

Developing an Exemplar Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB)

What makes for an effective HWBB?

Based on the most recent national annual review on the 'State of Health and Wellbeing Boards'¹, the factors associated with an effective board are:

- Committed leadership (political and managerial)
- “Collaborative plumbing” (history of partnership working)
- Clarity of purpose (clarity about primary task of board)
- Geography that works
- Collaborative response to austerity (rather than retreat to silos)
- Focus on Place (shared local priorities driving collaboration)
- 'Fulcrum' role of Director of Public Health (DPH) (spanning health across whole population)
- High quality support (flexible approach to 'council committee thing')
- Consistent membership (continuity in face of churn)
- Getting basics right (basic housekeeping enabling systems leadership)

To what extent are we an effective board?

- **Committed leadership**
- **Collaborative plumbing**
- Clarity of purpose
- **Geography that works**
- Response to austerity
- **Focus on Place**
- **Role of Director of Public Health (DPH)**
- High quality support
- **Consistent membership**
- Getting basics right (basic housekeeping)

Overall, we have some strengths (areas in bold) but also some fundamental issues to address. The feedback from our Board self-assessment and discussions that emerged from it indicate:

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<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6101750/HWB+Shared+Intelligenc e+report+March+2016+WEB.pdf/392c708e-1591-4b3f-8347-95291fde4f47>

- Confidence in the membership and potential for the influence of the group.
- Need for a sharper focus on priorities and also to drive a focus to prevention and early intervention (including a shift of resources).
- Need to strengthen high level visible leadership across the whole council and all council function particularly in the context of 'health in all policies' which needs to incorporate a health perspective to important determinants of health such as employment, income, environment and housing.
- Lack of visibility in the community and need to be more outward-facing and accessible

What do we need to focus on to develop as an exemplar Board?

Based on feedback from the Local Government Association (LGA) and other sources we need to consider the following issues and ensure that:

- The Board gets the attention level it requires at the most senior level in the council
- There is visible shared leadership between the council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- The Board is a primary strategic forum for delivering change
- The Board is both a hub (bringing people together) and a fulcrum (a point around which things happen)
- There is shared understanding of the primary task of the Board
 - Clear understanding among all Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) members of our power rooted in 'moral leverage' – our ability to change culture in our organisations. Also consistency of members, and at right level who can make decisions, key to progress.
 - Understanding among members of role as collective leaders of place - not of your particular organisation.
 - Be able to answer crucial question - is HWB having an impact on people's lives in our local place.
- The Board plays a more robust role in the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) – a crucial system change that all partners need to drive, not just the NHS and making sure through the HWBB that our local 'place' is central to this
- The Board enables partners to get on, try new things and push boundaries to shape integration and transformation based on our local needs and partnerships; with a focus on what works for Tower Hamlets.
- The Board reviews the frequency of meetings and what happens in between them (e.g. supplementing formal meetings with informal discussion and workshops)-

- The Board is co-producing strategy with the community focused on aspirations and being open to answers.
- The Board seeks to continually improve its effectiveness through seeking out best practice elsewhere and challenging ourselves

Across the country, Boards are at different stages of development. Examples of good practice identified include the following:

- Developing a 'concordat' or statement of intent which all HWB members sign up to clarify purpose, goals, ways of working
- Creative approaches to being an outward-facing Board - not just meeting locations but also online communications and more interactive formats to involve the public.
- On integration, the Local Government Association (LGA) are piloting a tool to help HWBs clarify their vision and role in driving this

What are the next steps on getting there?

- Organise an awayday session for the Board with the LGA to discuss and agree practical next steps for further Board Development including a local concordat
- Use the strategy development process as lever to sharpen focus
- Raise the community profile of the Board drawing on communications support and through the areas of focus and venues
- Develop a Board development programme
- Review the Executive Officer Group arrangements to ensure the appropriate level of support to the Board

Question for discussions at the Board

- What do you see as priorities for Board development?
- What would you help you be effective as a Board member?

Recommendation

- Organise a Board development session for September (prior to the next formal board)

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