

INVOLVING GOVERNORS IN LARGE SCALE CHANGE

On 1 April 2016, Greater Manchester took control of £6 billion of public funding for health and social care as devolution officially began. The region had undertaken extensive preparations to become the first in the country to achieve devolution, through the transfer of certain powers and responsibilities from national government.

A total of 37 different health and social care organisations began working together in 'shadow form' throughout 2015 and agreed a five-year strategic plan. Acute providers (including specialised services), primary care, community and mental health services, social care, public health, politicians, councillors are all involved. They have been working in partnership to look to the broader health of the local population and the impact of the wider determinants of health by combining their resources to enable place based approaches. In doing so, they have recognised that only by considering all of the elements that influence health (e.g. housing, education, employment etc.) can inequalities in health and wellbeing be properly addressed.

Governors from Stockport NHS Foundation Trust were informed and involved in these momentous developments from the start. The trust's own five-year strategy and Stockport partnership plans had to be totally aligned to the Greater Manchester strategic plan. A number of different methods were used to fully engage and inform the governors. Governors were kept updated through all the established 'business as usual' channels, as well as additional briefings. These included regular one-to-ones meetings between the chairman and lead governor. They also included devolution updates as a regular feature at the council of governor meetings, governance committee meetings and also board meetings which are attended by governors. These formed part of updates and discussions on strategic developments for the trust. The governors were also emailed the monthly staff team briefings and weekly media updates which included key headlines about Greater Manchester devolution and plans. Media announcements and information from the central Greater Manchester team, who were producing a full suite of communications materials, were also shared.

People however should be realistic about the benefits devolution can bring. Any savings will take time to deliver and require significant upfront investment. Greater Manchester for example is to receive £450 million in additional transformation funding to support developments to the system, outlined in December when the five-year vision for services across Greater Manchester was revealed, underpinned by four key long-term goals:

- 1 Creating a transformed health and social care system which helps many more people stay independent and well and takes better care of those who are ill.
- 2 Aligning the health and social care system far more closely with the wider work around education, skills, work and housing – to spend £22 billion effectively.
- 3 Creating a financially balanced and financially sustainable health and social care system – to spend our £6billion effectively and spend no more than that.
- 4 Making sure all the changes needed to do this are done safely so the NHS and social care continues to support the people of Greater Manchester during the next five years.

These priorities are underway and will be shaped in the coming months as participants respond to what local people want; using their experience and expertise to help change the way the region spends the money.

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