

Community Wellbeing Board – Report from Cllr David Fothergill (Chairman)

Adult Social Care Funding & Reform

1. At the end of March, we published two new documents on adult social care funding and reform. The first was a short restatement of our 'seven principles for reform' alongside a call for a '1948 moment' for social care in which we collectively aspire to something bigger and better for social care for all those who draw on or work in care and support. The pamphlet also identified the priorities for reform. The second document was a report reflecting on a series of roundtables we held last year on the future of social care with participants from across care and health, including people with lived experience. The discussions focussed on the future of care and sought to learn the lessons from the pandemic experience.
2. More recently, and ahead of the Queen's Speech, we wrote publicly to the Chancellor on the importance of adult social care reform and sustainable funding. In this we reiterated our call on Government to make the case for increases in national taxation and/or a social care premium to secure stable and sufficient funding for the long-term. The letter was shared widely on social media and was covered on Radio 4's Today programme, BBC News and other media.
3. Following the Queen's Speech, we coordinated a joint statement from a number of national partners urging the Government to bring forward their proposals for reform, and a clear timeline of action, as a matter of urgency. This was also very well supported on social media.
4. The LGA's deputy chief executive, Sarah Pickup, made many of the points contained in the above documents during a recent Health and Social Care Select Committee oral evidence hearing as part of their inquiry on adult social care and dementia.

Health Integration

5. On 11 February, the CWB Lead Members and invited local authority chief executives who form the Ministerial Local Engagement Group met Care Minister, Helen Whately, for an informal meeting to discuss health and care reform – in particular the role of local government in ICSs. The group met again on 26 May to discuss the Government's vision for adult social care and support reform, ahead of expected Government proposals for reform being published later this year.
6. On 9 March, Cllr Ian Hudspeth and Lord Victor Adebawale co-chaired a joint LGA and NHS Confederation Round Table to discuss the role and contribution of local authority public health teams in ICS. The Lead Members of the CWB also participated in the discussion.

7. On 11 March the Cllr Ian Hudspeth updated the LGA Executive Advisory Board on activity to represent local government on the government white paper on Innovation and Integration, and the forthcoming Health and Care Bill. The EAB acknowledged the clear and strong leadership provided by the CWB and agreed that they should continue to lead the LGA's response to the health and care reform agenda.
8. To CWB Lead Members agreed to sponsor the Devo Connect Health Devolution Commission's inquiry into the role and function of integrated care systems. Cllr Paulette Hamilton is an 'advisory commissioner' and CWB Chairman, Cllr David Fothergill, gave evidence to the Health Devolution Commission on 21 May 2021.

Armed Forces Covenant

9. On 10 March, Ian Hudspeth gave evidence to the Armed Forces Bill Committee. The session was an opportunity to emphasise our support for the aim of the Bill to further reduce disadvantage members of the armed forces community can face when accessing public services as well as calling for more detail about the new statutory duty to have due regard to the Covenant that will apply to public authorities.

Suicide Prevention

10. 24 March, Cllr Kemp attended the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group and emphasised the importance of tackling the wider economic and social determinants of mental health and wellbeing.

Mental Health Act

11. We have made a formal submission to the Governments Reforming the Mental Health Act White Paper. The Act is likely to become law in 2022. In our submission we stated that the LGA supports the reform of the Mental Health Act. We welcome the ambition to achieve meaningful change for people living with severe mental illness, and the role of local government in supporting this.
12. We highlighted that the new Act will have significant resource implications for councils and are working with MHCLG to model new burdens. In our submission we stated that councils' statutory children's and adults' mental health services and wider public health responsibilities need parity of funding with NHS mental health services, so that councils – working closely with partners – can help the whole population to be mentally healthy, prevent the escalation to clinical services and support people of all ages who are mentally unwell.
13. Finally, we welcome the intention of the Act to address the rising rates of detention and experiences of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. We stressed that achieving a reduction in detentions is not solely about legislative change. There needs to be alternative treatments and services available, commissioned by councils in the community, as well as NHS services. There needs to be a system-wide shift in policy and resources away from medicalisation and treating mental ill health, to early intervention, prevention, and support for recovery through integrated community-based services.

Children and Young People's Mental Health

14. In collaboration with the Children and Young Peoples Board we commissioned the Centre for Mental health to produce a number of case studies on a whole household approach to children and young people's mental health. These have now been published and we held a Webinar on the findings in March 2021, chaired by Cllr Judith Blake and joined by Cllr Ian Hudspeth.

Loneliness

15. The government has published [Emerging Together: the Tackling Loneliness Network Action Plan](#). This is a publication from the Tackling Loneliness Network (TLN), bringing together over 70 organisations, including the LGA.
16. The plan focusses on actions that can have an immediate impact as part of supporting a connected recovery from COVID-19. It will help empower people to seek support if they are feeling isolated, and enable people who are lonely to build more meaningful connections. We will work with government and TLN partners to support local councils to take action on loneliness, build social connections and link up on existing work. This will include a space for councils on the new digital Tackling Loneliness Hub to share resources, insights and case studies.

Autism

17. The Autism Strategy is to be published later this year. The LGA are members of the Autism National Executive Group which is leading on the strategy. We have made a number of comments on the new strategy. We are in support of the strategy ambitions, but areas where further information is needed include: the Implementation Plan, clarification around any supporting funding/resources for councils and partners to build community support and how the Government proposes to monitor or measure the progress of the strategy.

Dementia

18. The Department of Health and Social Care is developing the Dementia strategy. The strategy will be overseen by the national Dementia Programme Board – the LGA are members of the board.
19. We have provided feedback on the draft strategy. In our comments on the proposal, we have emphasised the central role of councils in delivering/commissioning services for people with dementia in the community. Also the importance of social care reform and long term funding to support councils to deliver the best outcomes for people with dementia and their carers. The strategy also needs to reflect the diverse needs of communities – particularly around raising awareness, risk reduction and ensuring appropriate support. Finally the strategy needs to reflect our principles for social care reform.
20. In May, Sarah Pickup, LGA Deputy Chief Executive gave evidence to the Health and Social Care committee on Adult Social Care and Dementia.

Public Health reform

21. On 23 and 24 March, the LGA hosted the Annual Public Health Conference 2021: Rising to the challenge. Over 1,000 delegates attended over the two days to hear from Prof Chris Whitty, Prof Devi Shridhar and Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP.
22. In March, the LGA published the ninth LGA Annual Public Health Report. This year's annual report looks back at what public health has helped to achieve during the pandemic. It also looks to the future - the new UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the publication of the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) white paper and the significant organisational changes these could bring.
23. In April, the LGA responded to the review of the public health system and the creation of the UKHSA and the Office of Health Promotion.
24. On 22 April, the LGA held a webinar with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to support local authorities evaluate public health interventions.
25. On 18 May, Cllr Colin Noble chaired a joint LGA/PHE webinar on inclusive economies and powerful link between health and economic growth.
26. On 4 June over 850 delegates booked to attend the LGA Mass Events webinar. Speakers from Liverpool, Gateshead and Doncaster shared their learning and insights from running safe mass events.

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