Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care

Welcome to the eight bulletin from the Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care Programme Board for May 2013.

The programme board is working with councils to improve performance in adult social care. The key emphasis of the programme is on collective ownership of improvement and its core elements involve regional work, robust performance data, self evaluation and peer support and challenge. Most of the solutions to key issues and challenges will be found locally and regionally - the model is being developed with the ADASS regions and networks, supported by the LGA’s and the Department of Health’s (DH) regional presence. Please using the contact details at the end of this bulletin to let us have any contributions to a future bulletin; to let us know your views on the bulletin; and keep us in touch with what you are doing in sector led improvement.

Introduction from Oliver Mills, National Programme Director

By increasing the grant to £800k in 13/14, the DH has expressed confidence in the model of sector led improvement we have been developing over the last two years. The focus of the programme now has to be for the model to become ‘the way we do things here’. Each council will ensure that priorities for improvement are identified and addressed, through engagement with local citizens and partners. The approach that Yorkshire and Humberside have taken, described in the ‘spotlight’ on their work later on this bulletin, shows this very well. There will be extra support for the nine ADASS regions to support them to deliver the model in each council.

Good communication will be key to success, as ever. I hope that this bulletin; regular teleconferences with the nine regional leads; links to the LGA Principal Advisers; the other improvement boards highlighted in this bulletin; the TLAP board; standing items at ADASS regional chairs and Executive Council will be sufficient. Please let me know if you have any suggestions of ways we could do this better.

Sector led improvement
Update from Oliver Mills, National Programme Director

Sector led improvement was an ever present theme at the ADASS Spring Seminar the week before last, which was enlivened by the contribution of extended members, who attended for the first time. Sandie Keene, ADASS President, will take over the Chair of TEASC from Peter Hay, who has very much led from the front in making the model of sector led improvement a reality, and will be joined on the board by Ray James, who both chairs the London ADASS region and the regional chairs, as a member of the ADASS President’s team.

I will be continuing as National Programme Director for the next twelve months, with responsibility for implementing the model through the Programme Plan. We have now finalised the Programme Plan for this year for approval at the TEASC board on 9th May.

Spotlight on regional work: Yorkshire & Humberside

In Yorkshire and Humberside we have developed a strong, genuinely collaborative network of professionals committed to maintaining standards and improving performance through a simple five step sector led improvement model.

We have developed an approach that is appropriate to our circumstances, resourced ‘economically’, with a clear escalation protocol which will be triggered if serious concerns are identified but addressed following offers of support. Our five step model uses the Local Account as its foundation.

We have adopted a principle led approach based on:

- A clear focus on outcomes rather than processes.
- Insight from users, carers and citizens.
- A culture of support, collaboration and joint working
- Relationships which are open, honest, action focused, transparent and productive.
- A commitment to share good practice, challenge current thinking and innovate.
- An approach that is based on identifying the characteristics that influence performance and define standards.

The 15 local authorities in the region have committed to provide up to 10 days of staff time to support regional improvement activity. Progress reports are made to every meeting of the ADASS regional group and to the Yorkshire and Humberside Chief Executive Group on a quarterly basis.

Implementation of the framework

All local authorities in the region have fully engaged and participated in the implementation of each stage of the model

Stage 1 - All local accounts in the region were developed and submitted by 31st October 2012 deadline. We developed our second year local accounts following an independent assessment of our first year accounts, identifying best practice but allowing for innovation in each subsequent year.
Stage 2 – Following the publication of local accounts we carried out reality checking across the region focusing on access channels. We used a pool of customer experts who were willing to operate across local authority boundaries. Scenario based assessments took place between 26th November and 9th December. The findings from this exercise fed into Stage 3 of the framework.

Stage 3 - An independent desktop assessment (Stage 3) was carried out by senior professionals from across the region, using Local Account and supporting information. This was completed 31st December 2012.

Seven local authorities took part in the assessment using agreed methodology and information in the public domain to ensure no further burdens are placed on local authorities. The participating local authorities worked together to publish an independent peer performance assessment report for each local authority.

