

## Influencing the New Health System in a Local Area- A Briefing for Local Voluntary and Community Groups

The NHS is going through a radical change at the moment. In order to ensure this happens in a way which takes on board the concerns and expertise of local voluntary and community organisations (VCOs), you will need to understand the changes and develop relationships with the new local policy makers and commissioners. This briefing provides a short summary of the emerging local statutory organisations and how best to engage with them.

It may be useful to read this briefing in conjunction with the Regional Voices briefing which describes the health transition period and how it may impact on the voluntary sector. Here is a link to the briefing. <http://www.regionalvoices.net/stronger-connections-for-better-health/briefings/briefings/>

### 1. Clinical Commissioning Groups - Local health commissioning

Local health commissioning is moving from the responsibility of the primary care trusts (PCTs) to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) from April 2013. The CCG boards (made up of GPs, other health professionals and lay members) will be responsible for making decisions on priorities for commissioning local health services. They will have staff working for them who will commission services on behalf of the CCG. "Pathfinder CCGs" now cover the majority of the country. They report that they are already incredibly busy, having to focus on costs and being bombarded with requests for information and meetings.

Ideas on how to develop your relationships with the pathfinder CCGs:

- Decide who you want to develop a relationship with; is it CCG board members or commissioning staff? If CCG have assigned leads for aspects of commissioning, it may be easier to engage those leads on their specialism rather than the Chief Executive.
- Unless you already have a relationship with your local GPs, assume they know very little about your organisation, the service you provide or the specific issue of the community you serve. Be clear about your clients' needs and how your organisation meets those needs.
- Use any relationships you already have in the health sector as CCGs will already have relationships with many health professionals.
- The more you can work with other organisations to demonstrate how many people or organisations share your concerns and how well your ideas fit in with the priorities of the statutory organisations, the more notice CCGs are likely to take of you.
- If you want to influence service provision, the more you can demonstrate beneficial outcomes and value for money the better, that includes how many people receive the service, what difference it makes to them and how much it will cost.
- When meeting people, spend time preparing the groundwork to ensure you create the right impression. Think about your message and make it as clear and relevant as possible. To do this you should:
  - find out CCG priorities so you can tailor your message to them
  - develop your 30 second and 5 minute pitches
  - summarise your points on 1 side of A4



For a louder voice, form partnerships and collaborate with other local VCOs in your area (the local support and development organisation, such as the Council for Voluntary Service, can help with this). You can find your nearest local support and development organisation by using NAVCA's members directory. [www.navca.org.uk/membersdirectory](http://www.navca.org.uk/membersdirectory) They may run a voluntary sector forum in your area, which:

- represents local VCOs in their area on strategic planning boards
- allows local VCOs to work together and share experiences
- enables local VCOs to work with commissioners on the development and delivery of services

## **2. Local Authorities - Commissioning For Public Health**

Local authorities will be responsible for public health commissioning from April 2013 with new Directors of Public Health (DsPH) appointed. You may already know some of the public health staff in your area because most of them are likely to be transferred from the local Primary Care Trust public health team to the local authority. Local authorities will also be responsible for providing some public health services in conjunction with Public Health England. Get in touch with your local authority public health team in order to influence work to improve local people's health. Show how the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is centrally placed to help them fulfill their aims.

## **3. Health and Wellbeing Boards - Joint Commissioning**

From 2013 local authorities will have responsibility for leading a Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) which will provide the overall strategic direction for improving health and wellbeing in their area. Most of the country is already in the process of setting up their boards in shadow form.

- Get to know the members which will include: the Director of Adult Social Services, Director of Children's Services, Director of Public Health, elected leaders, a representative of each CCG in the area, a representative of the local HealthWatch and other members as determined by the local authority.
- The HWB may also include representatives from the VCS. If the VCS hasn't yet been engaged in development of the HWB in your area, approach the local authority to find out how you can get involved, demonstrating the value you can bring. Whatever approach is taken to formal membership, HWBs will need to engage with key partners and stakeholders, including the VCS, to take forward their work.
- Collaborate with other local voluntary organisations to work on VCS input to the HWBs by joining the voluntary sector forum in your area. The forums can demonstrate how the sector is placed to help the statutory organisations fulfil their aims, both in shaping commissioning plans as well as in providing services, by bringing knowledge of the locality and local issues.
- Local HealthWatch (see below) will have a statutory seat on HWBs so another way of ensuring the needs of your service users are represented at the HWB is to get involved in the work of your local HealthWatch.

