

West Midlands Sector Led Improvement Bulletin – January 2015

Overview

Welcome to the first edition of the West Midlands Sector Led Improvement (SLI) bulletin for 2015. In here you will find a brief summary of just some of the Improvement work that is taking place in our region.

Our focus for the year ahead is to continue to build upon our successes so far and look at how we can continue to up the ante for sector led improvement and ensure our approach has the desired impact.

We will be introducing a new **annual improvement summit** as part of our programme of activities to enable us as a region to collectively take stock of where we are and where we need to be. More details will follow in future editions.

In the meantime, we continue to work hard to promote the work of our region and there is a growing interest our work both nationally and from other regions. On that note, we are delighted to welcome **Jon Rouse, Deputy Director General at the Department of Health** who is visiting the region on 23rd January to hear from Adult Social Care

colleagues about our regional approach to Sector Led Improvement.

For our work to continue to develop and be successful we need everyone to be involved. If you would like to know more please contact Sue Banks sbanks@westmidlandsiiep.gov.uk

Adult Social Care

With the pressures on the NHS accident and emergency system and the impact on social care reaching new levels of demand and receiving much media and political focus the importance of understanding what works and how directors of social care retain a focus on improvement and challenge has never been under sharper focus.

In this climate the West Midlands **Adult Social Care Sector Led Improvement Board**

Chaired by Martin Reeves CEO Coventry is continuing to focus on delivering the joint ADASS / IEWM improvement plan agreed for 2014/15 as well as recognizing the enormous challenges being faced in all councils. The key strategic priorities remain:-

- a. preparing for the implementation of the Care Act in 2015 – an extensive programme of work is now in place to assist councils ahead of the Act coming in to law on 1st April.
- b. work on getting all of the regions BCF plans approved has been assisted by Alistair Neill CEO from Herefordshire taking on the lead role as part of the wider vision of integrating social care with health services and focusing on the

use of resources and a focus on the use of resources

- c. developing a better understanding of the financial challenges being faced by adult social care and a sharing of practice about what councils are doing to mitigate against the risks in the system

All 14 councils in the region continue to be committed to the regional ASC peer challenge process and have all completed a regional ASC **self-assessment** which is used as the basis for our onsite peer challenge programme. Warwickshire, Sandwell and Solihull have recently completed their challenges bringing the total undertaken to date to 12 with the 2 remaining reviews in Staffordshire and Birmingham scheduled for February / March 2015.

As part of our commitment to be transparent, the results of each challenge sent to each authority have been published on the WM ADASS website <http://adasswm.com/sector-led-improvement/>

A second peer challenge summit was held in December 2014 and a record of the day with the slide presentations can be found here <http://wp.me/p3LWW9-t7> The day also provided time for DASS to reflect on priorities for 2015 and national ADASS President David Pearson provided an over view of the national challenges facing the social care system.

The peer challenges have continued to include **experts by experiences** who have contributed to the process by providing a user perspective on the services being reviewed.

This we believe is a unique approach and continues to attract interest from national colleagues. Additionally lead ASC elected members have also been participating in the reviews and this has provided a valuable insight into the governance and financial management of the authority being reviewed.

The region has also been developing a new **'Balanced score card'** to oversee the performance of councils in the region against a set of 20 data sets that combine performance, finance and thematic data to assist in identifying common challenges and to assist in identifying possible areas where councils may require support.

The scorecard is attracting interest from other regions who are also interested in developing systems to better focus performance data and answer the challenge posed by the Department of Health to demonstrate the difference sector led improvement is making.

A **regional data set** outlining the main areas of performance upon which ASC services are measured has been published with analysis of the data being undertaken by Raj Chauhan who has recently been appointed to support the region's Performance and Standards network. The data set of agreed indicators that complement the national Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework can be viewed at <http://adasswm.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ASCOF-chart-final.pdf>.

The **regional improvement programme** has defined 10 thematic areas for improvement and

has been summarised as plan on a page www.adasswm.com/wm-adass-iewm-improvement-plan-2014-15/ The regional improvement plan continues to link closely with the national TEASC programme which is currently being refreshed to reflect the national focus on demonstrating the impact that SLI is having on adult services.

