

LGA Boards' improvement activity

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This is a progress report on improvement activity undertaken by other LGA Boards.

Recommendation

That Improvement & Innovation Board Members note the report.

Actions

Subject to members' comments, officers will develop the LGA's improvement offer as part of its on-going work.

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LGA Boards' improvement activity

Background

1. Members have agreed that it is important for this Board to retain a strategic or “overarching” perspective on the improvement activity currently undertaken across LGA Boards. This helps ensure consistency with the key principles underpinning the approach to sector-led improvement and helps avoid any potential duplication.
2. To achieve this:
 - 2.1. officers coordinate the flow of business through the Boards so that the Improvement and Innovation Board can be invited to express strategic views about any significant improvement issues put before other Boards
 - 2.2. during the year the Improvement and Innovation Board receives suitably timed progress reports on the major improvement programmes
 - 2.3. as far as possible, the Improvement and Innovation Board meets towards the end of each cycle of meetings so it can consider any significant issues put before other Boards and then report back to Boards at their next meeting.
3. Significant improvement activity led by other LGA Boards since this was last reported in October 2019 is set out below.

Community Wellbeing Board: Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)

4. The [Care and Health Improvement Programme](#) (CHIP) is the sector-led improvement programme for adult social care funded by the Department of Health and Social Care and delivered jointly with the Association of Directors of Social Services and Association of Directors of Public Health. Our refocused support offer includes guidance and advice on implementation, bespoke support, webinars etc, including around the below themes:
 - 4.1. **Whole systems improvement** – focusing on the interface with hospitals and continuing support around transforming care; looking to capture/share innovations that are happening on the ground.
 - 4.2. **Sustainable, safe and personalised care** – developing guidance addressing provider concerns with partners around PPE, safety and human rights, good commissioning and financial resilience

- 4.3. **Prevention and wellbeing** – concentrating on issues surrounding volunteering, shielding and how social care works with Community Hubs
 - 4.4. **Social justice** – providing emergency legislation support on guidance and roll out; ensuring that marginalised groups (e.g. rough sleepers, substance misusers, people with behaviour that challenges, people with mental ill health) are supported and protected
 - 4.5. **National and local data** – analysis of latest information, including daily sitreps on the state of social care at local authority level available online from LG Inform
5. The support outlined links to wider LGA support for financial and governance resilience, workforce capacity and expertise to support government. [Click here to access](#) headline messages about the support we have delivered and the impact this has had.
 6. **Health and Wellbeing Board COVID-19 reset: rapid research** – In the week of 11 May, we undertook some rapid research with a sample of 15 Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) Chairs from around the country. The [report](#) from this rapid review is a valuable commentary on the evolving nature of the HWBs as they review and re-assert their system leadership role during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also inform the development of the health and wellbeing system improvement offer, starting with the new [HWB reset tool](#), a simple resource to support HWB Chairs move into the next stage of COVID-19.
 7. **The local leadership offer: Testing, Contact Tracing and Local Outbreak Planning** - The LGA has developed a [checklist](#) to support councils identify readiness to respond to a local outbreak. This is supplemented by the offer of free remote peer support to help facilitate these conversations locally.
 8. As part of the Care and Health Improvement Programme, we are hosting a series of webinars for political leaders of health and wellbeing. Webinars so far include [Covid-19 and Ethnicity, 2 June 2020](#) and [Using Marmot principles to tackle health inequalities and COVID-19, 23 June 2020](#). You can book a place on the [upcoming webinars](#) on the LGA website.

City Regions and People and Places Boards

9. The People and Places and City Regions Boards have commissioned a range of improvement support to deliver our local employment and skills offer to the sector.
10. **Shared Intelligence (Si) Report** – At the last round of Boards meetings, members approved a report for publication from Si, which summarises the outputs from a project we commissioned them to carry out. This project involved supporting eight local and

combined authorities to work with local partners to address skills and employability challenges and opportunities. Findings will be available on the LGA website soon.

