

## **The Health and Social Care Bill – *Pause to listen***

Following widespread criticisms and concerns expressed about the Health and Social Care Bill and the NHS Reforms, the Government organised a pause in the passage of the Bill and organised ‘Listening Events’ for the public which were facilitated by the NHS Future Forum.

In June the Government accepted the bulk of the Forum’s recommendations and said that ‘some’ changes can be made within the flexibility of the Bill and others will require amendments.

To view the report:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_127444](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_127444)

## **Public Accountability and the new Health & Wellbeing Boards**

- The Government will give **Health and Wellbeing Boards** (HWBs) a new duty to involve users and the public. The Bill will make clear that HWBs should be involved throughout the process as clinical commissioning groups develop their commissioning plans, and there will be a stronger expectation, set out in statutory guidance, **for the plans to be in line with the health and wellbeing strategy.**
- HWBs will have a stronger role in promoting joint commissioning and integrated provision between health, public health and social care.

**Health and Wellbeing Boards** need to ensure that knowledge within the VCS about local populations and their needs is accessed and used appropriately and influences both the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Assessment process.

The GP Consortia agenda needs to be broadened to include wider partnerships, including with local VCS organisations. The sector needs to be influential in ensuring that GP Consortia recognise broader health and social care needs outside of the traditional medical model.

## **Where is the Bill up to with its passage through Parliament?**

The Bill was introduced in January, with the 'Listening' break April-June, went back to Committee and recommitted after two days of discussion and voted on.

### **It is now on its way to the House of Lords.**

In theory the amendments will:

Reduce the Central direction of the NHS & places commissioning of health & wellbeing services locally.

Engages doctors & nurses in the commissioning of health services

Gives patients greater choice.

## **MACC is developing a Voluntary and Community Sector Forum to work at the Strategic level in the evolving Health and Wellbeing commissioning structures.**

The main aim will be to give the VCS an opportunity to be informed, involved and contribute to commissioning bodies to influence their plans and activities. By supporting the VCS's involvement in the Health and Wellbeing Board in Manchester, we will be able to:

- Inform and contribute to current policy direction.
- Engage with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and identify gaps in provision of services or areas of increased need.
- Act as a resource intelligence and highlight the contribution of the VCS to tackling health inequalities.
- Provide a space to stimulate collaborative working, innovation and integration of services between sectors and within the VCS.

The Director of MACC is the VCS representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Forum will give him his mandate for input into the Board from the local sector and provide a means to feed back and consult with colleagues. MACC will facilitate the Forum and ensure effective working links with existing local VCS networks and groups engaged with local communities in addressing health inequalities.

The Forum will focus on building relationships with the Directorate of Adults, local Commissioning Groups and NHS Trusts to broaden their partnerships to include the VCS.

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