Resilience Forum Pilots

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Summary

Eight areas are piloting stronger Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) through the creation of a chief resilience officer. DLUHC are presenting to the Board to update on progress and provide members with an opportunity to raise questions about the role of members and governance structures.

LGA Plan Theme: Supporting local people and places

Recommendation(s)

That the Board support the pilots and identifies any actions for the LGA to address any governance or other issues.

Contact details

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Position: Senior Adviser

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Stronger LRF Pilots

Background

1. In December 2022, the [UK Government Resilience Framework \(UKGRF\)](#) was published, following a consultation which [the LGA responded to](#).
2. The framework committed the Government to run a pilot across three key pillars of reform to significantly strengthen Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in England: Leadership, Accountability, and Integration of resilience into the UK's levelling up mission.
3. The pilot involves creating a permanent chief resilience officer role (CRO) for each LRF area, replacing the current model of part time LRF chairs drawn from individual LRF members such as the police/fire services or councils.
4. The CRO would be supported with the resources and mandate to bring partners together to drive and enhance resilience. They would be accountable to executive local democratic leaders, giving leaders a clear role in ensuring effective delivery of resilience activity, which is something the LGA has previously expressed concern around.
5. To strength accountability and assurance across LRFs, the framework sets out an ambition that clear mechanisms and expectations between the CRO and executive local leaders will make LRFs more accountable and provide mechanisms for local communities to hold local leaders to account for driving resilience.
6. The Government will consider the means for stronger assurance of LRFs' collective delivery, including auditable frameworks and building assessment of resilience into the inspection and audit regimes of individual responders.
7. The Government wants the CRO and local elected leaders to be empowered to work across the full range of local policy making and delivery to build resilience into wider policy making.
8. To support this, the Government intends for resilience to be included as a key aspect of devolution deals and will consider making the case for combined authorities and mayoral combined authorities to become category one responders under the Civil Contingencies Act.

Proposal

9. The LGA has previously encouraged its members to consider how the Government's ambitions could work in their areas, through engaging with these pilots.

- 10.22 areas expressed an interest in the pilots and eight were selected: Cumbria; Gloucestershire; Greater London; Greater Manchester; Northumbria; Suffolk; Thames Valley and West Mercia.
11. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) will be addressing the Board to update on the progress of the pilots and seek LGA support for them. The DLUHC lead, Paul Phipps-Williams, will give a short presentation on the reforms, what this means for local government and the opportunities there are to make resilience a fundamental part of achieving – and protecting – the wider priorities of locally elected leaders across England.
12. This support will be particularly important in areas where the LRF covers a large number of authorities, with potentially complex governance relationships. There will be a need for flexibility in the mechanisms enabling elected leaders to take on their leadership role in resilience, given different local government structures and LRF footprints across the country.
13. The LGA has previously expressed concerns that councils are not seen as equal partners in LRFs and has called for councillors to have a strengthened role. The UKGRF's ambition to take a more preventative approach to resilience and integrate it into other policy making, should mean that fulfilling this ambition for a stronger local government role will be vital to driving the ambition of the framework and thinking beyond a narrow approach to emergency preparedness, response and recovery alone.
14. The aim of the discussion is to establish what the LGA can do to support the pilots and whether there are any concerns about progress to date which DLUHC need to address.
15. Chief Resilience Officers do not as yet have any powers in relation to local authorities; however a key issue in the pilots will be accountability and governance given the involvement of fire authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners and previous sector concerns over the failure of some emergence services to recognise the role of councils adequately.

Implications for Wales

16. The Stronger LRF pilots are not being run in Wales.

Financial Implications

17. None for LGA, as any further work on this area will be met from existing resources.

Equalities implications

18. There are no specific equalities implications arising from the pilots, though as has been seen with Covid some civil emergencies can have greater negative impacts on some people with protected characteristics, such as the elderly.

Next steps

19. Officers will take forward any actions identified by the Board and will continue to work with DLUHC to identify the key lessons from the pilots.

Support for care leavers

Purpose of Report

For discussion

Summary

The Chair of the Local Government Association (LGA), Councillor Shaun Davies, has announced that one of his priorities for 2023-24 is corporate parenting, in particular support for care leavers. Recognising that all councillors are corporate parents to children in care and care leavers, all policy boards are being asked to share their own ideas for this priority area, to shape the LGA's work in relation to supporting care leavers. This report outlines current ideas for this programme and next steps, and is an opportunity for Board members to put forward their own ideas and good practice to inform the LGA's care leaver work programme.