11. **Case study report on the evolving combined authority skills and employment commissioning role** – The City Regions Board approved a case study report on the evolving combined authority skills and employment commissioning role. This report will be of benefit to CAs and the wider local government sector as it contains detailed case studies, lessons learned from devolution and recommendations for the future. The content will be available on our website soon.
12. **Supporting locally led jobs and skills recovery** – We have engaged with member authorities to inform views and policies relating to COVID-19. Officers discussed recovery issues with the Combined Authority Employment and Skills Network (3 June), and organised a roundtable between local authorities from non-devolved areas with DfE, DWP and MHCLG officials (4 June). The City Regions, People and Places and Children and Young People Boards discussed a jobs and skills recovery paper at their June meetings. The latest LGA position can be viewed [here](#).

Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board

13. **Publications and guidance** – Since the previous IIB meeting, the Culture and Tourism (CTS) Board have developed or contributed to a range of papers and resources to support councils on issues of leisure, culture, tourism and sport, including around COVID-19. These include the following publications:
 - 13.1. [Advice note on supporting leisure providers](#) – developed alongside parliamentary and media lobbying (and commissioning Local Partnerships to provide contract support to councils who commission with one of four providers – over 40 councils are benefiting from this work)
 - 13.2. [Guidance on parks management during the COVID-19 period](#)
 - 13.3. [A think piece on the future of CTS services for First magazine](#)
 - 13.4. [A think piece on the future of public leisure provision](#) – developed in conjunction with local government partners and Sport England
 - 13.5. [A joint statement on working together during COVID-19](#) – developed with ACE and local government partners
 - 13.6. [A letter to Secretary of State for DCMS](#) – about the support needed for the cultural and creative sector
 - 13.7. [Good council practice case studies](#) – developed by CTS services in light of COVID-19
14. **Best practice** – The Board are also developing a best practice publication on how cultural and leisure services have innovated during the lockdown period, and how CTS-specific staff skills have been useful during this period.

15. **Additional support** provided by CTS during this period included interviews with 20 councils about the financial impact of COVID-19 on their cultural, tourism and leisure provision and 10 webinars for councillors and officers on all aspects of CTS, with a further 16 planned. In addition, we have contributed to DCMS working groups that are drawing up reopening guidance for libraries, museums, and leisure centres and negotiated an extension to our Sport England improvement contract worth £279,120.

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board

16. **Climate smart recovery** – One of the EEHT Boards priorities is to support a climate smart recovery from the pandemic.
- 16.1 The Board supported the LGA’s [‘spotlight on a green reset webinar’](#), which was part of the annual conference series of webinars. This involved experts from Local Partnerships, Wirral Council and Waltham Forest, who discussed learning from the current pandemic and reflected on local initiatives, such as active travel. The combined attendance for these webinars was impressive – amounting over 600 participants.
- 16.2 We held a [decarbonisation of transport webinar](#), which included speakers from Leeds University, Sustrans and the DfT. Discussion, which covered topics including good practice, the DfT’s emerging decarbonisation plan, strategies for reallocating road space and the challenges opportunities for local authorities.
- 16.3 We are also looking to produce a series of 8 policy briefings across a range of transport and decarbonisation issues in the next few weeks from our collaboration with Leeds University.
- 16.4 We worked in collaboration with improvement colleagues to capture examples of climate changes actions from 100 councils in policy. The final set of cleared case studies and examples of notable practice have now been published the on [the climate change hub on the LGA website](#).
- 16.5 The LGA is working with Local Partnerships to develop support for councils on green finance as part of their green economic recovery. The aim of the work is to offer innovative approaches to accessing green finance and practical guidance, by looking at domestic and international best practice. This good practice advice will be aimed at local authority members and officer
17. **Town centres toolkit** – With pressures and challenges facing our high streets and town centres, the [LGA’s town centres toolkit](#) has been updated to reflect new national guidance. Further case studies will be added to this resource over the coming weeks.

