

Safer and Stronger Communities Board – Report from Cllr Heather Kidd (Chair)

Trading standards

1. In response to reports of criminals exploiting the digital switchover to scam vulnerable residents who use health care telephony devices, [officers have produced a guidance note to raise awareness of the issue amongst councils and offer advice on recommended actions](#). This was supported by a media release to raise further awareness.
2. Following sustained LGA lobbying, we are expecting Government to ban single use vapes on health and environmental grounds. The Government, like councils, are particularly concerned that the products are often aimed at children, who then become addicted. Further detail will be announced in the coming weeks.
3. Officers have also worked on a [media release to raise awareness of the ban on single-use plastic cutlery](#), single-use balloon sticks and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers that came into force across England on 1 October 2023. Trading standards teams will have a key role in enforcing the ban.

Licensing

4. The temporary pavement licensing regime has been extended to 30th September 2024. This has been done to allow the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which contains proposals for a permanent pavement licensing regime, to complete its parliamentary stages. A reminder that the LGA successfully lobbied for a higher fee, a longer consultation and determination period, and improved enforcement powers for councils in the permanent regime. Officers will continue to monitor the Bill closely as it completes its final stages and will support councils with its implementation.
5. The Government has launched a consultation on how to make non-surgical cosmetic procedures – including Botox, laser hair removal and dermal fillers – safer for consumers. The responses will shape a new local authority led licensing scheme for practitioners and cosmetic businesses which operate in England. The Government is proposing a three-tiered licensing regime based on risk, with the highest risk (red) tier procedures being regulated by the Care Quality Commission, and the lower risk amber and green procedures being regulated by councils. This first consultation is primarily focused on what tier each procedure should be located in. However, officers will respond and highlight broader points around capacity, funding, training and the need to take a comprehensive approach.
6. The LGA has submitted written evidence to the DCMS Committee's inquiry on the Gambling Act Review, and to the APPG on Gambling Related Harm's inquiry into the Review. Our evidence highlighted that whilst we welcome that the Government has pledged to introduce cumulative impact assessments to provide councils with greater powers to determine whether and where new premises can open, it is crucial the Government urgently identifies a suitable piece of legislation to implement these reforms.

Modern slavery

7. Officers held the third meeting of the LGA's modern slavery network for council officers leading on work to tackle modern slavery. The network meets quarterly online and aims to discuss current issues and share good practice solutions. The September meeting had a specific focus on the rise of modern slavery cases in the care sector and provided officers with an opportunity to share learning and ask for advice. We are aware of a number of useful pieces of guidance that are being developed on modern slavery in the care sector and will update our website to signpost to these once they are available.

Fire Services Management Committee Update

8. The LGA Fire Commission met on 22 September 2023. Agenda items included priorities for the year, fire finance, an update on RAAC, the HMICFRS Misconduct Review, an NFCC presentation on issues arising from Emerging Energy Technologies, as well as the usual updates on building safety, pensions, workforce and the Fire Standards Boards.
9. The EDI Champions Network also held its first meeting of this political cycle on 22 September 2023. Cllr Jane Hugo, in her role as Equalities Advocate for the FSMC, chaired the meeting. Rob McDougall, People, Culture and Leadership Lead for the NFCC, presented on the work of the NFCC in responding to cultural issues, including their culture action plan. Members asked a number of questions around the action plan and sought further joint work between the LGA and NFCC on these issues. Members also discussed the terms of reference for the group and future work.
10. The LGA also hosted a 'climate change evidence session', inviting Professor Rowena Hill (Policy Fellow on Climate Change to DLUHC), Jack Walter (Senior Advisor, Environment Agency) Jim McNeil (NFCC Wildfire Lead), Bridget Betts (Team Manager in Dorset County Council) and Matt Oakley (Watch Commander and National Wildfire Tactical Advisor in Surrey County Council) to speak to FSMC lead members about the impact that climate change is, and will have, on our fire and rescue services. The session was followed by a period for discussion, in which members were keen that best practice was being captured and shared by the LGA and that other Boards within the LGA needed to be engaged and aware of the impact of climate change on FRSs.
11. We held a conference for Fire and Rescue Authority Members on culture in the fire and rescue service, jointly with workforce colleagues on 27 June. The event was chaired by the FSMC's Equalities Advocate, Cllr Jane Hugo. We had presentations from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue, the Fire Brigades Union, Unison, the Asian Fire Service Association, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Kent FRS, Lancashire FRS, Dorset and Wiltshire FRA, West Midlands FRA and Derbyshire FRA as well as hearing from media and employment law specialists. The feedback from the culture conference will help to inform what other pieces of training we will look to develop for members around issues on culture, diversity and inclusion.

Resilience and Regulation

12. The LGA has responded to a government [consultation on a draft code of practice for Diversionary and Community Cautions](#). The introduction of these cautions was legislated for in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022 and the consultation only refers to guidance on their use.

13. DLUHC is in the process of establishing eight pilots across three key pillars of reform to significantly strengthen Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in England: Leadership, Accountability, and Integration of resilience into the UK's levelling up mission. The intention to run these pilots was announced in the [Resilience Framework](#).

Prevent

14. The Home office is continuing to implement the recommendations from the Independent Review of Prevent. Revised statutory Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales, was issued in September, which will come into force on 31 December 2023. The LGA is running a relevant Leadership Essentials course on 28-8 November at Warwick University For more information or to book, contact: Grace.Collins@local.gov.uk

Martyn's Law

15. The Home Affairs Select Committee published its [pre-legislative scrutiny of the Terrorism \(Protection of premises\) draft bill](#) at the end of July, Cllr Clive Woodbridge gave evidence to the Committee on behalf of the Board. The Committee raised a number of concerns:
- Insufficient clarity about the overall objectives of the Bill – in particular, whether it is aimed more at the Protect or Prepare space.
 - Whether it would make a difference to the nature of the terrorist threat
 - Proportionality and the impact on smaller venues and VCS organisations, where there is a lack of evidence that the terrorist risk justifies what's being proposed.
 - The cost of implementation (set out, optimistically, in the impact assessment as £2k over 10 years for standard tier and £82k over 10 years for enhanced tier) is disproportionate to the levels of threat.
 - The need for clarity over who will be the regulator as soon as possible – and whether their proposed powers are justified.
 - The need for a substantial comms exercise to raise awareness of the Bill and help those affected to understand their obligations.
16. The Committee also wanted government to consider expanding the bill to cover outdoor events of over 800 where express permission and payment aren't required to enter. The Government response to the report is now overdue.

Contact details

Contact officer: Mark Norris

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 07798 534781

Email: mark.norris@local.gov.uk