

## **LGA Boards' improvement activity**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This is a progress report on improvement activity undertaken by other LGA Boards. Members will have an opportunity to hear in more detail about the improvement work associated with Outbreak management.

### **Recommendation**

That Members note the report.

### **Actions**

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

**Contact officer:** Lusi Manukyan  
**Position:** Senior Advisor – Improvement and Policy  
**Phone no:** 07818 577429  
**Email:** lusi.manukyan@local.gov.uk

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### **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:
  - 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
  - during the year the Improvement and Innovation Board receives suitably timed progress reports on the major improvement programmes
  - 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 July 2020 is set out below.

### **Community Wellbeing Board, including the 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 (DHSC) and delivered jointly with the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) and Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH).
5. **Discharge to assess** – We have developed a sector-led improvement support offer to assist systems in winter preparedness, including Hospital Discharge Policy gap analysis workshops which have been delivered to three Integrated Care Systems to date. We are working with the Better Care Fund Team and NHS colleagues to capture local progress to implement designated schemes policy, understand blockages and advise solutions.
6. **Service continuity care market review (SCCMR)** – This is a process initiated by DHSC that asked each council to complete a self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) in relation to the market risks, contingency planning and support requirements. All councils submitted an SAQ and CHIP is linked into DHSC’s work to analyse the SAQs, as well as working to shape the support offer to councils arising from the review.

7. **Workforce:** Working jointly with ADASS and Skills for Care, we have agreed five priority areas to better support the social care workforce:
- Strategic workforce planning
  - Growing and developing the workforce to meet future demand
  - Enhancing the use of technology
  - Supporting wellbeing and positive mental health
  - Building and enhancing social justice, equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

A series of regional events will take place in early 2021 to engage workforce leads and to ensure that the implementation of these five priorities is driven by councils and regions.

8. **Leading healthier places:** We have launched a [councillors workbook on Health in All Policies and COVID-19](#). This workbook is designed to prompt reflection, insight and to identify actions to improve practice and support your work in adapting your approach to population health and the council's public health resource in the context of COVID-19.
9. **Leadership Essentials:** In October we piloted our first virtual Leadership Essentials course for health and wellbeing board members and ASC lead members. The two-day programme delved into the key challenges they face in adult social care in the changing policy landscape. In addition, a briefing session and a discussion was facilitated of the South West HWBs Chairs' and Vice-chairs' network on the role of integrated care systems in the reform of health and care systems.
10. **Public Health sector-led improvement offer:** In partnership with ADPH and SOLACE, we are engaging with DHSC on a proposal for a public health sector-led improvement offer. The proposal is currently in the development stage with meetings taking place in recent weeks with the DHSC Director General, DHSC Directors and PHE Strategy leads. In addition, we have also published a [series of Public Health on the Frontline Interviews with DPHs](#) providing a commentary on the pandemic from May 2020 with 28.
11. **Loneliness and mental health:** we have produced practical guidance for councils about [public mental health](#) and updated guidance on [loneliness and social isolation](#) impacts from COVID-19 in partnership with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH). We have also commissioned the Centre for Mental Health to develop support for councillors leading a whole household/family approach to mental wellbeing through the lens of 14-25-year olds, jointly with Children and Young People's Board. In addition, guidance was published on [councils' role in end of life care](#) alongside useful case studies.
12. **Test, Trace and Outbreak Management:** A new cross organisational and cross funded team has been established to support the LGA's work around testing, tracing and outbreak management and supporting shielding and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people, ensuring the voice of local government is heard. Support to the sector has so far included:

- A wide-ranging webinar programme on topics such as Mass Testing, Vaccination, Shielding, Compliance, COVID-19 and ethnicity,
- Monthly webinars for chief executives to raise issues directly with the NHS Test & Trace Contain Team in DHSC
- In addition, so far [13 local contact tracing case studies](#) have been produced
- Published Top Tips for leaders and chief executive and provided opportunity to take part in action Learning Sets for chief executives.