18. **Housing Advisers Programme (HAP)** – The LGA launched the 2019/20 programme in July 2019 and have funded 24 projects. Following project delays resulting from COVID-19, we are continuing to work with councils and have adapted the programme’s learning elements so that they can be delivered virtually. This includes the ‘Telling your Story’ evaluation (previously scheduled for March 2020), which will now be delivered over a series of webinars. We are pleased to confirm the launch of HAP 2020/21 later this year to support councils in their housing, planning and homelessness recovery.

19. **Private rented sector improvement project** – The LGA has commissioned a piece of research that is looking at the range of activity being undertaken by councils to improve the quality of the private rented sector and, to understand the key challenges. The final report and a practical toolkit for councils will be published by August 2020.

Children and Young People Board

20. Throughout the pandemic, the Children and Young People Board has worked alongside the Department for Education and Ofsted on how to best support councils in their work with children and young people. This has included work to reduce the data burden placed on councils via new data collections and working with Ofsted to develop their plans for social care and local area SEND inspections/visits from September. The Children’s Improvement Board met on the morning of the 14th July to discuss council’s response to the pandemic and lessons learnt.

21. **Schools** – Away from children’s social care we have been closely involved in work to support schools to allow all pupils to return in September. We have also commissioned research that is focussed on gaining an understanding of and learning from responses to the Covid-19 lockdown in schools and children’s social care.

22. **Children’s Improvement Advisors** have provided intensive support, guidance and challenge to councils, have engaged with regional REACT calls between DfE, Ofsted and the sector and have helped shape the response of councils to how they support vulnerable children through the pandemic.

23. **Children’s services system risks tool** – Work is being commissioned to develop and embed a tool that is able to provide strategic leaders with a clear picture of the risks that may be present in a council’s children’s services system. This tool will enable the nine Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances and the national Children’s Improvement Board to better identify risk and thereby co-ordinate support earlier to avoid failure in children’s services.

24. **Virtual learning and support** – 20 virtual action learning sets have been delivered for nearly 300 colleagues from the early years’ workforce from across the country. The purpose has been to share key learning and challenges across the early years sector and help shape and inform plans and strategies to reset service provision. In addition,

we have delivered two webinars (Hidden Babies and Child Poverty) with over 600 people attending to listen to expert input from national and council leads.

25. **Peer challenges and SLI** – The children’s service peer challenge programme has been refocussed with virtual peer diagnostic activity being piloted with councils in September. An independent evaluation of the LGAs sector led improvement activity for children’s services has been completed and highlights a range of key strengths of the programme and identifies areas for further refinement in the future.

Community Wellbeing Board

26. **Councillor COVID-19 guidance: response, reset and recovery** – Building on the general councillor guidance on civil contingencies published at the end of 2018, the Board developed specific guidance on the councillor role in relation to the COVID-19 [response](#) (published in March 2020) and [reset and recovery](#) (July 2020): the original guidance has since been downloaded more than 10,000 times.
27. **Modern Slavery** – In April, we published [guidance](#) on the role that councils can play in tackling modern slavery in hand car washes, which are recognised to be a high risk sector for exploitation. The regulation of hand car washes is complex and split across several different agencies and legal frameworks. The guidance provides an overview of this framework, and highlights examples of the work councils have undertaken to target issues in car washes.
28. **Licensed premises** – In April, the LGA developed practical guidance for councils on approaches to managing licensing during the pandemic, reflecting practices and approaches councils were already using. The guide sets out some key principles as well as picking up on issues around licence fees, procedures and hearings and non-compliance. The guidance, alongside other relevant information related to licensing is hosted on a the LGAs covid-19 hub. We have also issued advice notes for councils on the resumption of live sport, mobile caterers and the use of temporary screens in taxis which are hosted on a the LGAs COVID-19 hub, alongside other relevant information related to licensing is.
29. With pubs, cafes and restaurants able to re-open from 4 July the LGA has sought clarity from the Government on the approach that councils should be taking on various issues both to provide a level of assurance and to support consistency across the country. We have been supporting members by answering queries, signposting to advice and raising issues with relevant government departments.
30. **Outdoor tables and chairs** – In June government [announced plans to introduce new laws](#) and a simplified licensing and planning process as part of in a Business and Planning Bill to support the reopening of pubs, restaurants and cafes, and make it easier for people to safely drink and dine outside. The LGA has been in discussion with