HWBs will have the key responsibilities of developing a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and a joint health and wellbeing strategy for each local authority area. These will determine local health priorities and develop a plan to deliver improvements in those priorities.



- Talk to your local authority team working on the JSNA to influence priorities in health and social care. Ensure you have good evidence to influence the JSNA and ensure the issues of the people you work for are voiced.
- Find out when and how your joint health and wellbeing strategy is being developed and ensure you're involved.
- Some voluntary sector forums co-ordinate VCS input to the development of JSNA; talk to your local support and development organisation to find out more.  
[www.navca.org.uk/membersdirectory](http://www.navca.org.uk/membersdirectory)

#### 4. Local HealthWatch

Local HealthWatch are replacing LINKs (Local Involvement Networks) from autumn 2012. They will retain similar functions as previously, and will be gaining new responsibilities. HealthWatch have a statutory seat on the HWB.

- Get involved with your local HealthWatch to ensure the needs of your service users are represented within their work. Here is a link to more information on LINKs that will help you find your nearest one. <http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/links/Pages/links-make-it-happen.aspx>
- Local HealthWatch will be able to request information, require a response, refer matters to the council's overview and scrutiny committee and 'enter and view' premises to inspect health or social care services. If you are involved in their activities you can make use of these powers to help ensure needs are met.
- Use HealthWatch to increase your understanding of what's happening within health or social care service delivery and development.
- Promote involvement in your HealthWatch so that it becomes an important and powerful voice.

#### More information about the changes

For background on how the health changes will affect the voluntary and community sector, look at NCVO and the King's Fund's report. [http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/The\\_Voluntary\\_Sector\\_in\\_Health\\_Kings\\_Fund\\_and\\_NCVO.pdf](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/The_Voluntary_Sector_in_Health_Kings_Fund_and_NCVO.pdf)

For up to date information on the changes taking place, have a look at Regional Voice's health briefings. <http://www.regionalvoices.net/stronger-connections-for-better-health/briefings/briefings/>

NAVCA has more information for local support and development organisations around health and social care. <http://www.navca.org.uk/hsc>

VODG's (Voluntary Organisations Disability Group) has produced resources on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. <http://www.vodg.org.uk/JSNA-Resources.html>

VONNE has produced a briefing about the ways the voluntary sector can support commissioners. [http://www.vonne.org.uk/z\\_includes/inc\\_getasset.php?srcpath=../&type=file@id=2703](http://www.vonne.org.uk/z_includes/inc_getasset.php?srcpath=../&type=file@id=2703)

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**This briefing has been jointly produced by NAVCA, NCVO and Regional Voices**

NAVCA is the national voice of local support and development organisations in England. We champion and strengthen voluntary and community action by supporting our members in their work with over 160,000 local charities and community groups. NAVCA believes that voluntary and community action is vital for vibrant and caring communities. We provide our members with networking opportunities, specialist advice, support, policy information and training. NAVCA is a vital bridge between local groups and national government so we also influence national and local government policy to strengthen local voluntary and community action. For more details about the full range of ways that NAVCA can help you please go to [www.navca.org.uk](http://www.navca.org.uk) or call us on 0114 278 6636.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is the umbrella body for the voluntary sector in England, with sister councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. NCVO has over 8,400 members, ranging from large national bodies to community groups, volunteer centres, and development agencies working at a local level. With over 280,000 staff and over 13 million volunteers working for our members, we represent and support almost half the voluntary sector workforce. As well as providing the leading voice to government in the sector, we also provide training in a huge variety of areas. <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/>

Regional Voices: In each of the nine English regions there is a network which champions the engagement of the third sector within the region. They provide the bridge between local and national policy and share good practice across the region. On a national level, Regional Voices connects each of the regional networks, enabling the critical connection between national, regional and local infrastructure. Regional Voices is funded through the Department of Health Third Sector Strategic Partners Programme to ensure input from the sector in developing health and social care policy and to support organisations to improve health and social care services. As one of the eighteen Strategic Partners, Regional Voices is strengthening links between the Department of Health and the third sector. For more information go to [www.regionalvoices.net](http://www.regionalvoices.net)