Each local authority assessment identifies ‘outlier’ performance compared against regional and national comparator groups. The report signposts each local authority to the best performers in the region so that learning and buddy arrangements can be put in place. The report also identifies good practice which can be shared across the region. An assessment of the local account was undertaken both from a professional point of view against agreed key principles but, most importantly, from a citizen perspective. Each local account has also been tested for consistency or self awareness against the areas where performance is an outlier. Performance assessment reports have been subject to a moderation process which includes comments from the relevant local authority DASS which enables performance to be placed within a true context.

Stage 4 & 5 - Feedback on the overall process, the general outcomes of the desktop assessment and good practice were presented at a regional ‘Improvement Event’ (Stage 4) on the 31st January. This event, attended by DASS’s and standards and performance leads, discussed and made recommendations for: the next step of framework (Stage 5):

- Master class events, hosted by strong performing councils, in areas we could all learn from,
- Buddy arrangements with councils paired on the basis of strengths and weaknesses
- A thematic review that would benefit all local authorities in the region.
- A programme of peer reviews – the regional framework has identified local authorities that would benefit from a peer review.

The assessment team will present a report to the regional ADASS meeting in March to agree this programme of activity for the next 6 months. Stage 5 will commence in April. Buddying arrangements will be in place for a full year. All other improvement activity will be completed by September 2013.

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Evaluating sector led improvement

The LGA has recently published the results of a major evaluation exercise demonstrating that the sector is engaging with sector-led improvement. Since 2011 and the widespread changes to the nationally imposed regime of inspection and assessment, saving in excess of £1 billion, councils have taken on much greater collective responsibility for driving change.

Our initial findings show strong support across the sector, with more than 90 per cent of chief executives and heads of policy reporting awareness of the approach, three quarters of whom believe it is the best way to drive improvement and 83 per cent stating that local government is up for the challenge. Over 50 councils have already had a corporate peer challenge and the LGA is currently in discussion with another 100. The LGA will continue to evaluate the success of the approach. An interim review will be published towards the end of spring and a final impact report early in 2014. See http://tinyurl.com/SLIbaseline for more information.

Analysis of a baseline survey of Directors and Adult Social Care Lead Members on sector led improvement in adult social care should be available shortly.

In June 2012, Cardiff Business School completed an independent evaluation of the first phase of peer challenge, which may also be interest to local peer support activity. The key messages included:

- the voluntary and flexible nature of peer challenge is strongly supported
- the quality of the process and in particular the peer teams, has been high
- peer teams have provided constructive challenge
- the redesigned process is tailored, flexible and provides authorities with choice
- challenges are 'future focused' helping council's better tackle upcoming challenges.

Read the interim evaluation of Corporate peer challenge (PDF, 16 page, 1.87MB large file)

Children's Improvement Board Funding

The Children's Improvement Board has been informed that it will no longer be receiving funding from the Department for Education for 2013-14. The Board is considering its response to the withdrawal of funding in order to plan for a managed transition to orderly closure of the programme, to ensure that a core legacy programme could continue through 2013-14, supported by LGA, ADCS and SOLACE, and to think about sustainability beyond 2014. This all will impact differently on different parts of its work programme. The Board had received views from the CIB leads in each region, regional programme managers and DfE officials. The Board is now consulting with its leads in each region and with key stakeholders on its proposals. If you wish to comment, please contact CIB at cib@local.gov.uk by Friday 17 May.

Winterbourne View Joint Improvement Programme

As part of this, the LGA and NHS Commissioning Board have established a joint improvement programme to provide leadership and support to transform services locally, building on current good practice. The aim of this programme will be to work with local areas to provide swift and lasting action across the system to ensure that the services that are commissioned are personalised, safe and local.
This aims to result both in a movement away from the use of long stay, large-scale hospital services and also lead to real and rapid change in the attitudes and culture.

Regions and localities are expected to know who people are and where they are placed. The Joint Improvement Programme has had an initial focus on supporting local review activity. It has issued a report that sets out the principles that must underpin all reviews. It is intended for everyone who is involved in the reviews and those who will develop future service plans. There is already some very good practice and progress being made: this document is intended to support that but also provide a spur to ensure progress. It is not intended as a definitive guide for reviews but the principles set out are expected to be followed in all review settings of this nature. It is the first of a number of support and development activities which the programme board will want to develop.

For more information see: [www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/adult-social-care/](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/adult-social-care/)

For more information on the Towards Excellence programme please contact:

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Further details on the programme and the previous bulletins can be found via [http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/adult-social-care/](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/adult-social-care/)