

LGA Boards' improvement activity

City Regions Board and People and Places Board

1. Support offer on devolution

- 1.1 These two Boards have begun to consider the shape of a potential support offer on devolution, outlined below.
- 1.2 As councils have been getting to grips with the devolution agenda over the past year, requests for LGA support have been increasing. Initially, the requests were primarily related to understanding the policy context. Over time, demand for the LGA to offer more intensive and bespoke assistance to groups of authorities seeking to develop new governance pitches and proposals for devolution has steadily risen.
- 1.3 To date, the LGA has been managing requests for bespoke assistance on a case-by-case basis. Now that the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill has been published and the Government has extended the offer to negotiate with all places, we can expect the demand for support to ramp up even more.
- 1.4 Based on the nature of current demand, there could be three broad elements to the support offer:
 - 1.4.1 peer support to provide assistance with brokering
 - 1.4.2 knowledge exchange to bolster the strategic case
 - 1.4.3 access to technical advice.

2. Peer support

- 2.1 Our analysis shows that the majority of councils are in discussions about formalising sub-regional partnerships; most are still scoping out their options. The stage where places particularly seem to want help is to get from determining that they want to establish a formal partnership, to working out just what that arrangement might look like. The LGA has recently arranged for a couple of places at this stage to get advice about how to proceed from members and senior officers already in combined authorities, which has been very well-received.
- 2.2 It is suggested that the LGA build on our existing peer support offer to pull together a roster of member and officer peers with first-hand experience of establishing combined authorities or other joint arrangements and negotiating with government to provide tactical advice to areas at a more formative stage. Peers could be matched to areas based on the specific issues that they are working through. By holding the ring on a peer exchange arrangement, the LGA could also help to ensure that demands on individual peers are kept at a manageable level and benefit from their feedback.

3. Knowledge exchange

- 3.1 We have also picked up on a strong appetite among councils to learn from each other when it comes to preparing for and delivering new responsibilities. One of the disadvantages of a process that focuses on bespoke negotiations can be that opportunities to share learning across the country can be missed, which is where the LGA could step in to assist. We could gather good practice and disseminate learning through on-line resources and events, as places undertake their preparations and start to deliver on their devolution agreements. This would also give us the opportunity to track the outcomes that result from devolution, to help us strengthen the overall case.

4. Access to technical advice

- 4.1 Proposals for devolution will have to be backed up by detailed business cases. With the prolonged squeeze on council budgets also having led to an erosion of in-house expertise, many places are finding that they have to commission external analysis and financial modelling at significant cost. Last year, the LGA established a “Growth Advisor” programme, which enabled local authorities to commission up to 14 days expert help to progress local economic growth initiatives. A broad range of advisors with expertise on a wide range of issues was made available to councils. A similar initiative to enable councils to access technical expertise to develop their devolution proposals would likely be well-received.
- 4.2 Finally, Andrew Campbell, currently Acting Director General, Finance and Corporate Services at DCLG, is about to join the LGA on secondment to support work offering LGA support to councils. He is expected to work at the interface between councils, combined authorities and Whitehall, advising councils on the best way to formulate their bids and supporting them in negotiations, as well as facilitating discussions between groups of councils on the structures and governance they may need to put in place in order to access deals.

Community Wellbeing Board

Care and Health Improvement Programme – update

5. The 2015/16 Programme

- 5.1 The LGA has used its experience of successfully working with the Department of Health since 2012 on a range of social care improvement and health integration programmes, to inform the development of the *Care and Health Improvement Programme for this year*.
- 5.2 In developing the Programme, the LGA listened very carefully to what local authorities, regional leaders and professional associations told us they want. These views were tested and ratified by Lead Members from the Community Wellbeing Board in February 2015. The consensus is for a continuation of a sector-led improvement programme that recognises the significant change that is happening within the care and health sector, and provides the support and capacity to help local authorities improve services and manage change in a coherent and planned way.

- 5.3 The Programme therefore will seek to help *improve outcomes for local people by helping local authorities and Health and Wellbeing Boards* to:

Objective	Sub-objective
<i>Deliver better quality care and health</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support a joined up and consistent approach to the delivery of sustainable social care and health services • To support the effective implementation of the Care Act • To facilitate joined-up working across partners and providers to support the effective presentation, delivery and sharing of data across the health and social care sectors • To provide bespoke support to local authorities and Health and Wellbeing Boards as required to assist with service improvement and implementation
<i>Embed Health and Wellbeing Boards as place-based health and care leaders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support Health and Wellbeing Boards to become system leaders and encourage the integration of health and social care services by councils
<i>Make care and health sustainable locally</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the development of measures that increase the resilience of services • To encourage the protection of services for the vulnerable and those at risk of harm • To support councils overcome barriers in the care of people with learning disabilities or mental health conditions
<i>Use sector-led improvement to enable local authorities to increase public, regulator and government confidence in local care and health services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and share good practice to support service improvement

- 5.4 This broad and challenging programme responds to local and national needs. Its key areas include:

- 5.4.1 *Social Care Improvement*: addressing risk management, resilience, workforce, safeguarding, learning disabilities and mental health and improvement
- 5.4.2 *Health and Wellbeing Boards*: supporting systems leaders to be effective in their roles and to plan ahead
- 5.4.3 *Care Act*: helping local authorities to embed the Act's social care changes and plan for its funding
- 5.4.4 *Integration*: supporting local authorities to deliver their approved better care fund plans and prepare for the second year of the fund
- 5.4.5 *Informatics*: helping authorities and clinical commissioning groups share data to improve the delivery of care services.

