

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO HEALTH AND
WELL BEING BOARD**

25 NOVEMBER 2020

**REPORT OF STOCKTON-
ON-TEES BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

SYSTEM ENABLERS

SUMMARY

This presentation provides Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the work to develop the system enablers element of the strategy reset work. It is based on feedback from partners and explores in more detail the actions taken and key actions proposed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to note this report.

Purpose

1. This paper outlines the further work on the system enablers identified as part of the work being undertaken by HWB to reflect and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Context

2. Board held a workshop session on 24 June 2020 when Members reflected on what had happened in the Borough and their organisations, since the pandemic had occurred. The outcomes of that session were collated: what the impact of COVID-19 had been, what had worked well, what the challenges were, what data was telling us and what the most important issues were. The Board held a second workshop on 22 July 2020, where it used the outcomes of the first workshop to look forward, reset priorities and agree next steps.
3. A number of system enablers were identified. These were more related to 'how' things have been done which might provide opportunities to change the way we work in future.
4. These are:
 - a. *Volunteering and community asset building*
 - b. *Information, signposting and navigation*
 - c. *Partnership working and communication*
 - d. *Workforce*
 - e. *Data sharing protocols*
5. An initial paper to Board in September outlined the issues in more detail to check Board members were comfortable with the broad outline.

6. Since then further discussions have taken place, and a proforma was used to collect additional views based on 3 main questions to try and unpick the more general responses and reflections collected to date:
 - a. *What did we do? What did we learn?*
 - b. *What can individual organisations do now?*
 - c. *What can the HWB and the system do?*
7. This paper explores the issues in more detail and proposes how this work will be taken forward.

Volunteering and community asset building

The onset of the pandemic brought with it examples of effective community action – from the establishment of the shielding hub to the engagement of volunteers to support the distribution of free school meals, it has been possible to engage and galvanise community action as an immediate response. There are key lessons for the future which need to be considered and built into this aspect of the HWB strategy. So this aspect is about what we have learned through this period, and what specifically, we think organisations and the partnership as a whole can do to sustain this level of engagement as the pandemic continues.

What did we do? What did we learn?

8. Key examples highlighted here were around the many examples of community-led activity and support which have flourished, and the variety of ways in which volunteers have come forward to help others;
9. Volunteering numbers have increased, and could support a broader refreshed volunteering offer. There are examples across many service areas, from those involved at the heart of the direct COVID-9 response to the involvement of various forms of champions and ambassadors assisting those who are vulnerable to access services and support.
10. New service offers such as food distribution and supply chains have been established quickly, maximising the roles and skills of different agencies;
11. In parallel with the increased recognition of the value of many 'key worker' roles in keeping essential services running throughout the first period of lockdown, there has also been increasing recognition of the role and value of VCSE organisations in supporting local community activity, and this forms a platform on which stronger relationships can be built.

What can individual organisations do now?

12. Continue to prioritise the role organisations can play in stimulating local community activity.
13. Promote the role of volunteers in service design and delivery.
14. Contribute to and promote the borough wide volunteering strategy.

What can the HWB and the system do?

15. Commit to the ongoing development and implementation of a community asset based model, especially in relation to the development of local area based initiatives such as the proposed pathfinder.

16. Combine resources to sustain community champion schemes initially established to provide advice and guidance around COVID-19, but whose role and remit can be expanded to be broader champions of wellbeing. Capitalising on the role of the Community Health Ambassadors
17. Expand and support a refresh of the volunteering strategy and capacity, strategically led by Catalyst.

Information, signposting and navigation

The development of a 'community hub' as a resource to provide information and as a signpost to the services was a key achievement during the pandemic period. This has highlighted the specific issues faced by some individuals and communities and the value of a single, visible and effective information and support hub to support vulnerability. This strand of is therefore focused on what we need to do to continue to support this and how we might continue to enable an integrated 'shielding / vulnerability' approach for the longer term.

What did we do? What did we learn?

18. Responses highlighted the considerable benefit of establishing a Community Support Team / Hub function to provide a single point of access to respond to queries and requests for help from citizens, and the opportunity to retain this form of working.
19. Most organisations have also changed the way they deliver services with an increasing emphasis on outreach models of delivery. This also provides the opportunity for additional connections to be made with a single point of contact ie ensuring those who are visiting / contacting individuals and families are aware of the broader support offer and how to access it in their daily contacts.
20. A greater shift to virtual models of delivery has brought some benefits in terms of reach and efficiency, but also brings issues of inequality for some individuals and communities in being able to access online offers as they do not have the necessary access.