government departments and has [briefed MPs](#) about the possible relaxation of licensing emphasising the need for councils to be able to take decisions about what is appropriate for their areas given other considerations such as the need for road closures, nearby residential premises etc. We are also urging the Government to provide clarity on any changes as soon as possible, to enable councils to prepare for them and provide the most effective support to local businesses.

31. **Scams** – Sadly criminals have been exploiting COVID-19 to defraud the public in particularly older and vulnerable people who are isolated from family and friends. The LGA has warned consumers about a number of new [coronavirus-related scams](#), including criminals trying to con people out of money by pretending to be from the NHS Test and Trace Service. The LGA has urged business such as banks, family, friends and neighbours to work together to prevent fraud from happening in the first place and stop fraudsters taking advantage at this time of national crisis.
32. **Regulatory services** – Beyond licensing, trading standards and environmental health officers have been responsible for enforcing the premises side of the health protection coronavirus regulations which made provision for a number of public health measures to be taken to reduce the public health risks posed by the spread of COVID-19. We have highlighted to Government the significant demands and expectations on environmental health services in particular, given the implications of social distancing measures on the implementation of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which councils enforce in a number of local premises; the potential diversion of resources to support local contact tracing, and the resumption of business as usual activity (eg food safety) as the economy begins to reopen. The LGA and councils are emphasising the need for both additional resources, and also clarity about prioritisation of activity.
33. **Beach safety** – Over the past few months there have been numerous incidents at overcrowded beaches in England. With the country facing what could be its busiest ever summer beach season, with many schools closed and restrictions on travel abroad, the LGA [has made it clear](#) that councils urgently need government funding to help them introduce measures to improve safety at beaches and coastal spots, particularly as a lifeguard service still won't be provided at all the beaches patrolled in a normal summer.
34. **Fire Services Management Committee** – To support fire and rescue authority (FRA) members we have published a new fire specific member development webpage. Member development resources like our [Leading the fire sector guide](#) to oversight of performance and our [New Member guide](#) are directly accessible through the webpage. The webpage will also host new webinar videos on key aspect of the fire and rescue authority members role, including the FRA in times of crisis, FRA member induction, oversight of fire and rescue performance, and good officer/member relationships. We have also published a [Diversity and Inclusion Champions webpage](#) where outputs, resources and useful links to support FRA members will be hosted.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

35. **Domestic Abuse** – In June 2020, the LGA hosted a webinar on tackling domestic abuse. Guest speaker Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, opened the session. Followed by two excellent local government speakers, from Lambeth and from Central Bedfordshire, speaking about how they had taken the lead on responding to domestic abuse and supporting victims during the COVID-19 pandemic. We had over 240 delegates join the webinar, with councils from all around the country engaging with the event. Many delegates have since been in touch to call for further sessions on this important issue. We will continue to share best practice across local government and work closely with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s office and the Government, to help transform the response to domestic abuse.
36. **COVID-19 Domestic Abuse Support** – The LGA has published a [guide for councils on tackling domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The guide includes resources to help councils support domestic abuse victims and tackle perpetrators’ abusive behaviour. The guide has been downloaded over 1500 times and is being regularly updated with the latest policy and funding announcements.
37. **Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion** – We have been exploring the risks and evolving challenges around extremism and community cohesion related to the pandemic. This has included hosting two roundtables with the [Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism](#) (SIGCE - a local authority led network co-chaired by Leeds and Luton councils) in April and May for councils to share experiences and approaches, and discuss some of the anticipated longer-term implications from the pandemic in this space. We have also continued to work with the SIGCE’s Far Right Working Group, which is working across a small group of local authorities to proactively respond to far-right activism and provide support to others facing emerging issues.
38. At the beginning of July, we held a joint seminar with the SIGCE on online extremism for around 70 representatives from councils and statutory partners, which included inputs on current threats and opportunities to explore how authorities have been responding to issues at a local level.
39. **Guidance note on calls for changes to names of estates/streets and statue removal** – In June we [published a guidance note](#) for local authorities who had received calls for changes to the names of estates and streets and the removal of statues etc (alongside objections to such proposals) to help councils’ work to ensure all sections of the community feel heard by decision-makers and each other.

