

Lancashire Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board - Update on Public Health Transition

From April 2013, responsibility for public health will transfer from the NHS to upper tier local authorities who will be funded by a ring-fenced public health grant to deliver a new duty to take steps to improve the health of the population.

An estimated baseline for the public health grant has been published by the Department of Health and is based on public health spending during 2010/11. The estimated baseline for Lancashire is £45,891,000 which equates to £37 per person. The DOH are currently developing A needs-based allocation formula for the public health ring-fenced grant is currently under development and is expected to be published for consultation after the local elections with a fin allocation formula published along with the actual allocations in December 2012.

While local authority based public health services will be largely free to determine their own priorities and services, they will be required to provide the following mandatory services:

- Appropriate access to sexual health services
- NHS Health Check assessment
- Steps to protect the health of the population
- Weighing and measuring children for the National Child Measurement Programme, and
- Providing public health advice to NHS commissioners

In Lancashire, governance of the public health transition is provided by the Public health Lancashire Steering Group which is chaired by Richard Jones and includes membership from the County Council, a District Council, NHS Lancashire, the Health Protection Agency and the Strategic Health Authority. The three Lancashire Directors of Public Health are key members of the steering group.

In February 2012 a formal consultation was launched on 'Delivering the public health reforms in Lancashire'. This set out: proposals for the functions to be undertaken by the local public health service within Lancashire County Council, including the mandatory services above; a timetable for the implementation of the public health reforms; and a draft Human Resources Framework. The consultation closed on the 22 March 2012. A paper setting out proposals in response to the consultation and a process and timescale for developing a structure for the public health workforce is being considered by the County Council's Management Team and NHS Lancashire Executive Team. It proposes that shadow arrangements are put in place from the end of October 2012.

The Director of Public Health in the County Council will have chief officer status and within Lancashire County Council it has been agreed that the DPH will be an Executive Director reporting to the Chief Executive. Recruitment to the Lancashire DPH post is underway and it is hoped that interviews will take place no later than the end of June.

A Public Health Transition Plan for 2012/13 has been developed which sets out the action that is needed to ensure the safe transition of public health to the county council on 1 April 2012. It outlines six objectives:

1. To ensure effective public health leadership during the transition and beyond
2. To ensure the effective delivery of public health programmes through the transition and beyond
3. To co-design a public health service within Lancashire County Council; build relationships between LCC and public health staff
4. To manage the transfer of NHS public health staff to Lancashire County Council
5. To develop and implement a Business Transfer Agreement to guide the transfer of public health responsibility to Lancashire County Council
6. To ensure the effective transfer of financial and physical assets from the NHS to Lancashire County Council

The Public Health Transition Plan plan was approved in March 2012 by the executive teams of the County Council and NHS Lancashire. It has been reviewed by the Strategic Health Authority with positive feedback about the progress made. Approval of the plan by the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing is anticipated in June 2012.