

Adult social care green paper

Purpose

For information.

Summary

This paper informs LGA Executive of the forthcoming green paper on reform of social care and support for older people. It shares the LGA's developing lines in this area and updates Members on the most recent Community Wellbeing Board, at which a discussion was held on the future of health and care.

LGA Executive Members are asked to share their strategic views on this area of policy to help inform the Community Wellbeing Board's work. Subject to Members' agreement, a fuller discussion on adult social care reform will be scheduled with the LGA Executive once the Community Wellbeing Board has further developed its position and messaging.

Recommendation

That the LGA Executive notes this update report and provides a strategic steer on relevant issues to help inform the Community Wellbeing Board's on-going work in this area.

Action

As directed by Members.

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Background

1. The June 2017 Queen's Speech announced that the Government would "work to improve social care" and "bring forward proposals for consultation". The Cabinet Office assumed the coordinating role for this work to ensure a cross-Government approach.
2. In November last year, the Government announced its intention to publish a green paper on care and support reform "by summer recess 2018". Following the January reshuffle, it was announced that the newly renamed Department of Health and Social Care would assume oversight of the green paper process.
3. Caroline Dinenage MP was appointed as Minister of State for Care at the Department of Health and Social Care on 9 January. We understand she is leading the green paper work for the Government. At the time of writing, the Minister is confirmed to speak at Councillors' Forum on 8 March.
4. There has not been a great deal of publicly confirmed detail on the green paper. What we know from Government announcements, parliamentary debate and discussions with officials is that:
 - 4.1 The green paper will focus on reform of care and support for older people only.
 - 4.2 A separate 'parallel process' of work to consider the needs of working age disabled adults is also being taken forward. This is being conducted jointly between the Department of Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
 - 4.3 The previously planned Carers Strategy is now not going ahead; the issues it would have addressed will be wrapped up in the green paper.
5. The Government has appointed a number of 'independent experts' to provide advice ahead of the green paper. Among these, representing local government, is David Pearson CBE, former President of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the current Director at Nottinghamshire County Council.
6. Ahead of the green paper, the Government is also engaging with various parts of the wider care and support sector. In the coming weeks we expect that the LGA, along with ADASS, will have an opportunity to discuss local government's hopes for the green paper with the Minister of State for Care.

LGA key points

7. The following are key points the LGA has developed to date on reform of adult social care and support. These will be developed further in the coming weeks, informed in part by points raised during today's Councillors' Forum and LGA Executive.
 - 7.1 Adult social care must be sustainably funded for the short-, medium- and long-term. Funding should be sufficient to meet all existing and future cost pressures,

any new structural changes to the care system, and all duties under the Care Act, including a stable and diverse provider market offering quality services. Funding must also be sufficient to address the needs of both older people and working age adults. Local government must be consulted on any changes to funding that is ring-fenced for social care and funding decisions must not significantly disadvantage any one authority or type of authority.

- 7.2 Adult social care must be affordable and progressive, striking the right balance of roles and responsibilities between state and citizen. National risk sharing must be considered within this 'contract', supported by a mix of different solutions that work for/can incentivise people of all ages, with different conditions, and across different generations. People should be supported and encouraged throughout their life to plan for their potential future care and health needs.
- 7.3 Adult social care must be simple to understand with a clear emphasis on prevention. People should be supported and empowered to stay well and healthy through a clear service offer that links all relevant local services/agencies together in a way that is intuitive and easily navigable.
- 7.4 Adult social care must be an equal partner in place-based multi-agency working. No one part of the wider wellbeing sector should have primacy over any other part of the sector. In particular, any changes to adult social care (and concomitant changes to the NHS locally) must only be advanced if they support the broader ambition of bringing care and health together through a single point of commissioning defined and determined by local partners.
- 7.5 We support the idea of the green paper taking a broad scope and considering social care's interplay with other council services and other public services. However, we would not want to see anything that drives a further wedge between health and care and/or gives NHS further primacy over social care. We must consider our care and health system as one system made up of two equally important parts.
- 7.6 There have been numerous previous attempts to resolve the issue of long-term funding for social care from various inquiries, commissions and reviews. Despite the best of intentions, these have failed to gain real traction in part because of the politics of care reform. We are clear that this agenda is likely to involve difficult political decisions, which is why cross-party consensus is vital. In turn, this requires greater awareness and understanding from the public of why adult social care matters and its role in our communities. The LGA and local government stands ready to help build both cross-party support and greater public awareness of care and support.

LGA Community Wellbeing Board

8. At its most recent meeting on 21 February, the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board discussed an item on, 'the future of health and care'. This item considered three distinct but related issues: the forthcoming care and support green paper for older people; the future of health and social care integration; and the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) inquiry into the future of health and care, which is being led

by Lord Ara Darzi (ten years on from his report, 'High quality care for all – NHS next stage review'). The LGA is co-sponsoring the IPPR review.

9. Community Wellbeing Board Members made a number of important points during discussion, including:
 - 9.1 The importance of continuing to stress the importance of adult social care in its own right, and not simply as an adjunct to the NHS.
 - 9.2 The need to link to the wider public health and preventative agendas as part of supporting people to maintain their own health and wellbeing. Linked, the need to move from a model of health and care that focuses on treating sickness, to one that invests in promoting good health throughout life.
 - 9.3 The importance of engaging citizens in debates about the future of health and care, and the vital role councils can play in this as locally and democratically accountable bodies.
 - 9.4 The important contribution that other council services can make to wellbeing, in particular housing but also libraries, parks, leisure centres and transport.
 - 9.5 The need to work closely with partners in the third sector who provide vital support for people who would otherwise rely on statutory services.
 - 9.6 The importance of ensuring that the needs of informal carers are not lost in national debates about care and health reform.
10. In light of this discussion, Community Wellbeing Board Lead Members and officers will be working over the coming weeks to further develop the LGA's positions and messaging on care and support reform (and the linked agendas noted above).
11. Subject to the LGA Executive's approval, it is proposed that a further discussion is held with the LGA Executive in the coming months to comment and agree on the LGA's lobbying position.
12. In the meantime, LGA Executive Members are asked to share their strategic views on this area of policy to help inform the Community Wellbeing Board's on-going work.

Financial implications

13. Work on this policy agenda will be done within existing policy budgets.

Implications for Wales

14. The scope of the forthcoming green paper is England only.