

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 DECEMBER 2018

Statement from: Councillor B Young, Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Trading Standards

The second quarter of the financial year saw the successful conclusion of a Trading Standards investigation into the sale of unsafe bunk/high beds intended for children. A bed test purchased by trading standards was tested against the British Standard for safety and failed in a number of areas including insufficient ventilation on the bed base and issues with the safety barrier. There were no instructions, fixings or pre-drilled holes provided and no markings or warnings on the bunkbed stating that it complied. The manufacturer, who was selling the beds directly to consumers around the country online, was prosecuted having failed to ensure that his products were safe. He was sentenced to a 12-month Community Order to complete 200 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay a contribution to the costs of the investigation of £3,500, along with a victim surcharge of £85.

Trading Standards undertook a joint operation with Lincolnshire Police and South Holland District Council targeting the sale of illicit tobacco products in the Spalding area. In total 169,960 cigarettes and 12.3kg of hand rolling tobacco were recovered and investigations are on-going. This operation contributed to the Lincolnshire Tobacco Control Board's activity plan for 2018/19. Other activities undertaken include a programme of age restricted sales test purchases. Working with Lincolnshire Police, the service have undertaken 35 visits in quarter two with only four retailers selling to under age volunteers.

The service has undertaken a safety sampling project focusing on toys containing button batteries and replacement chargers. In total 15 items, seven toys and eight chargers were tested with three failing to meet the minimum safety requirement. The service is working with the importers to address these failures.

Community Safety

The revised Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP) structure is now embedded and there is good agency representation and attendance at all Core Priority Group meetings. Each priority area (anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, reducing offending and serious and organised crime (incorporating fraud and modern day slavery)) has a well-developed delivery plan and partners are actively engaged in the programme of work.

Lincolnshire has been chosen by the Home Office as one of two areas nationally to pilot a multi-agency safeguarding approach to financial abuse. This will involve victim care organisations providing a level of care that addresses both immediate and longer term victim needs to mitigate the impact of this type of abuse, and reduce the levels of repeat victimisation. The multi-agency model will trial greater information sharing between law enforcement partners (such as the Police and Trading Standards) and victim care agencies on victim data. The aim is to more effectively identify vulnerable victims and disseminate prevention advice and to reduce overall

levels of fraud and financial exploitation whilst safeguarding victims. As part of the pilot, Lincolnshire will also be establishing a joint agency enforcement response to perpetrators who target vulnerable victims through scams, doorstep crime and other fraud offences.

LCC has been successful in its bid for additional funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to strengthen the county's domestic abuse service provision and enable providers to better support vulnerable victims and those with complex needs. The funding will secure additional hospital-based Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) provision, as well as a number of complex needs workers, to offer intensive support for victims accessing refuge and outreach services and those identified through the hospital IDVA service. The Council is also awaiting a decision on a bid submitted to the Home Office Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund that, if successful will strengthen its ability to undertake prevention and early intervention work within schools, as well as increase providers capacity to support children and young people who have been exposed to domestic abuse.

Whilst sexual violence is no longer a core priority for the SLP, the Safer Communities Team maintains a sexual violence specialist who continues to develop and promote sexual violence strategies and campaigns such as #NoMore, 'Ask for Angela' and a Drink Detective pilot scheme. This specialist has recently attended Global Cities 'After Dark' Conference in Australia as an expert speaker, ensuring the Council's campaigns have gained international prominence.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Apprenticeship Reforms

As at the end of October the total number of apprentices is 143, of which 84% are being delivered by local training providers.

The Social Worker standard is in the final phase of being approved by the Institute of Apprenticeships and as a result we have launched the social worker apprenticeship recruitment to internal staff, where the response has been extremely positive. It is planned to start the programme for the ten successful candidates in January next year.

Our procurement of training providers continues to attract a number of suppliers as we work with the provider market to stimulate training provision.

A number of outstanding apprentices were nominated for the Greater Lincolnshire Public Service Sector Apprentice of the Year Awards. I am delighted to confirm that one of our care leavers, who undertook an apprenticeship in the construction industry, has won the award in the level 2 category.

We are working with the independent Adult Care Sector to transfer up to 10% of our levy funds to new apprenticeship standards training, in order to support the upskilling of Lincolnshire carers in the commissioned workforce. From April next year, the percentage which can be transferred to the supply chain will increase to 25% of our levy funds.

The Council has been successful in attaining Local Government Association support through the Apprenticeship Accelerator Programme which will deliver a targeted technical support offer to help us overcome barriers and to create and deliver longer-term multi-year apprenticeship plans and to increase apprenticeship starts, This support will be provided over the coming months.

LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Services Lincolnshire (LSL) continues to support the work of the Council and its District Council partners. In terms of the service the focus continues to be on pursuing a "grow your own" approach to developing the qualified lawyers of the future. Two of the practice's paralegal staff have enrolled for paralegal apprenticeships and two others are being funded through study for Chartered Institute of legal Executives qualifications.

More widely the service has been talking to the University of Lincoln about how we can work together to identify the lawyers of the future and provide them with the opportunities to pursue a career in local government. Two lawyers from LSL including the current trainee solicitor attended a speed networking event in which students were able to learn about the challenges and rewards of pursuing a legal career in local government. The service is also exploring becoming involved in the University's mentoring and placement schemes from September 2019.

The way in which solicitors qualify for the profession is due to be radically changed from 2021. In future candidates for the profession will be required to take a Solicitor's Qualifying Examination and the route by which they gain the academic knowledge and practical skills necessary to pass that examination will be much more flexible providing for work-based study and work experience routes into the profession.

LSL is actively looking at how this will affect its traditional recruitment practices since the changes offer new opportunities for growing our own lawyers with specific local government interests, knowledge and skills.

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