

Date: 18 November 2021

Title: Raising the profile of the Health and Wellbeing Board, communicating the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and engaging with our audiences.

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Report Sponsor: Cllr Angela Macpherson

Purpose of Report: To start a discussion about how we can raise the profile of the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and set a strategic direction for communications that support the objectives and desired outcomes of the Happier, Healthier Lives strategy.

Report for information, discussion, decision or approval: For decision

Recommendations:

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

1. Agree to the short-term quick wins for raising the profile of the work of the Board for the next six months and to suggest and agree further quick win suggestions.
2. Agree to the creation of a co-produced overarching communications strategy and related communications plans to support the Happier, Healthier Lives strategy by April 2022.
3. Note the planned reinstatement of the Getting Bucks Involved steering group in relation to engagement, in addition to the platforms that can be made available across the partnership.

Executive Summary

There is a consensus view that the work of the Board is not as visible as it could be.

This paper sets out a timeline and actions that can be taken to improve visibility and promote engagement with partners.

Background documents

Terms of reference for Getting Bucks Involved group

Introduction

1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory forum in the form of a partnership between local government, the NHS, voluntary sector and the communities of Buckinghamshire. It includes local GPs, councillors, senior local government and NHS officers, Healthwatch Bucks and voluntary sector representatives. The Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board was formed in 2013.

The Health and Wellbeing Board aims:

- To make a visible difference to health outcomes and reduce health inequalities across the county
 - To support and enable strong, motivated and empowered communities in Buckinghamshire
 - Deliver its statutory responsibilities and drive whole system leadership for health and wellbeing across Buckinghamshire
2. Earlier this year, the Board agreed the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy “Happier, Healthier Lives – A Plan for Buckinghamshire”. This includes the three key strategic themes of start well, live well and age well, in addition to the cross-cutting theme of better mental health. The plan also incorporates Covid-19 recovery.
 3. The Board continues to review and agree action plans related to its strategy.
 4. In general, people do not always make the connection between what is discussed at Board meetings like this and the availability and/or changes to health and social care that impacts on them personally.
 5. There is a desire from Board members to raise the profile of its work and encourage wider participation as part of the public questions. In addition, Board members would like to see a better alignment of strategic communication priorities related to health and social care with the Happier, Healthier Lives strategy.

Short to medium-term: October 2021 to March 2022

6. It is important to recognise the constraints that all partners are currently working in, both as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and as we move into what is anticipated to be a very challenging winter. This is all in addition to the changes that are happening within the wider system as a result of the Health and Care Bill.
7. For these reasons the recommendation is to focus the strategic alignment of communications activities from April 2022, rather than progressing activity during the autumn and winter months.
8. However, there are some simple things that can be done in the meantime to help to raise the profile of the work of the Board.

9. The first is to provide a very basic introduction to all of the reports for the Board. Naturally some of the topics and issues discussed are very technical, which can make the content less than accessible for anyone who is not a clinician or immersed within the health and social care environment.
10. Secondly, the Board could make greater use of partner members' collective social media channels, highlighting how people can ask questions of the Board, decisions that have been made, what is being discussed and why it is important. This could be done right across the partner members of the Board using #HappierHealthier.
11. Board members are welcome to suggest other communication quick wins that have limited resource implications and will raise the profile of the work of the Board, including working with the Community Boards. Suggestions will be agreed in consultation with the Chair of the Board.

Longer-term: April 2022 onwards

12. It is proposed that in the longer-term, the Board could expand use of social content, for example report authors giving a short video update on reports to make them more accessible and easier to digest for wider audiences. This content could be published on their own organisation's social media channels and shared by partners.
13. There is also a real opportunity to build on the strong communications and engagement partnerships that were further developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
14. The Board may also wish to consider encouraging greater participation in the Board on health and wellbeing matters, including those areas affecting wider determinants of health such as housing or transportation.
15. As a system across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, we are taking the opportunity to develop and deliver a shared communications plan for Winter 2021/22, which is then localised to specific concerns where appropriate, with plans to seek further opportunities for joint working.
16. Never has it been more obvious than during the Covid-19 pandemic that clear and timely information and compelling behaviour change communication plays an important and active role in creating healthier communities. It has also further highlighted how much our messages and resources are amplified when we work together on common causes.
17. In order for communications to support the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board - as individual organisations and as a partnership – it must be guided by and aligned to the Boards strategic priorities for the year. This will ensure that the service focuses on delivering what matters and we direct our effort and resources to what is going to make the biggest difference.

18. While we have identified key areas to work together on, it is recommended that this is taken a step further by developing a communications strategy for the Board that is co-produced by all partners. A related plan will set out the communication activity that will be undertaken by each organisation over the coming year, aligning core campaigns to Health and Wellbeing priorities, both as individual organisations and opportunities for the partnership.
19. By co-producing the strategy and related plan, we will:
 - identify opportunities to share resources and ideas
 - establish where we need to focus our collective efforts
 - highlight the work of each of the partners – together and individually
 - amplify and not duplicate campaigns and the work of each member organisation
 - ensure that our communications activity is aligned to the core priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board
 - have a clear Buckinghamshire wide communications plan on promoting responsibility for health and wellbeing
 - incorporate Covid-19 recovery.
20. It is recommended that a timescale of April 2022 is set to develop a Buckinghamshire-wide communications strategy which promotes the work of the Board and encourages and supports people to take up responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. It is proposed to establish a working group to develop the strategy.

Engagement

21. Engagement – however formal or informal – is essential to shaping health and social care policy, priorities and delivery.
22. The Getting Bucks Involved Steering Group was a helpful mechanism in which to shape plans for engagement activity. For many of the reasons outlined above, this group has not met in a meaningful way since December 2020.
23. While the terms of reference for this group may need to be updated, partners have recognised the value of this group. As a result, the group – and the communications sub-group – will be reinstated with the first meeting anticipated to be by January 2022.
24. Engagement is a core principle of the Integrated Care System proposed in the Health and Care Bill. It will therefore be integral to co-ordinate with the approach being taken across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire.
25. The Council has further renewed its subscriptions to the consultation platform ‘Your Voice Bucks’, in addition to a further platform which has recruited 1500 people to participate in health and social care surveys. Partners are once again invited to share in using these resources (and the cost).

26. The Council's Community Engagement Team's work in supporting Public Health, NHS and comms colleagues in areas such as Covid vaccination outreach, tackling health inequalities and targeting health/ prevention messages, will continue to be extremely valuable as we progress the "Happier, Healthier Lives" strategy.