

London Borough of Southwark Health and Wellbeing Board Governance Review

Summary of findings and recommendations

The statutory responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board are to:

- a) Encourage health and social care to work in an integrated manner
- b) Provide assistance for the making of arrangements for pooled budgets/integrated management of provision
- c) Produce the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- d) Produce the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- e) Sign off the Better Care Fund plans
- f) Approve governance arrangements for holding the pooled budget

Southwark's Health and Wellbeing Board has been established correctly and is meeting its statutory objectives. The Board is able to fulfil its obligations relating to the Better Care Fund without the delegation of executive functions, unless the Council wishes the Board to be responsible for commissioning of services using Better Care Funding, as opposed to advising strategically on how the funding could best be used.

The review found that all members understood the purpose of the Board - to establish a strategic framework within which member organisations work across their boundaries to deliver shared desired outcomes.

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy should guide the strategic direction of its member organisations and therefore the commissioning plans of the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council must reflect the strategic intentions of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. However, it is not the role of the Board to performance manage the organisations of its members.

The core purpose of the Health and Wellbeing Board is to encourage health and social care to work together in an integrated manner. Therefore the Board should establish a strategic framework within which the resources of health and care in Southwark can be applied to deliver the outcomes set out in its Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has a clear vision, but needs to develop its priorities in order to deliver an effective Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Board could have a wider remit to include housing, planning leisure and culture services where they have an impact on health and wellbeing, however a focus on health and care is advised at this stage in the Board's life.

Recommendations

The efficiency and effectiveness of the Health and Wellbeing Board could be improved through addressing the following:

1. Clarify the membership of the Board so that it matches the requirements of the Council's constitution.
2. Consider having a co-chair/vice chair, so that the Chair is joined by a non-Council member of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

3. Be clear on any given issue whether the Board's role is to take a decision on an issue, or to discuss an issue and have members go back to their own organisation for it to take a decision.
4. Ensure papers going to the Board are succinct and always include an executive summary. A cover sheet should accompany each paper and make clear what is required of the Board. If the Board is simply to receive a report, why is it necessary for the report to come to the Board? If it is to make a decision, what are the implications of the decision? If it is discuss and make recommendations, then what are the implications of the recommendations?
5. Ensure members of the HWB come to meetings empowered by their own organisations to discuss issues and, if appropriate to the issue, to make commitments, assisted by papers as described above.
6. Work towards a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy with less broad, more detailed priorities. Rigorous prioritisation work should be done with the assistance of public health professionals, so that the HWB ends up with a list of key priority outcomes with realistic costings for their implementation, so that clear recommendations can be made to health and social care to inform their commissioning.
7. Consider having sub-committees or task and finish groups to progress particular work streams outside of HWB meetings. These should not duplicate the work of existing committees/board (e.g. the Safer Southwark Partnership Board and Safeguarding Boards).
8. Prepare and publish a clear published forward programme of work and set clear agendas for its meetings. It could consider an "executive team" from amongst the members of the HWB to work with the Chair on this. Some HWBs do this and find it particularly effective. If Southwark adopts this approach, it will need to ensure that the "executive" works very transparently and inclusively to avoid distancing members of the HWB who are not included in the "executive".
9. Continue to hold HWB public meetings quarterly, but in between these public meetings HWB should meet informally in private in seminar sessions to discuss and debate issues relevant to forthcoming agenda items.
10. Consider whether the Board is doing enough to engage members of the public. Some HWBs nationally hold public engagement events once or twice each year.
11. Be clear as to how the Board relates to other bodies/boards/committees in Southwark without duplicating work done there. For example:
 - (i) NHS England's guidance requires that Safeguarding Boards must link with, but must not be subordinate to or subsumed within the HWB, and;
 - (ii) The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the statutory responsibility for scrutinising local health services and must be consulted on changes to local health services. The HOSC can be a valuable critical friend to the HWB.
12. Look at other groups, including those who may not have any specific statutory function, but whose work will be of interest to the HWB. The HWB should map those groups and plan whether and how they will link with them.