The next meeting of the ASC SLI Board will take place on 23rd January and will include a session with Jon Rouse – deputy director general at the department of health who is visiting the region to hear about the work being undertaken.

For further information about the programme contact Pete Jackson, Adult Social Care Programme Manager at pjackson@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk

Children's Services

Sector Led Improvement continues to be a key part of improvement in children's services in the West Midlands. During the last few months there has been activity in the following areas:

We are continuing to develop our **workforce development programme** and have recently launched a regional **Protocol for engagement of Agency Social Workers**. This protocol covers both the pay rates and the quality of workers engaged. This is the stepping off point for a larger piece of collaborative work planned for 2015 to cover recruitment and retention of Social Workers. As part of this we are currently tendering a training programme for Social Work

Team Managers, which has been a development area in the region for some time.

Auditing the Auditors peer challenge: The five LAs participating in the second phase of this programme are now confirmed as Walsall, Herefordshire, Coventry, Shropshire and Sandwell. Walsall was the first to receive a peer challenge in November and Coventry will be challenged in January, with the remaining three authorities receiving their challenges before the end of March 2015.

This continues to be a successful way of councils checking out how their audit tools are working to assure the quality of practice and also provides an opportunity for good practice and learning to be disseminated across the region. By the end of March 2015, 10 of the 14 children's authorities in the region will have received a challenge.

Annual peer challenge of self-assessments: The annual peer challenge event was held on the 25th October with all 14 LAs in the region participating. This is the second year that we have held an event in the region and as with last year there was lots of lively debate and much constructive challenge, sharing of challenges and good practice with arrangements made to follow-up areas where colleagues could support each other.

The information from the challenges and the moderation of the self-assessments completed before the event will support us in identifying the priorities for regional improvement focus for 2015/16. The second part of this process is an event planned for the 25th March involving

CXs, DCS, LMs and Scrutiny Chair and LSCB chair to ensure there is corporate, political and partnership buy in for the emerging priorities. It is the one opportunity where the key leadership stakeholders come together to talk about improvement in children's services.

Performance monitoring and analysis:

There has been considerable focus on this area over the last period as we work towards developing robust performance data around regional and individual LA performance. Work is happening on developing a regional and individual LA dashboard that will sit alongside the data pack and will be used to support SLI work in the region. A protocol for information sharing and identifying, supporting and challenging risk and underperformance is in development to ensure that the use and sharing of data and intelligence is governed by transparent and agreed processes.

The region's **Children's Improvement Board** has good engagement from CXs, LMs, DCSs and LSCB chairs and using the protocol above will be looking to take a more robust and evidence based approach to identifying poor performance and targeting early sector support. The universal improvement offers are accessible to all councils, but there is also the potential for more bespoke support. Part of this is the recently launched **Capacity Builders Programme**. We have up to 20 'experts in the field' who have expressed an interest in providing peer support to other councils in the region. This support will be scoped and brokered through IEWM. For more information contact Polly Reed.

Ofsted - the next round of unannounced inspections is underway. Dates notified by Ofsted to the sector for the next round of inspections are: 13th January 2015, 20th January 2015, 27th January 2015, 24th February 2015 and 3rd March.

It is highly likely that the region will have authorities who will be inspected in this period. The evaluation of the first 11 inspections under the Single Inspection Framework has been published and can be found here <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection>

Support for Lead Members and Scrutiny Chairs:

A successful event was held in December bringing Lead Members and Scrutiny Chairs together to talk about Corporate Parenting and the issues and challenges facing members in this critical and important area of their work. Councillor David Simmonds, Chair of the LGA Children's Improvement Board was able to attend and we had input from a young man in Shropshire who talked about his experiences of being in care and what he thought members could do to help. For more information contact Claire Burgess claire.burgess23@gmail.com

Principal Social Workers in the region are now meeting quarterly and have taken on some of the improvement actions in the 2014/15 plan. Of note is an event they are organising and hosting on 6th March 2015 on 'Hearing the Voice of the Child'. This event is aimed at front-line practitioners and managers and is

workshop based, if you are interested in attending please contact Claire for more details. The keynote speakers will be the Victoria Climbe Foundation with inputs from Research in Practice and Birmingham University.