LGA Plan Theme: Putting people first

Recommendation(s)

That the Board comments on the current plans for this programme of work and suggest any additional ideas as to how the LGA can promote positive outcomes for care leavers, including those based on their own councils' work, so that these can be included in the LGA's care leaver work programme. It is also recommended that the Board consider how care leavers can be considered in the Board's work.

Contact details

Contact officer: Louise Smith

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Phone no: 07464 652769

Email: louise.smith@local.gov.uk

Support for care leavers

Background

1. The Chair of the LGA, Councillor Shaun Davies, announced at the LGA Annual Conference that one of his priorities for 2023-24 is corporate parenting, and in particular how the LGA can support improved outcomes for care leavers and others with care experience. This was also discussed at Executive Advisory Board on 20 July 2023.
2. The Children and Young People Board will lead on this work, with regular updates also going to Informal Group Leaders and the Executive Advisory Board for organisation-wide oversight and join-up.
3. All policy boards at the LGA are being asked to consider how services within their remit could improve outcomes for care leavers, including potential policy positions and sharing of good practice. This reflects the fact that all councillors and council officers are corporate parents to children in care and care leavers.
4. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 outlines the following corporate parenting principles that all local authorities must have regard to when carrying out functions in relation to children in care and care leavers:
 - 4.1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people;
 - 4.2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - 4.3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
 - 4.4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - 4.5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
 - 4.6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their homes lives, relationships and education or work;
 - 4.7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Outcomes for those with care experience

5. Many people with care experience leave care and go on to happy, fulfilling lives. Care experienced people told the Independent Review of Children's Social Care

that it was important to recognise that, while a lot of policy and media attention is given to the disproportionate numbers of care experienced people who experience negative outcomes, such outcomes are not inevitable and care can be a “positive, transformational and lifesaving experience”¹. For example, there is [evidence](#) that longer-term care can be a protective factor in children’s educational outcomes. One of the aims of the LGA’s campaign is to emphasise a more positive narrative around those with care experience.

6. However, by understanding where those with care experience are more likely to experience negative outcomes than their peers, it is possible to identify opportunities to address these issues. The Care Review highlights several key areas where government, business and society can play a role in supporting care experienced people:
 - 6.1. An estimated 26 per cent of the homeless population have care experience.
 - 6.2. Almost a quarter (24 per cent) of the prison population in England have spent time in care.
 - 6.3. Four in ten (41 per cent) of care leavers aged 19-21 are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people of the same age.
 - 6.4. Adults who spent time in care between 1971-2001 were 70 per cent more likely to die prematurely than those who did not.
 - 6.5. Six per cent of care leavers report having no-one at all to provide emotional support, and nearly one in ten only had support from their leaving care worker.

Current work programme

7. Colleagues across policy, improvement, leadership and communications have been working to develop a programme of work to support the Chair’s priority.
8. Partner organisations are being engaged in this work, including Spectra which runs the Care Leaver Covenant, Become (the national charity for children in care and care leavers) and the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum (NLCBF) which connects local authority leaving care teams.
9. Ensuring that the voices of those with care experience directly influence this work is vital to ensure the impact and relevance of the programme. Become and the NLCBF have provided advice on engaging those with care experience, as well as evidence from their own work with care experienced people on key priorities.

¹ [Independent Review of Children’s Social Care 2022](#)

10. Work is being considered across three strands:

- 10.1. The LGA as an employer: including training for all staff, guaranteed interviews where minimum criteria are met for roles (subject to legal advice) and ring-fenced apprenticeship positions.
- 10.2. The LGA as a convener: working with the Care Leaver Covenant to promote their work and encourage sign ups; communications campaign to raise awareness; Work with LAMIT (Local Authorities' Mutual Investment Trust) and CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities Investment Management) to publicise their work to support care leavers.
- 10.3. The LGA's work to support and improve local government: dedicated outreach and support for care experienced graduates applying to the National Graduate Development Scheme; guidance and case studies for councils; lobbying government in relation to funding for children's social care and to support care leavers who were formerly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; training for councillors and officers on corporate parenting, including across the 'corporate core'.

What care leavers say is important to them

11. The following list has been compiled from a variety of organisations (including the [National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum](#), the [Care Leavers National Movement](#), [Barnardo's](#) and the [Children's Commissioner](#)) that have worked with care leavers to identify key support that they would like to see, noting that young people would like to see support offered to all care leavers, including those who are living outside of their local authority area.

