

Warrington's innovative approach to data-sharing



Improving integrated care is a strategic priority for the Warrington health and social care community. With a strong Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) which works closely with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), whose membership includes chief executives and senior management from statutory agencies local providers and the third sector, it is well-positioned to deliver real integrated care.

Warrington has a history of collaboration and an ambitious health and social care transformation programme within which the information technology (IT) and information governance (IG) programmes are integral parts.

The challenge

It was recognised that sharing personal data among various agencies can be highly variable and could potentially compromise the quality of care and delivery of the integrated care agenda. Although there had been various initiatives and improvements over the years which successfully addressed some individual problems, there had not been a wider, more holistic, cross-community analysis of the overall information sharing problem, or sufficient senior management engagement or clinical and patient input.

In autumn last year, the joint HWB and LSP Board decided to rectify this and chose to commence the work with a rapid, root and branch assessment of the situation. They wanted the work to be high profile, inclusive and transparent, recognising that the sharing of personal confidential data was a highly sensitive issue that affects many people. Consequently, they agreed that a different method was needed to tackle the problem and chose a Select Committee Inquiry (SCI) style approach.

Health and social care select committee

Warrington's health and social care select committee comprised members who represented those that received, supported or carried out the delivery of patient care. This resulted in a committee of 14 influential senior managers, clinicians and patients questioning a range of care professionals, patients, carers and other expert witnesses at three public hearings. To supplement this oral evidence and to ensure everyone had an opportunity to become involved, a request was made for submission of written evidence and a public survey was undertaken.

Communication

During the process, there was considerable communication from the outset via a range of channels, including websites, professional journals, local press and social media. A dedicated inquiry website was set up to host all relevant documentation, including agendas, minutes, terms of reference and survey results.

www.warringtontogether.co.uk/key-projects/supporting-integration/sharing-information-for-better-care-better-health

Recommendations

This approach resulted in a vast amount of evidence which the inquiry manager organised into groups of findings and these became the foundation for the recommendations to the HWB. One recommendation was that the collective set of actions should form a programme of work to be undertaken within the governance of the Transformation Board, ensuring alignment with the IT and IG programmes. It was also recommended that the inquiry be followed by a scoping, planning and preparation stage which would form the foundation of the implementation of the recommendations.

Insights from those involved

Some views of those involved in the investigation are captured below.

Foreword to the final report, Bob Saunders, Inquiry Chair:

“The witnesses were.....extremely knowledgeable and frank in their statements and open and honest in their replies to questions. As a result, when added to the written and survey evidence I am satisfied that the overall output from the inquiry had a high level of rigour, integrity and value, which will assist in achieving better care for the people of Warrington.”

Andy Davies, Chief Clinical Officer and Senior Responsible Owner for the inquiry:

“The approach has allowed the community to come together and focus on finding solutions which will enable the improved delivery of integrated care in Warrington.”

Jason DaCosta, Executive Director of IT for Warrington and Halton Hospitals and for the CCG:

“For a long time, I’ve been saying that we need to share and it’s unsafe not to. However, sharing has been hampered by the concerns and confusion surrounding the issue. This inquiry has engaged people and changed ideas and I now have great hopes that we can make progress.”

Roy Bhati, A&E representative on the select committee:

“As a care professional, my job is made more difficult if I don’t have key information about my patient readily to hand. I understand the concerns that my colleagues have but the issues have to be addressed. This has been a fascinating and thought-provoking process which has given clinicians the opportunity to uncover the barriers to sharing and to influence the recommendations for change.”

Helen Speed, Healthwatch representative:

“I have really enjoyed the process and feel that it has given us an opportunity rarely offered to take an in depth look at the sharing of data. [The work] will be a sound platform for the next stages of integrated data sharing.”

For more information visit:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
www.warringtontogether.co.uk/about-us/health-and-wellbeing-board
- Local Strategic Partnership
www.warringtontogether.co.uk/about-us/warrington-partnership-board

Or contact warringtonpartnership@warrington.gov.uk

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