Resources Board – Finance

40. **COVID-19 impact** – Councils face considerable financial pressures as a result of COVID-19. There are the direct costs associated with responding to the crisis and there the issue of delivering ‘business as usual’ services with significantly reduced income flows. We have been successful in achieving a number of positive financial announcements to help councils deal with the impact of COVID-19, including:
- 40.1. Three un-ringfenced funding announcements, worth £3.7 billion in total, to help meet the immediate impacts of the crisis on council financial positions
 - 40.2. A scheme to share irrecoverable losses of sales, fees and charges between central and local government
 - 40.3. A facility to spread the local taxation deficits over three years rather than one, with a commitment for the next Spending Review to contain an announcement on how irrecoverable local tax losses will be shared between central and local government
 - 40.4. Over £4 billion of upfront grant payments and £2.6 billion of deferred payments of business rates to central government to aid cash flow
 - 40.5. A three-month extension of the timescales for production of annual financial accounts and statements
 - 40.6. The extension of several reporting and data collection deadlines.
41. To aid the LGA’s work on COVID-19, including supporting councils, officers have been analysing the returns councils have been making to the MHCLG financial information surveys, disseminating information to Principal Advisers about their regions, and using feedback from councils on the financial challenges they face. We have used council feedback to develop a series of asks of Government for financial freedoms and flexibilities that would aid councils’ financial recovery from the pandemic.
42. **Business Support** – As part of its COVID-19 business support package, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has provided £12.3 billion to local authorities in England to administer the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund (RHLGF). BEIS publishes weekly data updates on progress of delivery of the grants. At the time of writing, the latest update – published on 30 June – reported that £10.57 billion (85.7 per cent of the grant) has been paid out to more than 861,000 business properties (90 per cent of identified properties). LGA and council officers have continued to engage extensively on all these schemes with Government officials, promoting the efforts of councils and raising issues relating to the schemes and interpretation of the Government guidance.

43. **Local Government Finance Reform** –The Government also announced the Review of Relative Needs and Resources and 75 per cent business rates retention will no longer be implemented in 2021/22 and that the Government will continue to work with councils on the best approach to the next financial year. This includes how to treat accumulated business rates growth and the approach to the 2021/22 local government finance settlement.
44. **Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally** – We continue to support the Board of [Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally](#). The Board published the [Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy](#) for the 2020s in late March. A launch conference was postponed due to the pandemic and is now planned to take place in October.
45. **NAO report commercial property** – In February the NAO published [a report](#) on investment in commercial properties by local authorities. This was discussed with the report’s authors at the LGA’s Advanced Commercial Group in March. The report has since been the subject of a Public Accounts Committee inquiry. We made a written submission to this and Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of Resources Board, gave oral evidence to the Committee in May.
46. **Public Works Loans Board** – We have argued for the reversal of last October’s increase in PWLB rates and continue to do so. We have responded to the [consultation](#) on PWLB future lending arrangements. In our [response](#), as well as answering the specific consultation questions, we called for the Treasury to implement immediately a scheme of short term low cost loans to aid councils with cash flow management and to allow councils a holiday on existing PWLB repayment; these were in response to calls from councils for immediate measures to help them respond to cash flow problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The main concern with the consultation proposals is that in seeking to prevent councils from borrowing to fund investment assets they will make it too difficult for councils borrow to fund investment in key capital priorities such as infrastructure and housing.