Issue and asks from care leavers	Examples of good practice
<p>Finance: support managing household bills; cold weather allowance; council tax exemptions; savings; higher rate of universal credit for under 25s</p>	<p>Winter fuel payments in Gateshead; paying council tax for those living out of authority in Doncaster</p>
<p>Housing: priority access to housing; Staying Put and Staying Close; access to a 'handyman' service and a maintenance fund.</p>	<p>Rent guarantor schemes (e.g. in Devon); home improvements via EQUANS</p>
<p>Travel: support with the cost of getting to appointments, work and staying connected with family and friends; driving lessons.</p>	<p>Greater Manchester free bus travel; Cornwall free bus travel; free driving lessons and paid for licenses in Medway; bicycle packages in Reading</p>

<p>Health: timely access to mental health services; access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services until 25 where necessary to avoid moving into adult support too early; paid-for prescriptions; NHS dentists; optician appointments.</p>	<p>Dedicated mental health worker in Lincolnshire; paid prescriptions in Oldham;</p>
<p>Digital connection: devices and access to WiFi and data to connect with health services, apply for jobs and stay connected to friends and family.</p>	<p>TalkTalk free broadband and data for active job seekers; Greater Manchester free data, devices and digital skills training</p>
<p>Leisure: gym passes, including for a friend to go with them; funds for leisure activities.</p>	<p>Cornwall Culture Card; free activities in leisure centres in Dudley; Christmas/festival allowance in Cheshire West and Chester</p>
<p>Education, employment and training: guaranteed interviews for apprenticeship roles; “work wardrobes”; financial support until a first pay check clears; education bursaries up to the age of 25 (these are currently available for those aged 16-19).</p>	<p>Year-round accommodation at the University of Kent; interview clothing through Smart Works or Suited and Booted; financial support between benefits ending and first wage payment in Cheshire West and Chester;</p>
<p>Practical support: starter packs for new homes or going to university; mentoring or buddying schemes; clothing allowance; passports.</p>	<p>Clothing allowances in Kent; setting up home start packs and TV licences in Northamptonshire; coaching for care leavers in Southwark</p>
<p>Offers for specific groups of care leavers: including care experienced parents, former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, young people with additional needs, those involved with the criminal justice system and the LGBTQ+ community</p>	<p>Support for care experienced parents in Hertfordshire; building community for former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Leeds;</p>
<p>Accessing records: including support through the process.</p>	<p>Access to Records training by the Rees Foundation</p>
<p>Post 25 support: to avoid a ‘cliff edge’ or support.</p>	<p>“Always here” support for those with care experience beyond 25 in North Yorkshire</p>

Issues for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board to consider

12. A [national protocol on reducing unnecessary criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers](#) was published in November 2018, recognising that these young people are over-represented in the criminal justice system. The protocol encourages work between councils and care providers, police forces, Youth Offending Teams, the Crown Prosecution Service, HM Courts and Tribunal Service, Magistrates, health services and other authorities to offer a response to incidents which reduces the likelihood of criminalisation, offending or reoffending wherever possible.
13. Just over a quarter of care leavers are former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Statutory guidance on the [care of unaccompanied migrant children](#) highlights that these young people are at increased risk of going missing and potentially becoming victims of modern slavery.
14. Care leavers may also be at risk of exploitation where they are placed in unsuitable accommodation or accommodation that is a distance from supportive networks.
15. Care leavers are also more likely than their peers to have experienced domestic abuse. Up to [60 per cent](#) of children in foster, adoptive or kinship placements have experienced or been exposed to domestic abuse prior to coming into care.

Implications for Wales

16. Children's social care is devolved in Wales however learning from the programme can be shared with the Welsh Local Government Association.

Financial Implications

17. This programme will be delivered within existing budgets.

Equalities implications

18. This programme is focussed on reducing inequalities for those with care experience.
19. Around one quarter of care leavers are former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Specific consideration will be given to how the specific needs of this group are recognised in the programme of work.

Next steps

20. Feedback from the Board today will be taken forward by LGA officers and reported to the Children and Young People Board as part of ongoing oversight of the programme.

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.

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendation(s)

That the Board note and comment on the update.

Contact details

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Update paper

Background

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

Licensing fees

2. Officers have [updated the LGA's guidance for councils on locally set licensing fees](#). The guidance aims to help councils to understand the full breadth of issues that should be considered when setting local licence fees in order to meet legal obligations and provide necessary reassurances to local businesses.

