

Housing for vulnerable people: Proposals for a task and finish group.

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This paper sets out a proposal for an initial programme of work for the LGA on housing for adults with health and social care needs.

It is proposed that work in this area should begin in July and take place over the Summer and early Autumn, in order to maximise the opportunities afforded by the Care Act and consultation on the regulations and guidance.

Recommendation/s:

That the Board agrees to:

- a. Take forward an initial programme of work on housing for adults with health and social care needs, set out in this paper;
- b. Setting up a small 'task and finish' group made of lead members drawn from relevant LGA Boards, to oversee the delivery of the programme and to steer the development of recommendations emerging from it;
- c. The timetable for the work, which will begin in July so that the Regional Events can be held in November and December and a good practice/next steps report produced by March 2015.

Action:

Officers to progress as directed.

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Background

1. The CWB Board has previously agreed that creating a clear position and profile on housing for people with health and social care needs was a priority for the Board. This paper sets out a proposal for an initial programme in this area which focuses on:
 - 1.1 The benefits that a more integrated approach to housing, health and care services can help deliver for vulnerable adults living in the community; and
 - 1.2 How local councils, working in partnership with health and social care providers, social housing providers, the voluntary sector and the private sector can most effectively contribute to this.
2. We are proposing to set up a small 'task and finish' group, made up of 2-4 members drawn from relevant LGA Boards, to steer the programme and the development of recommendations emerging from it.
3. We would aim to invite members from the Community Well Being Board and the Environment, economy, housing and transport Board in particular to form this 'task and finish group'.
4. We would aim to invite members and hold the first meeting of this in September, when membership of the LGA Boards has been finalised.
5. We propose that that work of the task and finish group is to:
 - 5.1 Provide a core support and challenge role as the project develops;
 - 5.2 Provide a clear link between the project and the work of relevant LGA's Boards – so that members are fully engaged in the work as it develops;
 - 5.3 Oversee and steer the delivery of a proposed good practice and next steps report, and the emerging work programme for the LGA in respect of this; and
 - 5.4 Work with other colleagues within LGA - principally Communications, Current affairs and Campaigns to agree the overall communications strategy in respect of the project and its final report in particular.
6. Funding permitting, we would like to work in partnership with another organisation which leads on housing and support for adults with health and social care needs, to deliver the events. The organisations we could consider working with include the National Housing Federation and the Housing, Learning and Improvement Network and Sitra.

The issues driving the need for a programme of work in this area.

7. The current consultation on the regulatory framework and statutory guidance for the Care Act provides an important opportunity to review the role that housing and supported accommodation plays in the effective delivery of integrated approaches to meeting the needs of vulnerable adults with health and social care needs.
8. As a result of lobbying, the Act now includes more explicit reference to housing and accommodation within it. The suitability of accommodation is explicitly listed as part of the definition of well-being in clause 1 of the Act; housing is explicitly referenced as part of local authorities new duty to promote the integration of health and care; and registered providers of housing are explicitly listed as one of the partners a local authority must co-operate with when considering and planning a person's need for care and support. The draft regulations and guidance also include a strong steer on the importance of the role of mainstream housing, specialist accommodation and/or housing services within all aspects of an integrated approach to the provision of health, care and support services.
9. The development of effective approaches to the integration of health, care and support for adults that meet the threshold for care and support services, is supported by the work of the Health and Well Being Boards, Better Care Fund and Integration Pioneers.
10. There are however a number of key challenges in this area. These include:
 - 10.1 The lack of priority for housing in many local area's strategic planning for integration. It is clear from initial analysis of the priorities for Health and Well Being Boards¹, Better Care Fund and Integration Pioneers, that housing is not currently a core priority consideration in local area's strategic planning for integration for adults with health and social care needs;
 - 10.2 There are a number of financial and structural challenges for councils in the funding and development of supported accommodation and housing support for vulnerable adults. These include in particular the potentially negative impact of welfare benefits changes on the funding of housing related support, which could potentially put at risk existing and future housing with support schemes which enable vulnerable adults to remain in the community and which could also impact on the funding of supported accommodation for adults with significant care and support needs; and
 - 10.3 Effective engagement with and increased understanding of NHS commissioners and providers of the contribution that housing can make to the delivery of effective approaches to integrated support for adults with health and social care needs.