LGA Sector Support: The final LGA Leadership Essentials course will be held at Warwick University on 29th and 30th January. Dates for 2015/16 will be published as soon as we have them. Each LA has one subsidised place for their Lead Member or Scrutiny chair. In negotiated situations both may be able to attend. More details can be found at http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/councillor-development/-/journal_content/56/10180/6175927/ARTICLE

The West Midlands continues to have good take-up of the LGA Children's peer review and diagnostic offers with several reviews and diagnostics being planned early in the New Year. Over the period since the last Newsletter there has been 2 LGA peer reviews, a bespoke safeguarding diagnostic and a LSCB peer diagnostic.

For more information please contact Polly Reed, Children's Programme Manager at preed@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk

LGA Update and activity

Here are details of just a few of the up-coming LGA events that you may find of interest. To see the full list of events and to register, visit www.local.gov.uk/events

- The national construction conference for local government – 5th February 2015 (London)

- National 'Our Place' Peer Review Challenge Event - 10 February 2015 (Birmingham)
- LGA/ADPH annual public health conference and exhibition - 11 February 2015 (London)
- Smith Square Discussion: The devolution revolution - 25 February 2015 (evening) (London)
- LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport annual conference - 4 March 2015 (Durham)
- Introduction to Social Impact Bonds - regional workshop - 3 March 2015 (Birmingham)
- LGA annual fire conference and exhibition - 11 March 2015 (Gateshead)

LGA Publications

Here are details of some recent publications available from the LGA website, many are free to download. To see a full list of the latest publications, visit:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/publications>

- National programmes of service transformation: Making these more effective, efficient and economic (November 2014)
- Highlighting political leadership: LGA Development Offer: Community leadership (November 2014)
- Making an impact through good governance: A practical guide for health and wellbeing boards (October 2014)
- Adult social care funding: 2014 state of the nation report (October 2014)

The LGA also has a range of tools and programmes to support councils to learn from

each other and try out new ways of improving and delivering services, including:

- A programme of corporate and thematic peer challenges:
<http://www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenge>
- The Productivity programme:
<http://www.local.gov.uk/productivity>
- LG Inform and LG Inform Plus:
<http://lginform.local.gov.uk/>

An evaluation of the LGA SLI offer was published last year <http://www.local.gov.uk/SLI-Evaluation>. More information about the full range of support can be found at: <http://www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement>

Corporate and thematic peer challenges

Since April 2011, 29 of the 33 authorities in the West Midlands have either undergone or are planning some form of LGA peer challenge. Every authority has access to a corporate peer challenge delivered at no cost once every three-four years and one of the great strengths of the offer is the way it is tailored to each council's needs. To date 14 authorities in the West Midlands have had a corporate peer challenge. If you are interested in finding out more about how a peer challenge could support improvements in your own authority, please contact Howard Davis, LGA Principal Adviser. Email: howard.davis@local.gov.uk

LGA Productivity Offer

The LGA's Productivity Programme supports councils to achieve better for less. It has focussed on critical high spend areas such as children's, adults and families, procurement and

capital assets. The programme aims to provide practical support to councils as they grapple with the challenges local government faces to deliver better for less. The [Productivity Expert Support](#) offers to fund a number of productivity 'experts' to work with councils over a 6-9 month period of time to assist with their productivity issues. Specialisms include: contract renegotiation, procurement, income generation, energy efficiency and adult social care. For more information about the offer see: <http://www.local.gov.uk/productivity>

LG Inform and LG Inform Plus

LG Inform is a free service, co-designed by the sector that provides you with up-to-date published data about your local area and the performance of your council or fire and rescue authority. It has been designed to support councils to manage performance, assist benchmarking and provide a means of data analysis. So whether you are interested in scrutiny, a particular service area, or simply need an overview, it can help you review and compare performance with other authorities. Register as a user at: <http://lginform.local.gov.uk/>

LG Inform Plus supplements the LG Inform service, giving subscribers the power to drill down from authority wide information to much smaller areas, such as wards. The service is based on the framework of local government information sharing standards making information easy to use and giving consistency across the sector. For more information on subscribing to LG Inform Plus and the benefits of doing so see: <http://about.esd.org.uk/subscription-benefits>