

Health and Wellbeing Boards – what are they all about?

Health and Wellbeing Boards bring together the leaders of Local Government and the NHS in each locality of England with the aim of strengthening partnership working through agreeing shared priorities.

The Health & Social Care Act (2012) introduced Health and Wellbeing boards. All “top tier” authorities (County Councils, Unitary Councils, Metropolitan and London Boroughs) were tasked with establishing a Health and Wellbeing Board for their area.

They are focused on addressing health inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of their communities.

Their role is to agree the priorities for the area in relation to improving the health and wellbeing of their population. This includes looking at how health and social care services are organised and commissioned.

Boards bring together Local Government, including Public Health and the NHS. They also include Healthwatch representing the patient voice.

Who are the members of Health & Wellbeing Boards?

The core membership of Health and Wellbeing Board is:

- A senior councillor appointed by the Leader of the Council
- A representative from each Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in the area covered by the Board
- Director of Children’s Services
- Director of Adult Social Care
- Director Public Health
- Healthwatch to represent the patient voice.

In addition to this core membership, each Local Authority can decide to add other members to the Board. Most will include more councillors and they can arrange that councillors will always be in the majority. In many cases there will be additional CCG (GP) members, and some include senior representatives of local NHS provider organisations including the Acute Hospitals serving the local area.

Most Health and Wellbeing Boards will include the lead councillor (the Cabinet member) with responsibility for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children’s Services. In counties, there may be places for District Council members.

Boards are usually chaired by a senior Local Government Councillor – either the Leader or the Cabinet member responsible for Public Health or Social Care.

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What do Health & Wellbeing Boards do?

Health and Wellbeing Boards have a number of key responsibilities:

- To prepare a Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) setting out the priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of their community.
- To oversee and agree the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for the area.
- Ensure that the Commissioning Plans of the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) align with both the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- It will also consider the local authority's Public Health plan and how it is meeting the Public Health Outcomes Framework.
- It will look at how well health and social care services are being integrated.

How do Health & Wellbeing Boards operate?

Most Health and Wellbeing Boards operate in a similar way to other Council committees. They will be fairly formal, probably meet in a Committee Room in the County or City Hall.

They will have a formal agenda, minutes and reports prepared by either council or NHS senior officers.

Many will also hold periodic public engagement events, aimed at hearing directly from their community and to feedback on actions taken.

A Kings Fund study of Health and Wellbeing Boards in 2014 found that:

- Nearly all boards have produced Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies (JHWSs).

- Public health and health inequalities are the highest priorities in most Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies.
- Most boards want to play a bigger role in commissioning services.

How to influence my local Health & Wellbeing Board:

Firstly do your research:

■ Who is on the Board?

- Does it include NHS provider organisation representatives?
- Who are the members of the Board who are most likely to champion the needs of children and families? You can find out by a simple internet ("Google") search: "(name of Council) Health & Wellbeing Board membership")

■ What are its current priorities? What does the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy set out as the priorities for the area?

- Are improved outcomes for Children and Families included in those priorities?
- Look at its recent agendas – what issues is it spending its time discussing?
- Has your Board discussed children's health and wellbeing at a recent meeting? Has it discussed the 1001 Critical Days report?
- Has it discussed the forthcoming commissioning transfer of 0-5 services from NHS England to the Local Authority?

■ Attend a meeting:

- Do not expect to be invited to speak – the meetings are held in public but are not public meetings. Some will allow contributions from visitors, but usually this will be by prior arrangement on a specific issue.

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■ Communicate with key members:

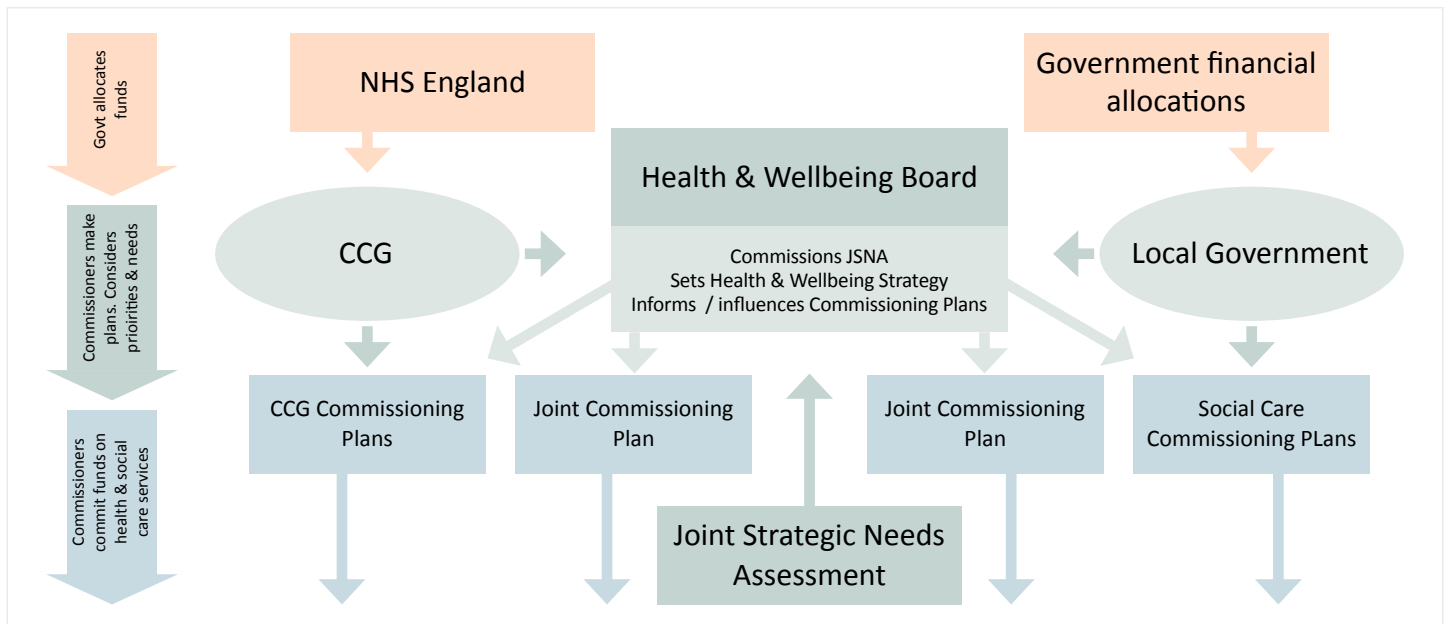
- If your Organisation is represented on the Board, that is a good place to start. Raise the 1001 Critical Days report, for example, or the All Party Parliamentary Group on Conception to Age 2 “Building Great Britons”.
- Ask them if they plan to raise this at the Board, and suggest that they request an agenda item.
- Talk with other Health and Wellbeing Board members with an interest in Children’s services – e.g. the cabinet member for Children’s Services or the Director of Children’s Services.
- Contact the Director of Public Health about the 0-5 Commissioning transfer and ask when it is going to be considered by the Board.
- In these communications, offer to contribute towards any report, or presentation that is being made to the Board, offering a practitioner’s perspective.

Health and Wellbeing Boards can be powerful places to influence the priority given to services that affect the outcomes for young families.

Health & Wellbeing Boards in the Future:

Health & Wellbeing Boards are set to become even more significant in the future. An expanded role for them with greater influence over the commissioning plans of health and social care.

In 2014 Health & Wellbeing Boards were responsible for developing plans for the new joint Local Government/NHS “Better Care Fund” aimed largely at integrating services for adults and older people. This is likely to be expanded, and in some areas, (e.g. Greater Manchester), there are plans to make Health & Wellbeing Boards responsible for the entire health and social care budgets. So the more familiar you are with how yours operates, the better placed you will be to ensure that it is including outcomes for children amongst its top priorities for the future.



References

- Health & Wellbeing Boards One Year On – The Kings Fund bit.ly/1aWftS9
- All Party Parliamentary Group for Conception to Age 2 – Building Great Britons bit.ly/1EbleAa
- The 1001 Critical Days bit.ly/1vw7a1m

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership – The LGA bit.ly/1GClF7p

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For additional fact sheets see www.ihv.org.uk