## **City Regions and People and Places Boards**

13. The People and Places and City Regions Boards continue to focus on support around devolution, jobs and skills, growth and the SDGs. Moving forward work will also start to focus more on economic recovery.
14. **Devolution** – We are currently in the process of commissioning new materials to update our public facing resources to explain devolution, explore the practicalities of devolution to parish councils and deepen our support offer to emerging combined authorities through a review of the experience of devolution of the last six years.
15. **CA Communications** – Newgate Communications [guide to Combined Authority Communications](#) has been published. This looks at the lessons learned in communicating devolution over recent years, from partnership working to how to leverage the Mayoral profile. It also highlights some of the work English combined authorities have been doing to successfully engage residents in their work and the concept of devolution.
16. **Shared Intelligence (SI) Report** into [The Drivers of Collaboration in Two tier areas](#) has now been published. This research sets out the factors which drive collaboration between district and county councils and draws from a combination of attributable and non-attributable interviews in 12 areas with county and district councils.
17. **Metro Dynamics report** into [Lessons Learned from established and emerging approaches to Sub-National Growth Bodies](#) has now been published. This looks at the lessons learned from the experience of subnational bodies (Midlands Engine, Northern Powerhouse) and suggests some principles that ought to underpin their further development.
18. **IPPR North Report** into the [role of councils in building Inclusive growth](#) has now been published and supported by a well-attended webinar. This report sets out how local government can build inclusive economies providing examples of how councils can help solve the economic exclusion that we have seen during previous booms, spurring on recovery, and making their economies more resilient to shocks.

19. **Golant Media report** into [the role of councils in supporting their creative economies](#) has now been published. This research is designed to help councils understand the creative sector, illustrated by examples and case studies and with tips from councils across England.
20. **SDGs for Councils** – UKSSD guide to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals for councils](#) has been published and was supported by a well-attended webinar. This guide sets out proposals for how councils might respond to the SDGs and make use of them in their own communities, drawing on actions and ideas being discussed in the UK and internationally. A further webinar suggesting ways that councils can practically engage with the SDGs has been scheduled for February.
21. **Jobs and skills recovery** – We have recently commissioned work to map digital and high-tech skills, this is on course to be completed in March 2021. As the sector looks to plan for the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, we know that so much expertise, knowledge and ideas lies within the sector but is not widely shared. That is why we have kickstarted a project led by the Learning and Work Institute to work with some of our member authorities to identify key issues / ideas needed to lead or contribute to jobs and skills recovery locally. The outputs of that work will be developed into an online ‘how to / top tips’ hub available to the whole sector by the end of March 2021.
22. **The case studies** from [two commissioned publications related to employment and skills](#) are now available online. These include eight local areas’ work to address skills and employability challenges (delivered by Shared Intelligence) and the evolving combined authority skills and employment commissioning role (delivered by the Learning and Work Institute).
23. [Learning for Life: a councillors’ handbook on council-led Adult and Community Education \(ACE\)](#) has been published on our website. It aims to raise awareness about ACE so its benefits are understood internally – both with elected members and other services – so that we could do more to advocate for the service externally at a local and national levels. Officers will look to organise sessions involving elected members and local authority officers on ways to maximise and keep improving the service in light of a changing skills landscape.
24. **Youth employment** – Young people’s life chances have been severely affected by the economic implications of the COVID-19 crisis. Local government has a core role in supporting them into education, employment and training but we know these are challenging times. That’s why we have started a project with York Consulting to work with some of our member authorities to better understand the barriers/challenges for councils in fulfilling their statutory duties for young people, for instance, in relation to NEETs. This project will conclude in March 2021.

## **Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board**

25. The CTS Board continues to work with its key improvement partners – The Arts Council and Sport England.
26. **Training and support** – Since the previous IIB meeting, the CTS Board have secured funding from key partners, [Sport England](#) and [Arts Council England](#). This funding has been used to deliver a series of online events, providing ongoing support to officers and members until March 2021. All content has been refreshed to support delegates work through challenges specific to COVID-19.
27. **Arts Council England** – We are delivering a grant award worth £40,000 aimed at improving awareness of best practice in library services, and in-depth advocacy sessions on the role of libraries in delivering public health outcomes, education and skills outcomes, and economic renewal objectives.
- These seminars have been attended by 133 officers and councillors with public health being the most popular topic. The economic renewal session will take place on 11 January.
  - We have also moved our popular Leadership Essentials course online and will deliver it over four sessions. We are currently recruiting up to 20 councillors onto the programme.
  - Three library recovery and renewal panels have been confirmed for Bradford City Council, Kent County Council and South Tyneside Council. Peer challenges delayed by COVID-19 are being rescheduled for Nottinghamshire County Council and Oxfordshire County Council.
28. **Sport England** – The CTS Board is delivering a grant award worth £279,120 for Sport England in 2020/21. This includes piloting an online version of the Leadership Essentials programme for officers, which is now entering its third year as a programme. The WhatsApp group established for alumni of the programme continues to go from strength to strength and has enabled rapid sharing of issues and problem solving between alumni in response to COVID-19 and announcements relating to lockdowns and national restrictions. We are considering developing a similar group for alumni of the cultural and councillor programmes.
29. The refreshed content for the online programme explores a number of key challenges captured through [online discussion groups with Leadership Essentials alumni](#), delivered earlier this year.
- Programme 11 (9 November 2020 – 4 December 2020): Has been completed recently with 18 delegates attending from 9 councils, 1 trust, and 8 Active Partnerships. Feedback is being collated and will be reported at the next Board meeting.