Resources Board - Workforce

47. **Workforce Transformation through Organisational Development** – We are providing tools, techniques, leading practice workshops and action learning sets in the field of organisational development. The support offer is being delivered in partnership with North West Employers Organisation for Local Government and Roffey Park and will culminate in a national conference in 2021.
48. **Employee Engagement Diagnostic** – Working with partners, the LGA has developed an employee engagement diagnostic survey tool to identify what drives performance at work. In 2019/2020 the LGA provided support to a number of councils including Norfolk CC, LB Ealing, Tendering, Solihull and Cardiff.

49. **Workforce planning** – The LGA is providing councils with a new resource to aid strategic workforce planning, including practice examples, templates, modelling tools and activities. We supported up to 40 councils from March to June 2020 to undertake gap analysis on their approach and developed a Workforce Planning maturity model. We have also launched an online community of practice.
50. **Apprenticeships** – Our support offer this year includes:
- 50.1. A series of webinars supporting improvement in practice (from 17 June)
 - 50.2. A focus on end-point assessment which is a key aspect of an apprenticeship programme
 - 50.3. Dedicated telephone/email support for councils
 - 50.4. Support to regional apprenticeship networks
 - 50.5. An individual council offer called the “Apprenticeship MOT”
 - 50.6. Support to Apprenticeship Trailblazers
 - 50.7. Engaging providers on improving their offer for councils
 - 50.8. Continued policy support working with government on their plans for apprenticeships as well as our newsletters
 - 50.9. The KHUB group and annual apprenticeship survey (this group includes a dedicated COVID-19 thread).
51. On 8 April we also held [a joint webinar](#) for the sector with ESFA, which was attended by over 250 people from more than 130 councils, combined authorities and LEPs.
52. **Disability Confident** – We have worked with DWP and councils to raise awareness of the Disability Confident Scheme and can report that 91 per cent of councils have signed up. We continue to work with councils who want to achieve Disability Confident Leader status so that they can influence recruitment practices in their local areas.
53. **Employee Relations Casework** – We have provided support to councils in complex employee relations casework in relation to senior managers and on all aspects of pay and grading — ranging from small job evaluation projects to complete reviews of reward strategies e.g. Harrogate.

54. **Combined Authorities' HR Network** – We continue to convene regular meetings of this network and encourage cooperation and dialogue between HR leads. We have provided information on job evaluation, apprenticeships, terms and conditions and COVID-19.
55. **Employment Law Advice** – We continue to issue monthly advice updates to over 5000 individuals on employment law cases and legislative developments and brief on the impact for local authorities and subscribers. In addition, we have provided advice in response to individual queries, which increased in number significantly as a result of COVID-19.
56. **COVID-19 support** – Since mid-February, nearly all routine workforce team activity has been suspended and we have been working on COVID-19 advice and guidance including a revamp of our [online offer](#).

Implications for Wales

57. We are working closely with colleagues in WLGA to ensure that we share learning and best practice based from our work.

Financial Implications

58. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Next steps

59. Subject to Members' views, officers will continue to brief the Board on the latest improvement activities across all LGA Boards.

Appendix 1: Supporting Adult Social Care during the COVID-19 outbreak

1. CHIP are responsible for delivering the Adult Social Care workstream for the LGA PMO, ensuring key links with its partner the ADASS. This Adult Social Care Hub was responsible for ongoing activities including:
 - Responding to overnight enquiries from local authorities, local systems, partners and government departments.
 - Providing core text for daily bulletins to summarise new events, policies and guidance.
 - Co-ordinating the response to COVID-19 where this was within the improvement remit.
 - Supporting NCAG and its constituent task and finish groups.
 - Establishing ten workstreams to draw together the response into coordinated improvement.
 - These workstreams have adapted where possible to those already in the programme. Where necessary, we have added new ones, including PPE, testing, mental health and Care Act easements.
 - Allocating all CHIP staff to these workstreams or the Hub, in April and May and drawing on support from elsewhere in the LGA at no additional cost to the programme.
 - Ensuring that the regional element of the programme response fits with the agreement between ADASS and DHSC for extra work and deliverables.