¹ According to John Oldham's 2014 report – 'One person, one team, one system', only 31% of existing health and wellbeing boards (HWBs) currently include a housing lead; and a recent analysis of the JSNAs of the 14 Integration Pioneers found that one in five (21%) did not recognise housing as a key element in the planning and provision of social care; for instance, elderly people with complex needs. Among the JSNAs that do consider housing within the context of social care, there is little consideration of the needs of people with specific long-term conditions, such as dementia or diabetes (MHP April 2014 - A review of how pioneer and whole-person care councils are considering housing in the planning of local health and care services – April 2014)

11. Many local councils are already beginning to develop and implement innovative practice in this area to address these challenges; whether led at a strategic level through their Health and Well Being Boards, via the Better Care Fund or through the development of effective partnership approaches between local councils, health partners, social housing providers and the private sector.
12. Such solutions include innovative approaches to the development and funding of physical adaptations to housing, which can result in significant savings in respect of adults with health and care needs and the development of alternative integrated pathways for adults which more firmly embed housing solutions as a core part of an integrated service for example.
13. Our aim is to support local councils, unitary and non-unitary, build on such developing practice in this area, utilise the opportunities that are currently available and to explore with them pressing challenges at an operational and strategic level in order to find solutions to these.
14. We are therefore proposing to develop an initial programme of work that will:
 - 14.1 Bring together examples of innovative practice that councils working with local partners such as health partners, social housing providers, private sector providers and voluntary sector partners are currently developing. This would be carried out principally through a light touch approach to Principal Advisers – to request exemplars of positive and innovative practice from within their areas;
 - 14.2 Provide an opportunity for councils and their partners, through a series of regional seminars, to review lessons from those areas which are implementing or developing innovative and/or integrated approaches to the housing, health and social care needs of vulnerable adults; and
 - 14.3 Provide an opportunity to explore the implications for the Care Act.
15. These seminars would be focused on:
 - 15.1 The benefits that a more integrated approach to housing, health and care services can help deliver for vulnerable adults living in the community;
 - 15.2 How local councils, working in partnership with health and social care, can most effectively contribute to this;
 - 15.3 The lessons from those areas which are implementing integrated approaches that other councils and their partners can draw on – as leaders and enablers and as commissioners and providers of services;
 - 15.4 What is working well and how this has been achieved;
 - 15.5 The barriers that arise (locally, regionally and nationally); and
 - 15.6 What needs to happen at a local and a national level to help address these?
16. A proposal for the format of the workshops is set out in Annex 1.

- 17 We would aim to bring together the learning and practice examples from these regional events into a LGA report, the aims of which will be to:
- 17.1 Set out emerging lessons from practice; and
 - 17.2 Set out the challenges and issues facing those delivering innovation in this area – locally, regionally and nationally.

18 The core messages and lessons to emerge from this work, will in turn inform future LGA's lobbying/policy development/sector improvement work in this area.

19 A proposed timetable for the events has been set out below:

July:	'Call out' for local authorities involved in innovative practice in this area;
July/August:	Approach speakers and workshop leaders for the events
Early September:	Hold the first task and finish group.
Early September:	Publicise the regional seminars
Nov – Dec:	Hold the regional events
Jan/Feb:	Write up the events
Feb:	2 nd task and finish group – to review emerging themes and discuss next steps recommendations
March:	Publish the report and next steps document

Next steps:

20. Members are asked to:
- 20.1 Agree the proposal to take forward an initial programme of work on housing for adults with health and social care needs, set out in this paper;
 - 20.2 Consider taking part in the task and finish group and to hold the first meeting in September, when the membership of the LGA Boards has been finalised; and
 - 20.3 Agree to initial work on this project beginning in July, so that the Regional Events can be held in November and December and a 'good practice/next steps' report produced by March 2015.

Financial implications.

- 21 The Finance & Policy Directorate budget will fund this work. The level of funding to be attached to the project will be determined at a post-LGA Conference budget review. The availability of funding will obviously affect whether this work is conducted largely in-house or whether elements of it can be commissioned externally..

Annex 1.

Possible format for each workshop.

- A national policy overview – what is the current context for local councils in respect of housing, social care and health – opportunities and risks. (We could ask a CWB Board member based in the relevant region to deliver this)
- Sessions on learning from practice – 2-3 examples of Councils and their partners engaged in innovative practice – how they have achieved this, what the benefits are and what are the barriers that still need to be addressed (locally and nationally)
- Discussion from those attending on what they perceive to be the opportunities and the risks – and how these might be overcome at local and national level. We would want this to focus down on what they might want to take away at a local level to change but also – their priorities for the LGA to take forward at a national level.
- A session to review the implications of the Care Act.