- Programme 12 (January - February 2020): we are in the process of recruiting 20 delegates from a combination of councils, trusts, and Active Partnerships.
- Programme 13 (April – May 2020) we are in the process of recruiting 20 delegates from a combination of councils, trusts, and Active Partnerships.

30. **Research and feedback** – An in-depth review of the Culture Leadership Essentials programme from the past two years is being undertaken. All findings and insights will be reviewed to support the ongoing development of the programme.

## **Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board**

31. **Transport** – we concluded our programme on [decarbonisation of transport](#) on 10<sup>th</sup> December with a webinar on the role of active travel. The series of 7 webinars, has been hugely popular, with the accompanying policy briefs being downloaded nearly 2,000 times, and over 1000 bookings for the webinar series. Further work is being planned on supporting council leadership on managing disruptive change on road reallocation.
32. **Economic recovery** – We have commissioned further work to support councils on their local economic recovery and growth efforts post-pandemic which will be published in winter. We Made That are producing support materials and there will be a webinar in February on how councils can help deal with growth in empty retail units and Social Finance are pulling together good practice guidance on local economic recovery planning which will also be published in the new year. There are also plans to provide further good practice advice on the importance of microbusinesses and how councils can help them as part of their economic recovery work from the pandemic.
33. **Green finance** – In November a good practice guide on [financing green ambitions](#) and projects has also been published on the LGA website, exploring sources of funding, as well as green loans, community municipal bonds and more and how they might apply to different types of projects. This was accompanied by a webinar.
34. **Housing Advisers Programme** – The 2020/21 [Housing Advisers Programme \(HAP\)](#), which is designed to support councils seeking to innovate in meeting the housing needs of their communities, opened for applications on 12 November 2020 with a closing date of 7th January 2021. Earlier this year Design Council were commissioned to work with the 2019/20 HAP cohort to co-design guidance on writing case studies. This has now been disseminated and completed case studies are expected by the end of 2020.
35. **Housing Leadership Essentials Course** – Following the success of our first Housing Leadership Essentials residential course in January, we are running a second programme in February 2021. The programme is designed to help participants develop their leading role in shaping the local housing market to meet the needs of both people

and places. The delivery format of this programme is subject to change depending on COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time.

36. **Homelessness:** we published a report, delivered for the LGA by Local Partnerships, on [lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 crisis](#). We also held co-hosted a webinar with Local Partnerships to discuss the report's findings. On 1 December, the LGA also launched its new Rough Sleeping peer support offer. This has been designed in partnership with MHCLG and will provide peer support and learning to councils which have received funding through the government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme. (More information on this was provided in Item 5: **Update on Remote Peer Support and Rough Sleeping Peer Support** paper)

## Children and Young People Board

37. Throughout the pandemic, the Children and Young People Board has worked alongside the Department for Education, ADCS, Solace and Ofsted on how to best support councils in their work with children and young people. We continue to work closely with Ofsted to ensure that inspection arrangements will be proportionate upon recommencement, with SEND area inspections due to start in January and social care inspections in April.
38. **Schools** – We have continued to work with councils to support schools to remain open since September. Specifically, we have sought to improve Department for Education guidance where appropriate and also fed back on issues being raised by schools and member councils, for example the sufficiency of supply staff. LGA-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 is on-going and will be published in the New Year.
39. **Early years** – We maintained regular contact with early years teams in local authorities to support them in interpreting guidance from the Government throughout the pandemic and to ensure they were able to respond to local issues. This included successfully lobbying for community settings to be allowed to open for early years provision, and for new burdens funding to allow for the extension of the two-year-old offer to some children in families with no recourse to public funds.

