

Partnership for Change

Partnership for Change is a service user and carer led organisation that has been established to support greater participation and engagement with the public sector across North Lanarkshire. Founded by four not-for-profit organisations covering carers, older people, disabled people and people affected by mental health problems, it provides a platform for service users and carers to engage with the changes taking place across health and social care services.

In response to the launch of the Scottish Parliaments Health and Sport Inquiry established to examine the Integration Authorities' (IAs) approach to engagement with stakeholders and whether IAs are doing enough to involve patients, carers, the third sector and other stakeholders over the design and future of health and social care in their local area. This is a collective submission to the inquiry from Partnership for Change and it has been endorsed by the following four member organisations:

- Voice of Experience Forum
- Lanarkshire Links,
- NL Disability Forum
- North Lanarkshire Carers Together

General Comments

The engagement of service users and carers within the North Lanarkshire Integrated Joint Board (IJB) in North Lanarkshire is at an early stage and shows signs of being very constructive and central to the work of the IJB. Some examples of note can be summarised as:

- Service user and carer representatives have been involved in the main board, sub-committees and authority wide partnership boards from the outset.
- Early discussions on the published commissioning intentions, through to the formal consultation process in October 2016 has seen changes and amendments to the current draft approach, which is still to be finalised.
- A more explicit commitment to carer support.
- A commitment to the medium-term resourcing of the Community Capacity Building & Carer Support Programme.
- The commitment to include transportation as a future commissioning intention later in the process.
- Involvement in the design and development of the IJBs Engagement and Participation (E&P) Strategy through the working group that has been established to develop and implement the action plan.

A key element to the ongoing success with the engagement of service users and carers in the design of health and social care services across North Lanarkshire, will be a commitment to the medium to long-term resourcing of effective participation mechanisms. This may be achieved as part of the implementation of the IJBs E&P Strategy as the resource implications are fully identified.

Specific Comment on Inquiry Questions

The following responses are being made on the specific questions posted by the Health and Sport Committee in the call for evidence:

1. Do you know how and when you can get involved with the Integration Authorities to influence decision making?

The processes and structures for the involvement of stakeholders within the North Lanarkshire IJB are still evolving, with the remits of the refreshed Partnership Boards being recently agreed and the creation of Locality Planning Groups (LPGs) at an early stage. Agendas and papers for the main IJB Board and the two sub-committees (Finance & Audit and Performance, Scrutiny & Assurance) are published on the North Lanarkshire Council MARs (which stands for Minutes, Agendas and Reports) web portal and accessible prior to the meetings. Two points that should be noted:

- Notification and circulation of papers should be done with a longer time prior to the meeting to allow service users and carers to be fully briefed.
- Guidance on how to get specific items on to the agenda of the various meetings should be further developed.

2. Were you consulted in the preparation of the strategic plans or involved with the work of the Strategic Planning Group?

The IJB Strategic Plan was issued in draft form and finalised as the structures for service user and carer involvement were being established and nominated representatives identified. There were stakeholder events at the time, but with no infrastructure to support service users and carers to make a coordinated response, there was no real opportunity to influence the final strategic plan.

There was more involvement of service users in the review of the commissioning intentions and the development of the Strategic Commissioning Plan (SCP). There was good representation of service users and carers at the locality consultation events and there was a formal consultation response made on behalf of the members of Partnership for Change. There was then involvement of service users and carers in the Strategic Planning Group to review the first draft of the SCP with some specific changes being made. The final SCP is currently in production and further involvement is expected. The following point should be noted

- A more consistent use of the Strategic Planning Group would help service users and carers contribute more effectively.

3. Have you been involved with the work of the Integration Authority following the publication of the strategic plan?

Service users and carers have been involved in the work of the IA following the publication of the IJBs Strategic Plan. It is recognised that the infrastructure to fully support effective service user and carer participation is still developing, with the resources required to ensure meaningful involvement currently being identified as the IJB E&P Strategy is being implemented. It should be noted that:

- A commitment to medium to long-term funding will be required for the employment of workers to fully support service users and carers, if meaningful engagement and participation is to be maintained.

4. *Have you been involved with the work of the localities/ what involvement would you like to have?*

New Locality Planning Groups (LPGs) are in the process of being established, with service users and carers being involved in the establishment of them. The establishment of two LPGs in each of the six localities across North Lanarkshire is being pursued and it is anticipated that this will place significant pressure on the existing service user and carer support structures; if meaningful involvement in all 12 LPGs, in addition to the five pan North Lanarkshire Boards is to be achieved.

As with point 3 above, a commitment to medium and long-term funding will be required for the employment of workers to fully support service users and carers within the new structures.

5. *Do you think that your involvement with the IAs has had an impact on decision making?*

There are a few examples where the involvement of service users and carers has had an impact on decision making within the IA.

- The support for carers to bridge the anticipated gap in funding prior to the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 has now been identified as a formal risk with the IJB and is to be included on the Risk Register.
- A commitment to continue to fund the Community Capacity Building and Carers Support Programme beyond the end of the Integrated Care Fund has been formalised.
- Recognition that transportation (including Community Transport) is a key issue and will be addressed through a future commissioning intention has been made.

Members of Partnership for Change are keen to build on and extend the influence and impact that they have on decision making within the IJB. To this end one of their participation mechanisms is to develop a Prospectus for Change, which will identify service user and carer priorities at both a pan-North Lanarkshire level and at a locality level and develop a business case outlining what commissioning solution would be preferred. This will be built around the model of co-production, where users of service are involved with the design of future services better suited to address the priorities that they have identified. Note should be taken of:

- The need for resources to support the process of co-production for services identified as priorities by service users and carers at a local level if shared ownership is to be achieved.

6. *What could be done to improve the communication from the IAs?*

Communication can be improved in a number of ways including the timely publication of agendas and papers for the main IJB Board, the two sub-committees and the two refreshed Partnership Boards. Publishing papers on the NLC MARs web-portal is welcomed, which should be extended to the papers for the Partnership Boards.

The adoption of Care Opinion by the IJB is desired by service users and carers as this will provide an additional mechanism for some users of services and their carers to share their experiences and to get feedback instantly from service providers. An awareness conference is being organised by Partnership for Change along with Patient Opinion for key decision makers within North Lanarkshire IJB and neighbouring IJBs. Once adopted, the reporting and analysis of experiences submitted to Care Opinion will be key to being able to share the views of service users and carers as they experience them. The following point should be noted:

- The adoption of Care Opinion will complement and not replace other existing engagement and participation mechanisms.

7. What could be done to ensure greater collaboration and engagement in the decision-making process of Integration Authorities?

Throughout this submission, the need to commit to medium to long-term funding has been highlighted. Resources for the engagement and participating of service users tends to be though one-off and adhoc awards and is not imbedded within the strategic planning and commissioning of services and support. This may change as the North Lanarkshire IJB E&P Strategy is fully implemented, but it is not guaranteed at this stage. Work is being undertaken to draw up participation guidelines for the IJB built around the National Standards for Community Engagement, developed in partnership with the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC). This should ensure service users and carers along with all stakeholder groups are supported to meaningfully engage.

Conclusions

As the IJB in North Lanarkshire comes to the end of its first full year of operation, it is recognised that the infrastructure to fully support effective service user and carer engagement is still evolving. Service users and carers recognise the difficult financial pressures being placed on the IJB and the complex issues associated with the integration of primary healthcare with social care; as such they have a desire to fully engage in the process of change and are committed to the redesign of services that better meet the areas and people they represent.