In so doing, the CHIP provided key areas of essential support such as:

2. Supporting DHSC, the NHS and other Government Departments
 - CHIP supported central government by commenting on, and where possible shaping, a wide range of government policy. This was achieved by providing professional and expert input and review where this does not exist in Government.
 - We engaged with 17 task and finish groups involving 85 meetings.
 - We participated in 65 meetings to help government and NHS officials understand the financial pressures on local government and the costs of proposed policies.
 - Over 20 meetings were held with care provider associations and groups. This presence has helped to ensure those who deliver care are in a better position to inform government policy and understanding.
 - 16 meetings and briefings were held with DHSC and CQC officials to inform and support Care Act easements with a further 9 days support in order to support changes to direct payments
 - 15 meetings were held with DHSC officials and provider associations on workforce matters including PPE, BAME, recruitment and retention, death in service and good practice
 - CHIP commented on 8 policy proposals, 5 guidance documents and 12 case studies to support hospital discharge.
 - We dealt with 183 PPE queries from councils, manufacturers and care providers. And provided expert input to DHSC, MHCLG, BEIS and Crown Commercial Services.
 - We also responded to a large number of direct calls and emails from government and NHS officials in order that the NHS better understands how local government works and LG concerns around and implications of proposed policies.

- CHIP ensured that people with learning disabilities and/or autism are part of the response to COVID-19, and that the core DHSC objectives for this group of people are still being taken forward. This has involved a very large number of meetings with those with lived experience, providers, local authorities, providers, trainers and other partners

3. Communicating and responding to questions

- The 50 plus editions of the daily email bulletins reach almost 800 ADASS members, including DASSs, 100 other recipients and so far, we have produced over 50 bulletins. Messages from these bulletins are frequently repeated in the LGA's daily bulletins to Council Leaders and Chief Executives with a circulation over 6,000 recipients.
- The Hub has also dealt with 810 questions from councils relating to social care and public health that were routed through the LGA's COVID-19 enquires system.
- The Hub bulletins, and responses to individual queries, are highly regarded by those who receive them.

4. Sharing information

- Supported the development, with NHS and CQC, of two national routes to collect activity data for daily SITREPS, latterly extending this to collect data on infection control. Ensuring this information is available to councils to support their local outbreak planning.
- CHIP has reached in excess of 7,000 local authority and NHS staff through almost 50 webinars on a wider range of topics relevant to social care and public health.
- We have established a Knowledge Hub containing access to 150 guidance documents, 180 web links, 33 good practice examples and links to 14 webinar summaries. The LGA's adult social care COVID-19 webpages have received over 5,300-page visits.
- Produced 12 high-level summaries of government guidance for DASSs and Principal Social Workers.
- CHIP has led on provider engagement under NACG involving 21 meetings with 11 provider organisations working on a range of issues including funding; regulation/risk; PPE; hospital discharge processes; infection control etc.
- CHIP has supported the NHS by working with its discharge and community cell in particular with 300 plus meetings, 12 webinars reaching over 3,000 people.

5. Local and Regional Engagement

- Engaged with and supported all 9 ADASS regional networks.
- Engaged with 11 ADPH regional networks.
- Averaged 141 engagements with individual councils each month from March to May, including 17 engagements with NHS organisations.
- On a regional level, CHIAs have engaged with 98 councils on a bespoke basis alongside working with regional structures over the COVID-19 response: the latter has involved an average of 15 weekly meetings per CHIA (who work part-time).

