

HEALTH AND WELL BEING BOARD DEVELOPMENT IN DARLINGTON

BRIEFING NOTE FOR HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14 FEBRUARY 2012

As Members may be aware, at the time of writing, the Health and Social Care Bill is making its way through the parliamentary process and is subject to change. Through the last 12 months, there have been some significant changes in relation to the formation of Health and Well Being Boards, and there are likely to be further changes as well.

Common themes throughout the process in relation to the development of Health and Well Being Boards (HWBB), and therefore likely to be enacted in the Bill, are as follows.

- HWBB are intended to bring together leadership and strategy for the local health and social care system, and will be required to promote and encourage integration of commissioning for health and social care.
- They will be a requirement for local authorities to develop in their area, and there is likely to be a significant degree of local discretion involved.
- Key functions of a HWBB are likely to be: production and approval of the Strategic Needs Assessment, outlining the health and social care needs of the local population; production and approval of the Health and Well Being Strategy which will identify how these needs will be addressed; and consideration of local commissioning plans.
- HWBB will have the right to refer back local commissioning plans to the NHS Commissioning Board if they are not in line with the Health and Well Being Strategy for the area.
- HWBB are free to consider, and indeed in more recent documentation being urged to consider, the wider determinants of health in their work.
- HWBB do not have a scrutiny role; scrutiny of health and social care lies with the local authorities, working with patient groups.

Membership is an issue on which there has been change in emphasis over the last 12 months. Initially, a statutory membership was listed:

- (a) Elected Member/s
- (b) Director of Public Health
- (c) Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)
- (d) Director of Children's Services (DCS)
- (e) Representatives of Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- (f) HealthWatch
- (g) Voluntary Sector.

It was left to local discretion how many elected Members and which ones.

More recently, it has been suggested that there may be scope for these to be considered as 'proposed' membership, rather than 'statutory'. More recent documents suggest that there will be freedom to invite other members to join the HWBB in order to maximize gain in health outcomes and align to other important local priorities. In particular, more recent documents also make reference to the NHS Commissioning Board also being members of the HWBB.

A key issue has been that in early documentation, the HWBB were referred to as fulfilling an 'executive' function with local authorities, and that these would be formal committees of Council. More recently, this view has been relaxed, though written clarification of the position is not yet available.

Local Development

In Darlington a development group began meeting in February 2011, in order to begin to develop relationships between the Council and local General Practitioners (GPs). This group became a Formative Health & Well Being Board, and over the last 12 months focused on developing mutual understanding of one another's challenges, as well as a more general understanding of the corporate strategies of the main provider organisations. The Darlington group committed to becoming a Shadow HWBB by 1 April 2012, and it has met that commitment. Such early development of relationships is likely to prove crucial to future developments and provides a sound basis for close partnership working.

The current membership of the Formative Health & Well Being Board is:

Cllr Bill Dixon – Leader of Darlington Borough Council (DBC)
Ada Burns - Chief Executive, DBC (Chair of the meeting)
Harry Byrne - Chair of the CCG
Joanne Evans - Clinical Commissioning Project Lead, Darlington Shadow CCG
Martin Phillips - Interim Chief Operating Officer, Darlington Shadow CCG
Miriam Davidson - Director of Public Health (Vice Chair)
Chris Sivers - Assistant Director of Development & Commissioning, DBC
Murray Rose - Director of Services for People, DBC (both DCS and DASS)
Elaine O'Brien - Head of Strategic Commissioning and Health Partnerships - Joint Primary Care Trust/DBC Post
Richard Alty - Director of Services for Place, DBC
Mary Hall - Voluntary & Community Engagement Manager, DBC
Mel Brown - Programme Manager for Health Transformation, DBC

Given the changing agenda, the group has been keen not to rush into a decision that may not be right for Darlington, but instead wait until the full picture on local flexibility is known.

The group is planning a development session in March to develop plans for the next stage of the HWBB in Darlington, including the wider membership, function, and governance arrangements.

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9 February 2012*