LGA and Institute of Licensing training standard

3. The LGA and Institute of Licensing (IoL) have [produced a training standard](#) which sets out what the LGA and the IoL believe to be a basic level of licensing committee member training.
4. The aim of the training standard is to encourage licensing committee members to participate in training, drive consistency, and promote the training materials the LGA has developed. We hope the Home Office will promote the training standard when it next updates the guidance accompanying the Licensing Act 2003.

Annual licensing conference

5. Officers are finalising arrangements for the upcoming annual licensing conference on 6th February. The conference will examine the government's plans and expectations for licensing as well as exploring the challenges facing licensing authorities, highlighting innovative work being undertaken by councils and their partners and discussing how we can build on best practice. [The agenda can be seen on the event webpage](#). If any Board members are interested in attending the conference, please contact jade.hall@local.gov.uk

Primate licensing

6. Government has [introduced legislation into Parliament](#) which will create a local authority led primate licensing regime. This means keeping primates as pets will be banned in domestic settings and a licensing scheme will set strict rules to ensure that only private keepers who can provide the highest welfare standards will be able to keep primates. The changes have been introduced via secondary legislation under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Government expects the new regime to come into force in 2026. Officers will engage with Government to understand what support they will be providing to councils.

Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing

7. In preparation for the expected consultation on the Government's proposal to transfer control of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to combined and upper tier authorities (as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper), officers will send a brief survey in early January to licensing authorities who will be affected by this proposal. To support this work, we are also hosting a roundtable discussion at the end of January with some county councils who would be likely to be given this responsibility to understand their views. This follows a Board request for officers to take a proactive approach to this consultation.

Licensing hours consultation

8. The [Home Office has launched a consultation](#) on whether to relax the licensing hours for certain matches (the semi-final and final) of the 2024 UEFA European Championship contingent on the England men's national football team and/or the Wales men's national football team and/or the Scotland men's national football team playing in those matches. The LGA has responded positively to this consultation.

Gambling

9. Board members have been invited to attend ICE, London, which is the UK's largest gaming and betting exhibition held at the ExCeL centre 6-8th February 2024. The Gambling Business Group would like to share details of their High Street Hub with the Board. Please let jade.hall@local.gov.uk know if this is of interest.

Spiking prevention

10. The Home Office has committed to amending the Criminal Justice Bill and updating the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 to make clear that spiking is illegal. The Section 182 guidance which accompanies the Licensing Act 2003 has also been [updated to provide a definition of spiking](#). Accompanying Home Office factsheets also signpost to [LGA best practice guidance](#) for licensing authorities on spiking prevention.

Modern slavery

11. In December officers hosted a meeting of the LGA's modern slavery network for council officers. This network is for officers leading on work to tackle modern slavery and shares best practice. At this meeting, we had a presentation from officers at the Modern Slavery Regional Coordinators for Eastern Region Special Operations Unit, discussed effective approaches to training council staff on modern slavery (awareness and prevention), and best practice on housing victims of modern slavery. Officers will schedule another meeting for March and will also set up a working group on modern slavery training to scope out further work the LGA can undertake to support councils in this area.

XL Bully Ban

12. New restrictions on XL Bully dogs are now in force (31 December) making it a legal requirement for all XL Bully dogs to be kept on a lead and muzzled when in public. It is also illegal to breed, sell, advertise, gift, exchange, abandon or let XL Bully dogs stray. Officers are still in discussion with Defra about new burdens funding to support councils with their new duties under the ban.

Prevent

13. New statutory [Prevent duty guidance](#) came into force on 31 December 2023, which applies to councils and other specific authorities under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and sets out expectations for each of the main statutory sectors and the ways in which they should comply with the Prevent duty. This [reflects the recommendations, accepted by Government](#), set out in the Independent Review of Prevent, published last year. This sits alongside the (non-statutory) [Prevent Duty toolkit for local authorities](#), which was also updated last autumn.
14. The Home Office has published the latest set of [Prevent statistics for year ending 31 March 2023](#). Key headlines include:
- 14.1. an increase in referrals of 6.4 per cent compared to the previous year, and the third highest number since the first period reported on (2015/16).
 - 14.2. 82 per cent of the 6,817 referrals made were not deemed suitable for multi-agency Channel panel consideration; of which the majority (79 per cent) were signposted to other services; 16 per cent of referrals were discussed at Channel and 9 per cent adopted as a Channel case (a decrease when compared with the previous year)
 - 14.3. where gender was specified (6,801), most referrals were for males (6,125; 90 per cent). Females accounted for a higher proportion of Islamist referrals than for Extreme Right-Wing concerns.
 - 14.4. where age was known (6,796), those aged 15 to 20 again accounted for the largest proportion (32 per cent); with those aged 14 and under the second largest proportion (31 per cent) of referrals. Those aged between 11 and 15 account for 39 per cent of referrals where age is specified. Nearly half (46 per cent) of referrals that became adopted cases are for individuals aged between 11 and 15.
 - 14.5. the category 'vulnerability present but no ideology or Counter Terrorism risk' accounted for the largest proportion of referrals (2,505; 37 per cent), up from 33 per cent the previous year.
 - 14.6. for the third year running, the number of referrals for Extreme Right-Wing concerns (1,310; 19 per cent) is greater than referrals for Islamist concerns (781; 11 per cent). Of the 645 referrals that went on to be adopted as a Channel case, 296 (46 per cent) were for Extreme Right-Wing concerns,