### Feedback from councils

*"Your updates and support has been invaluable over the last 6 months"*

**Greater Manchester**

*"Thanks very much for all the [...] information sharing you have been doing for us – it's been much appreciated."*

**Brighton & Hove**

*"Can I offer my personal thanks for the enormous support you have provided."*

**Stoke**



40. **Children's social care commissioning** – We worked with councils and providers to develop [guidance for commissioners of children's social care services](#) to support both commissioners and providers to alleviate pressures arising from COVID-19.
41. **Early years: virtual learning and support** – 47 action learning sets have been facilitated with over 800 officers from across the early years sector engaging and eight webinars with over 1900 delegates have also been delivered. Themes for these sessions have included SEND, workforce, emotional wellbeing and sufficiency and sustainability. In addition, bespoke support has been brokered in 20 council areas which has involved LGA associates delivering 53 days of support and challenge activity. The Department for Education has also just published an evaluation of the [LGAs early years SLI programme](#) which highlights the positive impact of this work in the sector.
42. **Children's services system risks tool** – Work is well underway to develop a tool that can use data and information and provide strategic leaders with a clear picture of the risks that may be present in a council's children's services system. A steering group has been established to guide the development of the tool and includes representation from LGA, Ofsted, Department for Education, Association of Directors of Children's Services and Solace. 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.
43. **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.
44. **Peer challenges and diagnostics** – The children's service Peer Challenge programme has been refocussed and remote peer diagnostic activity has already been delivered in seven different councils, covering themes including children's social care, SEND, early years and youth justice. Further remote delivery has already been agreed with an additional six councils and will take place in the spring 2021.
45. **Member support** – the nine regional Lead Member networks continue to provide a regional forum where members can share practice, challenges and innovations and all of the networks have seen improved participation from lead members since remote delivery was introduced in April. 24 lead member peer mentoring assignments are currently in place with experienced lead members providing support to those new to the role. We are also piloting a lead member self-assessment process in the south east and south east that will lead to challenge sessions between groups of 3 lead members.

## **Safer and Stronger Communities Board**

46. **Counter Extremism:** We have continued to host a series of roundtables for councils in conjunction with the [Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism](#) to explore the evolving challenges around extremism and community cohesion over recent months, including four to explore issues related to the pandemic and emerging concerns, and a further four on asylum-seeker harassment.
47. We have also continued to work with the SIGCE's Far Right Working Group, which has been working across a small group of local authorities to proactively respond to far-right activism, including providing bespoke support to specific councils facing emerging issues. Additionally, we have met with the SIGCE's Faith Based Extremism Working Group, which brings together councils working on issues relating to "Islamist" extremism.
48. In August we hosted a seminar for council leaders on evolving security threats as a result of the pandemic, with attendance from around 50 councils. We have also published [scrutiny guidance for councillors on Prevent and counter-extremism](#).
49. Earlier this month we worked with the SIGCE to host a webinar on conspiracy theories related to COVID-19, and their links to extremism. Over 200 delegates from partners agencies registered for the event, including representatives from 60 councils.
50. **Community safety:** To support councils on improving community safety, we ran three webinars on tackling domestic abuse, tackling anti-social behaviour and identifying county lines and child criminal exploitation. Across all three webinars, we had almost 1,000 delegates engage in these sessions. When domestic abuse unfortunately increased in lockdown, we published a [resource guide](#) for all councils to help improve their response to tackling domestic abuse - and worked closely with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the Home Office to raise awareness of the "You Are Not Alone" campaign.
51. We also held a series of six workshops, with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, to help local authorities prepare for the new statutory duty outlined in the Domestic Abuse Bill. We also published a case studies document "[Taking a Public Health Approach to Tackling Serious Violent Crime](#)" to help share best practice and examples of local leadership in tackling serious violence.
52. **COVID-19:** Some officers within the team continued to work almost exclusively on supporting councils on their ongoing COVID-19 activity. A particular focus has been on COVID-19 compliance and enforcement activity, where the LGA has been liaising closely with both MHCLG and councils to provide a local government input that has helped to strengthen the policy response to regulatory challenges, including through daily liaison with MHCLG to help steer the direction of government initiatives and regulations. Finally,

we have also held two extremely well received webinars for councils on compliance and enforcement issues, with more planned for the future.

53. **Death management:** In response to the significant rise in excess deaths across the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic, the LGA has supported Councils in local death management processes, including lobbying government to improve its good practice guidance on [Public Health Funerals](#), and [guidance for arranging or attending a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic](#). This ensured the information provided to local authorities, the funeral sector and mourners was accurate and applicable, which Councils have reported being useful.
54. **Building Safety Bill:** The LGA assisted in the organisation and marketing of and presented at an event raising awareness of the implications for councils and fire services of the new Building Safety Bill. This was attended by **166 local authorities** and **27 fire and rescues services**. We are also developing a councillor's workbook on advising constituents with building safety issues.
55. **Joint Inspection Team:** The Joint Inspection Team is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and hosted by the LGA, and its role is to advise councils on the use of their powers under the Housing Act 2004 to require building owners to remove aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding from their buildings.
56. Having had to suspend inspections during the first national lockdown the Team resumed activities in the summer and, since the autumn, has increased the number of inspections it has conducted to two a month – all in a COVID-19 secure way. Most of these inspections have been in London due to the considerable number of residential buildings with ACM cladding, but the team have also carried out inspections in Nottingham and Liverpool. Discussions are underway with MHCLG on the future of the team in 2021/22.
57. **Fire Services Management Committee:** To support fire and rescue authority (FRA) members we are developing a series of videos on good governance and related issues. We have published the first introductory video on the LGA's [fire member development pages](#). Further videos will be added to the page over the next few months. The [Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network](#) has also met to discuss a range of topics including positive action and staff networks. We will be continuing to support members with a series of meetings on racial inequality in January and February 2021.

