

Housing, Health and Care – the Integration Agenda

There was a time when housing, health and social care organisations could each focus on their own core sectors and get on with their business. Not anymore. Integration, collaboration and joint venturing are not only increasingly important but are necessary as commissioners look to carry out their joint strategic needs assessments and implement their joint health and wellbeing strategies. If housing providers do not overcome the problem of silo working or lack innovation in a rapidly changing legislative and financial context then their ability to expand and develop their business will be significantly curtailed.

The NHS Act 2006 as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires health commissioners to not only secure that health services are provided in an integrated way but also that health services are integrated with the provision of health-related services and social care services where this would improve the quality of health services, including outcomes, and reduce inequalities. Clearly the whole issue of housing, as one of those key aspects of the wider determinants of health, is crucial to the question of health outcomes and reducing inequalities and so housing providers need to engage with health and social care commissioners about their goals, objectives, assessments and plans.

Importantly, a tranche of health funding has been specifically identified to be used on this integration agenda with £1.1 billion being made available in 2014/15 and £3.8 billion in 2015/16. This is the “Better Care Funding” (previously the Integration Transformation Fund). Essentially the fund needs to be used to support adult social care services which also has a health benefit and Councils need to agree with their local health partners how this should be spent and the outcomes expected. Health and Wellbeing Boards are the natural place for these discussions to take place and so again housing providers need to make the necessary efforts to be involved in these meetings and to give the benefit of their experience and help commissioners to ensure that housing needs are taken properly into account in their decision-making.

How Capsticks can help.

Capsticks is fully involved with the integration agenda and we understand how health and social care commissioners operate and what they are trying to do and therefore we can help and advise housing providers on how best to engage with this process. Procurement, competition, reconfiguration of services, consultation requirements and structuring contractual arrangements will all feature in commissioner deliberations and we can make sure that in so doing you are not left behind. We have been involved in integration projects and are experienced in understanding what all the key legal issues are and so we can help you develop a “road-map” for you to help you chart your way through your project. Also as part of any project you may need to look at how best to structure yourself to provide services, particularly if you are joint-venturing with other organisations and we can advise on memorandums of understanding, joint-venture agreements, prime-provider arrangements and sub-contracts. We can also advise on new corporate structures like social enterprises and mutuals including how to establish and set up for operation organisations such as Community Interest Companies and Community Benefit Societies.

Integration is an agenda that is not going to go away and you need to get up to speed and get involved. Capsticks can help you do that.



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