6. Post-election review

- 6.1 The Programme is governed through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Health. The Conservative government's new policy direction, principally set out in their manifesto, will have an impact on the Programme. In order to ensure that the Programme continues to support local authorities to respond to emerging priorities (Ministerial, policy and operational), a review of the Programme will begin in July 2015.

7. Benefits to local authorities

- 7.1 Local authorities, and their social care departments in particular, are facing unprecedented changes, increased demands and the growing impact of austerity. The range, scope and pace of change is significant and far reaching with implementation of the Care Act being part complete, the future nature of the Better Care Fund being uncertain, and Health and Wellbeing Boards taking an increasingly strategic role in the local health economy. At the same time, an aging population is placing ever increasing demands on services, and the Care Act brings a new client group (carers) within the scope of local authorities' responsibilities. This, coupled with on-going austerity, is placing increasing pressures on local authorities.
- 7.2 The needs and requirements of the sector have been placed at the heart of the *Care and Health Improvement Programme* in 2015/16. The structuring of the Programme reflects the inter-relationships between legislation and policy initiatives at a local level. For example, the links between the Care Act implementation and adult safeguarding or the Better Care Fund and integration pioneers are recognised.

8. Offer to the sector

- 8.1 The Programme provides for a broad range of support to local authorities and Health and Wellbeing Boards including:

9. Leadership support

- 9.1 leadership essentials for Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs and Vice Chairs
- 9.2 induction sessions for new Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs and Vice Chairs
- 9.3 leadership training for Directors of Social Care

10. Peer challenge, support and diagnosis

- 10.1 health and wellbeing peer challenges and follow-up support
- 10.2 social care commissioning peer challenges and follow-up support
- 10.3 social care practice deep dives to support implementation and improvement
- 10.4 risk assessment identification and management

11. Integration, implementation and improvement support

- 11.1 products and tools to support implementation of the Care Act, Adult Safeguarding Boards, Safeguarding and Commissioning for Better Outcomes

- 11.2 supporting local authorities and their Clinical Commissioning Group partners to redefine the way people with mental health and challenging behaviour are cared for locally
- 11.3 products and tools to support the Better Care Fund
- 11.4 bespoke support to those places and areas that require it

12. Public reporting and analysis

- 12.1 social care annual report
- 12.2 use of resources
- 12.3 area profiles for adult social care, public health, and health and wellbeing areas

13. Regional networks

- 13.1 supporting networks of regional Lead Members, Health and Wellbeing Chairs, Chief Executives, Directors of Social Care and operation managers to share information, best practice and experience
- 13.2 providing expert senior Care and Health Improvement Advisers, working with LGA Principal Advisers, to support improvement and change locally.

14. Sector-led improvement on/for health and care – priorities for 2015/16

- 14.1 The Community Wellbeing Board considered a full report on the Care and Health Improvement Programme and proposed the following objectives for 2015/16:
 - 14.1.1 achieve the successful transfer of the 0-5 public health services to local authorities with adequate funding
 - 14.1.2 support councils to take a proactive approach to specific conditions – autism, mental health and dementia
 - 14.1.3 deliver effective programmes of support to local health and care systems (grant funded) which meet councils' needs to cover Health and Wellbeing Board leadership, Care Act Implementation, adult social care improvement, the Better Care Fund and the Transforming Care Programme.

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

- 15. Sport England and Arts Council England are funding a comprehensive sector-led leadership offer for sport and culture portfolio holders. We will deliver seven leadership events (three Sport Leadership Essentials Programmes, two Culture Leadership Essentials Programmes and two Library Seminars) and three peer challenges between July 2015 and the end of March 2016, with the aim of supporting over 150 portfolio holders to lead transformational change.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

16. Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspections

- 16.1 The PEEL programme of inspections has been introduced by HMIC to give the public the information they need to be able to judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole. In recent years HMIC has undertaken inspections on specific subjects or services, but even when combined these do not provide a rounded assessment of the 43 forces in England and Wales, so PEEL has been developed to fill this gap. The 2014 PEEL assessment piloted the approach, with the 2015 assessment being the first with fully graded judgments. These assessments will be published in February 2016. The Board has been part of the stakeholder group looking at the methodology used to assess effectiveness and has indicated a desire to also be involved in the work around the legitimacy strand of the inspections.