## Resources Board

58. **Social Work Health check 2020** – The [health check](#) is intended to help support and deliver effective social work. Each council participating in the health check will be given a bespoke report in January and demographic data will be captured for the first time. The offer is proving popular with 75 councils taking part so far and 4,000 responses from social workers.

59. **Apprenticeships** – Our apprenticeships programme continues to reach a wide range of councils with support, advice and guidance through a range of channels including:

- Reaching 163 councils at least once since April via our webinar programme – feedback shows that 90% of attendees would recommend the webinars to colleagues;
- Supporting more than 40 councils via the LGA-funded End Point Assessment service provided by South West Councils (SWC), including Barnsley, Dorset, Medway, North Somerset and Trafford. SWC is currently approved to deliver nine standards and has certificated 95 apprentices so far;
- Carried out Apprenticeship MOTs with Northumberland and Telford and Wrekin Councils;
- Provided Levy Transfer policy development support to councils including Barnsley, Shropshire and Islington.

### Feedback from councils

Barnsley reported that “*everyone came away excited and motivated to get things moving*” after their Levy Transfer Facilitation session, while Shropshire told us they were delighted with the speed they were able to get their policy operational, starting with an LGA session in April and securing cabinet approval in early September.

Islington also provided feedback on the full extent of our support offer, which helps to underline the value that many councils place on the help and advice we provide on apprenticeships: “*The service you provide is excellent and has been really helpful in challenging us in a positive way to achieve more from the apprenticeship reforms.*”

60. **Social Work Together** – This [LGA talent pool has](#) over 1,000 qualified social workers registered, and 126 councils subscribed. Councils can use this resource free of charge to help support their social work teams and avoid agency costs by employing directly.

**Environmental Health Together** – A further [LGA talent platform has been developed for environmental health](#) and went live at the end of October. Councils can use this resource free of charge to help support their busy Environmental Health teams. So far, it has attracted 182 qualified EHOs and 86 councils have subscribed.

61. **Local Government Earnings and Demography Survey** – For the first time since 2015, the LGA has conducted a [major survey of the earnings and demographic characteristics](#)

[of the local government workforce](#) – vital information for effective recruitment and retention as well as for promoting diversity. As well as full survey reports, [key workforce statistics are available in infographic form](#), updated whenever new data is available.

62. **Schools** – We have held several webinars this year in place of our annual schools’ workforce conference. Topics included pay, employment law and wellbeing support relevant to schools. A total of 890 members attended with an overwhelmingly positive feedback.
63. We also support the National Schools Workforce Sounding Board, which is well-established as an expert group that help to develop and share good and emerging practice with the Department for Education and the whole sector. The Board also provides general intelligence on common hot topics being raised across regions, including Wales.
64. **Workforce planning** – The LGA Workforce Team provides two days funded bespoke workforce planning support to 36 local authorities. The two-day support offer focuses on strategy and skills development, senior management development sessions and a benchmarking service that include recommendations for improvement. The LGA facilitates a national workforce planning network bringing together participating councils to share practice and learning, focusing on workforce planning during the pandemic.

#### Feedback from councils

Following the delivery of three LGA workshops for the council, Birmingham introduced Workforce Review Boards within each Directorate with workforce planning becoming an integral item in their business planning cycle. As they said themselves, *“We have welcomed the bespoke and ongoing support that the LGA offers and recommend to others the opportunity to step back, reflect and refocus the benefits of workforce planning.”*

For North Somerset, participating in the programme has enabled the council to *“get to grips with the challenging issues of succession planning and career progression”*, while the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham indicated that the support has given them the opportunity to *“reflect on our approach to apprenticeships and workforce planning and... develop our offer which aligns with our very ambitious programme for the future”*.

## Equalities Implications

65. Officers continue to seek to ensure that issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are factored in decision making processes and work undertaken with councils. This includes support to protect vulnerable people, enhance community cohesion and increase diversity within councils and the local government workforce.

### **Implications for Wales**

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

### **Financial Implications**

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

### **Next steps**

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