What can individual organisations do now?

21. Consider and contribute to the further development of a single point of contact / hub arrangement.
22. Commit to exploring the further scope to ensure that outreach services are aware of the broader support offer.

What can the HWB and the system do?

23. Support the retention of a support hub model, which could see its remit expanded to be a single point of contact for a broad range of community issues concerns and support, and with an ability to triage.
24. Work together to address the 'digital divide' and ensure there is choice for all.

Partnership working and communication

Many services increased their level of communication throughout the initial period, updating on the status of services, what was available, how it had been impacted and contingency plans. In many respects, communication between agencies and 'service users' increased during this period. The focus of this element is on what agencies feel have been the key learning points to ensure are embedded in future joint working.

What did we do? What did we learn?

25. Agencies have worked flexibly, and in many cases outside of their organisational boundaries to make things happen.
26. New partnerships and relationships have been created. Relative skills and strengths have been recognised and utilised.
27. The role of the VCSE has been at the forefront, and the role of catalyst in support the engagement of the sector has been key.
28. In the initial stages of lockdown, there were some variations in approach to the risk assessment of face to face delivery.

What can individual organisations do now?

29. Recognise that innovation comes from empowering front line practitioners to respond and reacting quickly
30. Recognise the value of the 'crisis' / burning platform in stimulating new thinking
31. Share approaches to risk assessment for face to face delivery.

What can the HWB and the system do?

32. Recognise and promote greater collaboration in problem solving between statutory and VCSE sectors.
33. Re-create the conditions for innovation, speed and flexibility through different approaches to engagement, design and co-production of services – avoiding traditional ways of working and where appropriate instigating 'crisis mode' to accelerate processes.

Workforce planning and recovery

Our people have had to work differently, including for many, remote technology, working from home. What do we think are the key lessons from this and what good practice can be shared around practice, policy and procedure?

What did we do? What did we learn?

34. Employees were adaptable and flexible in their response to a crisis.
35. The roll out of new ways of working is possible and can be achieved more quickly as a live test environment.
36. Many existing services and procedures can be moved to being virtual, and this brings benefits for providers and recipients, providing face to face services are also retained for those who need them.
37. The fast and mandatory shift to greater home working has demonstrated that major changes in ways of working are possible to achieve, and that there is a demand for more blended ways of working as a permanent working pattern.

What can individual organisations do now?

38. Document changes in practice to ensure any changes in models of service delivery are supported by skilled staff and effective process – although many procedures can be made virtual, many also require changes to make them effective as workflow, decision making and oversight may well be different. This is especially important in people facing services.
39. Survey employees to identify key lessons and continue to adapt and change working practices.

What can the HWB and the system do?

40. Support a move to more blended and flexible working arrangements and more cross organisation learning and working on what works, how common issues have been addressed and what works best.

Data sharing

The start of the COVID-19 period saw an immediate focus from the NHS on data sharing at patient level with the Council. Most notably this saw the sharing of information which was critical to the work on developing an analysis of vulnerability to support the work of the shielding hub and to ensure that vulnerable children continued to be safeguarding during the period where schools were only seeing a limited number of vulnerable children and children of key workers. The emphasis is on retaining this, and overcoming any issues which might prevent this from happening, so the focus of this strand is on: what did we do and how do we want to progress from here?

What did we do? What did we learn?

41. Key NHS data was shared at the start of the pandemic to support greater collaboration around those considered most vulnerable.
42. Data sharing can therefore be achieved where agencies feel there is a specific enough purpose.
43. Collectively we have been able to develop, quickly, sophisticated indices of vulnerability to help coordinate offers of help, or to have oversight of vulnerable individuals or families.

What can individual organisations do now?

44. Consider their data sharing protocols and identify opportunities to retain effective practice, with appropriate controls.
45. Consider similar sharing of information to address other significant issues, even if time limited to assist in the development of new service models.

What can the HWB and the system do?

46. Support the development of data sharing approaches. Provide a mechanisms for agencies to identify which data sets for what purpose.

Conclusions and next steps

47. The outcomes in this paper have been identified to support a system wide discussion on some of the key learning from the pandemic response and have identified a

number of areas of potential further collaboration at a system level. The value in having a coordinated multi agency support hub; with networked and linked outreach offers; and a consistent and energetic focus on the value of the VCSE in supporting and promoting community led activity offers a potential model for the redesign of a number of key services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

48. No direct implications from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

49. No direct implications from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

50. No direct implications from this report.

CONSULTATION

51. A number of key agencies have been consulted on the contents of this report, through the use of a proforma.

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