17. Police and Crime Panels

- 17.1 The Board published a good practice guide for police and crime panels in June to help them in their scrutiny of police and crime commissioners. The Board will also be considering the '*Tone from the Top*' report by the Committee on Standards in Public Life on leadership, ethics and accountability in policing as this contained a number of recommendations directed at police and crime panels and the LGA.

18. Gambling

- 18.1 The Board has revised and updated its councillor handbook on gambling to cover issues around betting shop clustering and the use of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals. The handbook sets out the range of tools that councils can use to shape local gambling regulation in their area.

19. National FGM Centre

- 19.1 Progress is being made with establishing the joint LGA and Barnardo's National FGM Centre. Discussions have been held with a number of local authorities to secure their agreement to becoming pilot areas for the Centre's work and work is now progressing to formalise these arrangements. Key staff including social workers and project workers to deliver the Centre's programme have been recruited and planning is already underway for the Centre's first conference in the autumn.

20. Prevent and Counter-Terrorism

- 20.1 The two new statutory duties on councils to prevent terrorism came into effect on 1 July. The Board ran a plenary session at the LGA Annual Conference to look at what the new duty means for local authorities. The Home Office have also announced that there will be £10,000 available to each non-priority council

to implement the new duty as a one-off payment, and that there will be a national package of support for councils which will include:

- 20.1.1 access to training if required – including online access to WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent)
- 20.1.2 regional Awareness Raising Events – 8 regional events held across England, Scotland and Wales directed at those most affected by the Duty
- 20.1.3 an innovation fund – a public fund available to specified authorities, third sector groups and business to support the expansion of Prevent activity and to increase the number and range of local partners delivering Prevent work
- 20.1.4 a peer support group – a team of expert practitioners who will provide a dedicated source of expertise and best practice for bodies, particularly those who might be facing challenges in implementing the new requirements
- 20.1.5 additional sector specific information – where required, provided by lead departments and sectors, to support implementation.

21. The Board will be reviewing its proposals to support councils implement the Prevent duty in light of the support available from the Home Office.

22. Fire and Rescue Service – Beyond Fighting Fires

- 22.1 June saw the publication of ‘Beyond Fighting Fires’ a joint piece of work between the Community Wellbeing Board and the Fire Services Management Committee on the role of the fire and rescue service in improving public health. With the fire and rescue service successful in reducing the number of fires by half over the last decade the case studies in this publication set out examples of how Fire and Rescue Authorities are using their expertise in prevention to improve the public’s health.

Children and Young People Board

23. Education and Adoption Bill

- 23.1 The Education and Adoption Bill contains new powers for the Secretary of State and Regional Schools Commissioners to more rapidly intervene in schools rated Inadequate or as Requiring Improvement. Schools that are unable to achieve ‘Good’ within an acceptable timescale will be turned into academies. The legislation also contains measures to encourage councils to join together to create regional adoption agencies.

- 23.2 It will be important to respond to new developments on the expansion of academies (as the Department for Education is unable to effectively support the rapid expansion in schools converting to academy status) and to build on the success of recent years in using the adoption system to find children new homes.
- 23.3 The LGA Executive has therefore agreed that this Bill be treated as a high priority in lobbying terms.

24. Ofsted support and buddying

- 24.1 The LGA has recently started offering informal 'buddying' support to children's lead members when their council undergoes an Ofsted Single Inspection. This system, which mirrors arrangements made by ADCS and Solace, allows lead members to get advice and support from another lead member whose authority has already been inspected. Early feedback from members has been positive.

Leadership Board

25. The Leadership Board has approved the LGA's response to a consultation of the future of the public sector ombudsman sector.
26. In 2014, the Minister for Government Policy commissioned Robert Gordon to test whether the current public sector ombudsman sector is best for citizens, best for Parliament and delivers value for money. The report, published along with the Cabinet Office Consultation, puts forward the case for reform of the current ombudsman sector and, in particular, recommends the creation of a new Public Service Ombudsman, bringing together the existing jurisdictions of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Local Government Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman.
27. The creation of a new Public Service Ombudsman is intended to improve customer experience, by providing an integrated service and the opportunities to improve public service systems. The Local Government Ombudsman supports the proposed change.
28. Overall, the LGA has welcomed the proposal to create a single Public Service Ombudsman covering health, housing and local government and considers that this move to streamline and reduce duplication and confusion for citizens is long overdue.
29. We support the three principles underpinning the reform – improved service to citizens, greater value for money and the continued independence from Government of the Ombudsman. In addition we would propose a fourth principle - early resolution at the most local level.
30. Responding to the specific consultation question: *Would you support a wider role for a PSO as a champion of effective complaints handling across the public sector?*
- 30.1 The LGA responded: *there is some merit in the PSO taking on a wider brief that would enable them to identify trends to support improvement across the public sector. The LGA would support this in principle, provided it is done in a collaborative way and does not put create additional burdens for local authorities and other public service providers.*