115 (18 per cent) were for Islamist concerns, and 103 (16 per cent) were for those with a Conflicted ideology.

14.7. referrals discussed at Channel for individuals with 'Other' concerns were adopted as a case at the highest rate (66 per cent; 23 of 35). Referrals discussed at Channel for those with School massacre ideology were adopted as a case at the second highest rate (64 per cent; 18 of 28). 61 per cent (296 of 484) of referrals discussed at a Channel panel for individuals with Extreme Right-Wing concerns went on to be adopted as a case; 52 per cent (115 of 222) of those discussed at a Channel panel for Islamist concerns went on to be adopted as a case.

15. A new 1½ day free residential [Leadership Essentials course for elected members on Prevent and counter extremism](#) has been scheduled for 14-15 March to explore local government's role in this space. Featuring a range of inputs and workshops, the programme will explore themes including national and local approaches to Prevent delivery, counter extremism and cohesion work, including exploring changes to the Prevent duty; national and local threats, including the online and conspiracy theory space; emerging and evolving challenges; and communications and community engagement on divisive issues. Further details and booking are via grace.collins@local.gov.uk

Community cohesion

16. At the November SSCB meeting, members discussed council concerns on community cohesion. Since the meeting, officers have held a roundtable for over 130 council and statutory partner practitioners, and a separate session for council chief executives. We are continuing to provide/signpost support and guidance to councils as issues evolve, with a further practitioner session planned for February.

Victims and Prisoners Bill

17. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) have been seeking the views of councils on draft guidance. Volunteer councils from the Community Safety Advisors Network (CSAN) gave comments and these were shared with lead members for sign off before submitting.

18. The comments included the need for continuity of long-term support for children, that victims voices are included wherever possible and existing structures should be used where appropriate.

19. Comments also included the need for the guidance to reflect different local governance models.

Domestic Abuse

20. The LGA have received requests from both Home Office (HO) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to collaborate

with councils on best practice in tackling domestic abuse. The LGA will be hosting a series of webinars. The first is scheduled for 30 January 2024 and will focus on domestic abuse amongst those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The second will focus on commissioning and the third on children as victims in their own right.

21. MOJ and the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) will be attending.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

22. In collaboration with the DAC Office, the LGA will soon be issuing a survey to councils to gain a better understanding of the cost and pressures in organising DHRs.

23. The research will inform the future of DHRs going forwards.

Building Safety

24. The Joint Regulator Group (JRG) was formed to bring together regulators in the runup to the establishing of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). This LGA takes part in this group despite not being a regulator.

25. The JRG have been discussing ways of dealing with the recruitment challenges the different regulators have in having a skilled workforce for individual safety cases.

26. Furthermore the JRG are establishing a method of prioritising buildings for these cases. Primarily this will be based on height but the challenges of a bias towards London, the resourcing implications and the fact that height does not necessarily equate to being unsafe are all challenges being worked through.

Decisions made outside of SSC Board meetings

27. Lead members signed off updated guidance on locally set licence fees, as well as the LGA's response to a targeted DCMS consultation on white collar boxing and agreed that the LGA should respond positively to a Home Office consultation on extending licensing hours for the 2024 UEFA European Championship (*approved 6th December*).

28. Lead Members agreed that the LGA would put its name to some cross-government guidance on information sharing with regards to taxi/PHV licensing (alongside some other Government agencies/ wider stakeholders). The guidance outlines the council role around licensing (to assist police officers), how the police shares information and what their thresholds are, and seeks to try and encourage more collaborative working. LGA officers inputted into the development of this guidance (*approved 22nd November*).

Implications for Wales

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

Financial Implications

30. A number of the items within the Update paper may incur additional costs for councils and the LGA will seek to raise these as part of its ongoing work.

Equalities implications

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

Next steps

32. Officers to continue progressing these issues as required.

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