

Briefing Note 1 Health and Wellbeing Boards: For Directors of Transport Services and their staff

Headline: Transport services (planning and delivery) are legitimately part of the strategic overview by the government's new statutory Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs).

Introduction

A key plank of the government's Health & Social Care Act 2012 is the creation of statutory HWBs in every top tier local authority. HWBs bring together local elected councillors with the key commissioners, (including representatives of clinical commissioning groups, directors of public health, children's services and adult social services, and a representative of the local Health Watch - the new patients' representative body). The intention is to improve health services, care services, and the health and wellbeing of local people. The Boards are also responsible locally for leading on reducing health inequalities. HWBs will not control funding per se but will exert strong influence on spending plans through the budget holding role of many members and the statutory requirement for health & social care commissioning plans.

Background: Transport as a wider determinant of health

Health is influenced by a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors. These shape the conditions of daily life which, in turn, contribute to individual and whole population health. The term 'wider determinants of health' is used to describe the circumstances and influences which impact on the health of individuals and communities. Transport planning can play an important role in addressing the wider determinants of health.

What is the role of the HWBs?

The main functions of the HWB are to:

- assess the needs of their local population through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment process¹
- produce a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy² as the overarching framework within which commissioning plans are developed for health services, social care, public health and other services which the board agrees are relevant
- promote greater integration and partnership, including joint commissioning, integrated provision, and pooled budgets where appropriate.

Local authorities in considering their membership will be able to invite other members to sit on the board in order to maximise the gain from health outcomes and align these with employment, welfare and reductions in offending. Subject to the minimum mandatory members (6), the final membership will be up to each authority to decide.

¹ Joint strategic needs assessments (JSNAs) analyse the health needs of populations to inform and guide commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within local authority areas. The lead for JSNA is most often within Public Health teams.

² The Joint Strategic Needs Strategy is a new development building on the pre-existing JSNA

HWBs are the only component of the reformed NHS that will bring together different organisations and interests to promote local collaboration and integration.³ It is likely that in those top tier authorities where strong links have been made between transport and health that transport may be represented on the Boards or else be frequent attendees. Such engagement offers the prospect for stronger synergies between transport and health given their shared agendas.

Suggestions for issues upon which transport teams could engage with HWBs to further common goals

- Encourage key decision makers involved in transport, access to services, job creation and education to proactively consider the health impact of their policies and how they can contribute to reducing health inequalities
- Encourage major employers to use their influence to support the creation of more sustainable communities that are designed for active ageing, where services are accessible to those they serve
- Encourage employers to have active travel plans, which promote walking, cycling and public transport
- Promote the use of NICE Guidance, now comprehensively endorsed by DfT, across all transport disciplines – see Briefing Note from NICE ([briefing](#))
- Improve safety, and reduce traffic danger, in population centres – from villages to towns and cities – through widespread adoption of 20mph limits wherever people walk and cycle in residential streets and busy High streets <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>
- Reduce social exclusion and promote independence by improving safe access to services through providing quality transport networks
- Promote partnership working to encourage ‘designing for health’ where new developments incorporate open space to encourage recreation and play, create accessibility to services, promote the benefits of active travel, minimise road traffic collisions and discourage crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Promote health and well-being as an integral part of the physical, environmental and social regeneration of our towns, cities and rural areas, including adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier, positively promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles and evaluating the benefits

³ The King’s Fund, 2012 Health and wellbeing boards. System leaders or talking shops? <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/health-and-wellbeing-boards> accessed 19/12/12.

- Promote community ownership of, and protect, green space and improve access to land so people can grow their own food
- Seek to inform the JSNA and JHWS and to use both of these outputs to shape future transport policies and programmes
- Utilise evidence in order to address the wider determinants of health and tackle health inequalities and place Local Government and local communities at the heart of improving health and well-being for their populations