Key impacts of our COVID-19 response

6. Our work in response to COVID-19 has resulted in significant impact for the sector, as outlined below:

- Every draft document issued from DHSC received comments, sometimes within hours and over weekends.
- DHSC policy and guidance was continuously informed by the knowledge and experience of local government and of social care's professional leadership. Had this not been the case a large part of the policy and guidance would have landed less well.
- Local authority DASSs, chief executives and lead members were enabled to keep up to date with a complex and very fast-moving set of developments within social care, on a daily basis.
- Social care provider concerns were channelled and managed within planned meetings and a clear issue log, which meant that they had more confidence that their issues were being addressed.
- Issues about safety and human rights were continually fed into discussions to ensure that these were not lost.
- The needs of particular vulnerable groups have not been overlooked, including those with learning disabilities and/or autism
- Specific queries from local authorities and others were answered quickly and within a process which meant that all of them were dealt with.
- Central and local government had a clear analysis of the financial pressures on providers.
- Local government worked with the NHS to ensure that the requirements to free up hospital beds were broadly met quickly and within agreed policies of home first and discharge to assess. Where these policies were not being followed, this was brought to the attention of the NHS.
- Thousands of local government and partner staff were enabled to discuss new guidance openly through webinars.
- Business continuity and capacity data from providers has been collected daily and made easily available to local authorities.
- Local authorities were supported to have data and guidance in one place which helped the submission of care home support plans on time. BCST was helped to produce a review process which was broadly accepted as fit for purpose.
- A proposal was worked up for the LRF PPE emergency drop, and attention was given to some other key aspects of PPE such as the needs of carers and PAs.
- NHSX has a clearer line of sight into social care and the digital programme overall is starting to be more truly joint.
- Core agreed objectives and outcomes for people with learning disabilities and autism have been advanced, including mandatory training, commissioning on a person-centred basis, avoiding hospital admissions, and using the discharge grant.

Appendix 2. COVID-19 Workforce Support

The activity summary below covers the range of COVID-19 support available

Industrial and employment issues – We have worked with Trade Union colleagues to issue:

- Nine joint circulars for Local Government staff covering self-isolation and working from home; critical worker status; and social distancing
- Several guidance notes on schools covering for example school closures and reopening
- An agreement on extra responsibilities in the Fire Service during COVID

Guidance -- We developed a series of FAQs on COVID employment issues e.g. on managing staff when services are closed and redeployment. We prepared LGA guidance on the critical worker procedures produced by Government in response to the closure of 43.4 schools and on the coronavirus job retention scheme.

COVID Workforce Survey – Working with research colleagues [the LGA COVID-19 workforce survey summary report](#) is now in its third edition, monitoring key factors, such as the number of staff absent with COVID-19 and the number on furlough. The survey continues to develop as we enter further phases of the COVID response. Councils are able to access their own and comparative data in [LG Inform](#).

Ensuring service provision through emergency recruitment – In partnership with DfE, Social Work England and DHSC, we launched a ‘Social Work Together’ campaign to encourage people back into the profession. By June over 1000 applicants and 88 councils had signed up, with North Yorkshire CC being one of the first councils to offer positions to five social workers.

Return to Social Work Programme – We worked with Social Work England to adapt our current Return to Social Work Programme in order to provide help with the pressures that councils are experiencing with the pandemic. Through urgent dialogue with pension scheme administrators, we ensured that retired social workers who return to work will not suffer any pension abatement.

Staff wellbeing – We have worked with partners to produce advice, guidance and support on the wellbeing of different categories of staff including blogs, case studies from councils and examples of organisations providing direct support to employees on health and wellbeing. We produced a short film on furloughed staff, exploring appropriate support for long-term wellbeing issues and looking at ways we can help staff to have healthy home workstation arrangements and practices.

Recovery phase – The LGA Workforce team are considering how best to support councils beyond recovery into renewal and are currently building a workforce programme to that effect. This work includes initial transition to the world of work when social distancing still dominates, but also starts to look toward the local government workplace of the future. This will include advice on managing the blended workforce (as we anticipate greater numbers of home-based workers) and staff well-being. The work is highlighted in a [recent blog](#).