

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Ann Lucas OBE (Chair)

Joint LGA, Solace and ADCS CSE Summit

1. The Board's Chair, Cllr Ann Lucas, chaired the morning session of the joint LGA, Solace and ADCS summit on tackling child sexual exploitation in January. Delegates for this session heard from speakers from the Home Office as the department responsible for the national group on sexual violence against children and vulnerable adults, NHS England, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Deputy Children's Commissioner for England, and the National Working Group – a network of practitioners with a focus on child sexual exploitation and trafficking. The morning session then concluded with reflections on the presentations and discussions by representatives from Solace and ADCS.

National Group on Sexual Violence Against Children and Vulnerable Adults

2. Cllr Lucas represented the LGA at the national group on sexual violence against children and vulnerable adults, chaired by the Minister for Crime Prevention, Lynne Featherstone MP, towards the end of January. The meeting had an update on the government's work in response to the Jay report on child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and the Home Secretary's report on this to interested stakeholders. The LGA raised a number of points for inclusion in the report including a national campaign to raise awareness of CSE, and gathering of good practice around information sharing.

HMIC Peel Advisory Group Meeting

3. Cllr Sophie Linden attended the January meeting of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's advisory group around the effectiveness strand of the new police inspection framework PEEL (Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy). The results from the first PEEL assessment of each police force were reported at the end of November and the meeting considered what format the effectiveness strand inspections should take in 2015. This included consideration of the core questions that inform the effectiveness assessments and what diagnostics could be used to provide answers to these questions.

Suffolk Domestic Abuse Conference

4. The Board's Vice-Chair, Cllr Joanna Spicer, spoke at the conference Suffolk County Council organised in late January to discuss approaches to domestic abuse in the county and how they might need to change. Cllr Spicer talked about the national context around domestic abuse and the lobbying the LGA has been doing to push government to give greater support to approaches that bring budgets together and allow joint commissioning.

Drug Related Deaths Summit

5. A summit was jointly held by Public Health England, Drugscope and the LGA in late January to discuss the increases in drug related deaths between 2013 and 2014. Cllr Sophie Linden chaired the event on behalf of the LGA. The summit was attended by people working in substance misuse in councils, the police, the health service, the voluntary sector and government departments. The morning session was taken up with presentations around the issue including further analysis that had been carried out on drug related deaths

data, as well as perspectives from agencies working directly with people with substance misuse problems. The afternoon was then spent discussing the implications of these findings on substance misuse treatments and commissioning of services.

Future of Safer and Stronger Communities Conference: Tackling Crime and ASB

6. At the end of January Cllr Lucas spoke at an event organised by Salford University on the future of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and stressed the importance of partnership work, pointed out that what works in cutting crime varies between different places and differs over time, and highlighted how multi-agency working was necessary to make best use of the new tools and powers for tackling anti-social behaviour. Cllr Lucas also pointed out the need in a time of reducing budgets for more work to be done in local areas on preventing people being drawn into crime, and councils had already built up experience and skills in this area through their work around Troubled Families.

Year Ahead conference and 'Remodelling Public Protection' report

7. Cllr Philip Evans attended the annual 'Year Ahead in Regulatory services' conference, which looked ahead to the work of trading standards, environmental health and licensing services over the next Parliament. Cllr Evans used the conference to launch an LGA discussion paper entitled 'Remodelling public protection.' The paper aims to prompt further discussion and seek views on the work that councils are doing to create sustainable environmental health, trading standards and licensing services.

LGA / CQC / HSE memorandum of understanding

8. The LGA has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) relating to the enforcement of health and safety law. In April this year, the CQC will assume responsibility for all safety and quality of care issues relating to patient / service users in registered providers, when health and safety responsibilities transfer from councils and the HSE. The enforcement of health and safety in relation to staff and members of the public will remain the responsibility of councils (in regard to residential homes) and the HSE (in regard to nursing homes and hospitals).

Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials

9. Cllr Jeremy Hilton hosted a Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials course on 3rd and 4th February in Coventry. The course gave delegates the opportunity to develop their understanding of fire and rescue authorities, improve their knowledge of key strategic issues facing the sector, appreciate how leadership style can assist in the management of organisational change, and how communication and stakeholder engagement could be improved. The course was attended by eight leading members from a variety of fire and rescue authorities and was very successful and well received.

Contact officer: Helen Murray
Position: Head of Programmes
Phone no: 020 7664 3266
Email: helen.murray@local.gov.uk