

Barnsley HWB Board Development Session 23rd September

Facilitated by Robin Douglas

The session was called to strengthen the focus of the Board, build clarity about key priorities and agree effective the working arrangements.

Introductions

The introduction from Chair stressed the need for the Board to have a clear purpose, add real value and work to explicit priorities.

The members added the following expectations:

- There was strong agreement that the Board needs a stronger sense of purpose
- Put some 'meat on the bone' of the high level commitments and direction, and clearer timelines to follow
- Clarify the Board's role in respect of the HWB Strategy and the recent review
- Build a clearer common purpose based on outcomes for local people
- Develop some underlying principles that guide the work of the Board
- Strengthen behaviour in the Board to reflect more honesty

Robin referred to the note that had been circulated on challenges faced by boards nationally, he then reflected on the following themes as a guide to the conversation:

- To achieve the scale of change we need in local services, effective organisational leadership will only take us so far: the requirement is for much more far reaching and cross-organisational working that can only be achieved through *system leadership*. The Board offers an important focus for this approach.
- At the heart of such leadership is the need for coherent, *common purpose*. Without such shared or common cause, a Board too easily becomes just another council committee.
- In terms of working in complexity, Robin emphasised the work of Richard Beckhard in 'Solving Problems and Managing Dilemmas'. The work of the Board is more likely to be successful if it focuses more on working with dilemmas(or wicked problems), rather than just trying to solve problems – that are often the responsibility of member organisations/partnership rather than the Board.
- The work of the Board is then likely to move from solution focused/scrutiny activity to a more *facilitating, influencing role* that recognises the need to support and encourage the work of existing organisations and integrated services. There may be areas where the Board may add value through additional commissioned or direct activity, but the test should always be 'Is this something the Board and only the Board should do?'

Discussion

The members raised the following themes in discussion

- The need to remember the 'Barnsley Six' key values
- The Vision for Health and Care work led by the CCG was recognised as an important contribution to building a common 'story'

- Setting realistic aspirations given the continuing austerity programme and the future pressures on services
- The need to re-examine the 'core offer' given the cuts and restrictions on services. Recognising local assets as well as the need for services and direct support.
- Keep the HWB Strategy alive and at the centre of the Board's work, it should be a living idea not just a paper based plan.
- Stephen suggested '3 things that matter' as the heart of the Board's work:
 - 'Local People living healthily and independently as long as they can'
 - 'When people need help we will provide it as well as we can'
 - 'We should support people supporting themselves'
- Some principles to guide the work of the Board were suggested:
 - Partners should recognise the impact of their organisational decisions on one another, and aim to understand the pressures upon members from other sources
 - Be sufficiently challenging with one another to enable issues to be dealt with and not 'fester'
 - Ensure that there is a common story or narrative to which all members subscribe and can use as the basis of discussions on priorities etc
 - Recognising that there are likely be constant changes in national and local policies, and local health needs. The overall strategic approach by the Board has to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate such changes, without being diverted from its core purpose.
- The business of the Board should include:
 - Challenging member organisations to live up to 'the stories they tell'
 - Understanding what 'good' is
 - Supporting and challenging members in their approach to delivery/creating benefit
 - Identifying gaps in the strategy and (rarely) sponsoring/commissioning additional activity
 - Understanding the effects of changes in policy, practice and community and the effects on members commissioning or services.
- The success of the Board would be judged by:
 - The extent to which it facilitated local organisations to work in more integrated ways
 - The movement towards achievement of the HWB Strategy, complete with real evidence of progress
 - Real engagement of local people in the nature and progress of the Strategy
 - Board members understanding what is working less well or not being achieved
 - To be using agreed and collective intelligence – paying attention to key indicators rather the regularly 'deep diving' into details
 - Understanding members organisational pressures and priorities and the effects of these on collaborative/integrated working
- It was noted that an important member organisation – the BHNFT was not represented in the discussion. It was agreed to approach them to encourage their further involvement.
- The work of SSDG in supporting the Board was recognised and it was acknowledged that this had improved significantly in recent times. The balance of effort between this

group and the Board will need to be kept under review as not every member of the Board is represented in SSDG discussions.

- The group agreed to develop the discussion further, both in terms of focus for the agenda and in more open, working arrangements. It was suggested that there is a need for regular developmental space for the Board, separate from the public meetings, and a further future review should be planned to assess progress.
- At the completion of the session, the Chair produced a brief summary of his sense of the discussion. See below:

Points from Health and Wellbeing Presentation (Stephen Houghton):-

- Design on H&WBB Strategy based upon the 3 principles.
- Identify what good looks like for the 2 principles.
- Measure current position against them.
- Identify actions to close the gap.
- Identify performance measures against those actions.
- Write the 'Story' of the H&WBB from these actions.
- Get a communications plan to tell partners.
- Identify principles / behaviours to underpin the strategy.
- Design H&WBB agendas to test if it looks better.

Note prepared by Robin Douglas

September 26th 2015