Healthier Wigan
NHS SBS Helps Transform Mental Health Services For Local Healthcare System

Serving 320,000 residents as part of the Healthier Wigan partnership, NHS Wigan Borough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) helps integrate health and care services to benefit local people. To support its successful recommissioning of mental health services, the CCG turned to NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) to help manage the complex procurement and commercial process.

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Julie Crossley, Director of Commissioning and Transformation, NHS Wigan Borough CCG
The challenge
Healthier Wigan is a partnership between the local NHS and council, alongside GPs, voluntary organisations and community groups, bringing together a talented health and care workforce to combine skills and experience.

With a reorganisation of mental health services needed across the region, NHS Wigan Borough CCG brought the NHS SBS specialist Healthcare Improvement Solutions team on board to support the partnership through the process of recommissioning.

To add to the challenge, the complex procurement process would need to be undertaken remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The solution
NHS SBS began by bringing all stakeholders together to outline the various high level options and develop a roadmap for the project, including the necessary governance frameworks and specification for the new service.

In parallel, a senior procurement and transformation lead from NHS SBS – with specific experience and specialist expertise – helped guide Healthier Wigan through the recommended options and processes.

NHS SBS also helped establish decision making principles and ensured that all risk factors were considered, including a specific focus on being fully compliant with, and navigating through, the relevant procurement regulations.

Despite the challenges of remote working, NHS SBS carefully managed the process from start to finish, involving key partners and including patient representation to foster a strong culture of collaborative working and co-production.

This included developing a new outcome-focused service specification to act as a key enabler for the future transformation of mental health services in Wigan.

The NHS SBS team made a vital contribution to ensuring that key partners and stakeholders were informed and supportive of the approach and final decision. This included:

- Arranging one-to-one sessions with clinical leads and others from the Clinical Reference Group (CRG) to drive transparency of expectations and build collaboration
- Facilitating workshops to define the key outcomes to be set out in the new service specification for mental health services
- Assisting in the development of papers for the Integrated Commissioning Committee (ICC), which makes decisions on the joint budget of Wigan Council and NHS Wigan Borough CCG
The result

Following the careful and collaborative procurement process, local mental health services in Wigan were formally transferred to The Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust as the new provider.

Today, Healthier Wigan is further transforming its high-quality mental health service provision through a new style of working – benefitting patients and professionals alike. Crucially, this supports flexibility, allowing services to evolve over time based on the needs of local people and NHS priorities.

The co-designed, outcomes-based service specification has provided new shared currency to progress from a purchaser-provider, transactional relationship, to a collaborative partnership approach that is aligned to the new system-led way of working.

Julie Crossley, Director of Commissioning and Transformation at NHS Wigan Borough CCG, said:

“We felt reassured to have NHS SBS working with us all the way through, providing consistency and continuity.

“Strong collaborative working and co-production has resulted in a new, open-book approach between us and our new provider. We have developed real trust and assurance throughout this process.

“This approach was completely different to anything we have done before and it has set a precedent moving forward. Everyone liked the way the process was managed and we now plan to use a similar method for the review and recommissioning of future community services.

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Prof Craig Harris, Accountable Officer at NHS Wigan Borough CCG, said:

“This work with NHS SBS has laid a foundation for new ways of whole system, outcomes-focused working in the local area, bringing together partners, stakeholders and residents with a shared vision and focused priorities to enable us to transform mental health services for the future.

“We have been extremely impressed by the support from NHS SBS and they were a fully integrated part of Team Wigan. We will be using our newly adopted outcome specification approach with other services we are reviewing, as we felt that the innovation and improvement methodology approach is exactly the direction of travel our system wants to accelerate towards.

“We would have no hesitation in recommending and endorsing the NHS SBS team – a huge thanks and a massive well done to all involved.”