



Title of report: Health and Wellbeing Board development work

Meeting: Health and Wellbeing Board

Meeting date: Monday 18 May 2026

Report by: Director of Public Health

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards)

Purpose

The Local Government Association (LGA) provides tailored support to leadership for health and care through the Partners in Care and Health Programme (ADASS & LGA), which is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and provided free of charge to councils. Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Board invited the LGA in to review ways of working at the board through conducting one-to-one interviews with system leaders and a board workshop in February 2026. This report captures a high-level summary from this work.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The Health and Wellbeing Board note the findings of the LGA facilitated work with the HWB; and**
- b) **Agree next steps for the board development work.**

Alternative options

1. To do nothing. This would not support improving the work of the HWB.

Key considerations

2. In March 2026, the UK government published a new Neighbourhood Health Framework, positioning Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) as central to the delivery of community-based health services. This sets out how HWBs are responsible for shaping Neighbourhood Health Plans that align with their Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
3. In anticipation of the publication of the Neighbourhood Health Framework, the HWB recognised the importance of reviewing ways of working as a board.
4. The LGA provides tailored support to leadership for health and care through the Partners in Care and Health Programme (ADASS & LGA), which is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and provided free of charge to councils. Herefordshire HWB invited the LGA to undertake a review of the board through conducting one-to-one interviews with a sample of board members, followed by a development session workshop in February 2026.
5. The purpose of this work is to ensure that the Herefordshire HWB remains an effective and influential strategic partnership — one that provides democratic legitimacy, aligns system priorities with community needs, drives collective action on the wider determinants and is well positioned to shape local neighbourhood health plans.
6. The workshop contained a mixture of presentations and interactive exercises to meet the workshop objectives. These included:
 - Sharing best practice and top tips from other Health and Wellbeing Boards across England
 - Supporting the HWB to explore and gain clarity on the role of the board as a strategic partnership, with clarity on statutory role as well as its specific added value
 - Providing clarity on the role and purpose of the HWB in relation to the wider determinants of health and neighbourhood health within the local and strategic context
 - Test the potential for different ways of working based on examples of what works and learning from elsewhere.
 - Explore shared priority areas for action.
7. The LGA outlined what good looks like for a modern Health and Wellbeing Board:
 - A clear and purposeful strategic partnership with shared ownership of priorities and outcomes.
 - A strategic, inclusive, and action-oriented forum aligning NHS, local government, and community ambitions.
 - A body that champions community voice, uses evidence to drive decisions, and delivers visible improvements in wellbeing.
 - A clear accountability for delivering on priorities.

Similar aspirations were highlighted during one-to-one interviews with members of the HWB.
8. The development workshop involved discussions on how the HWB should focus on broader upstream population health approaches and clearly define its role within the partnership arena.
9. Below summarises the key themes and suggestions from the workshop of principles for ways of working for the HWB:
 - a) ***Strong connections from leadership to organisations*** – strengthening how board members take actions back into their respective organisations

- b) **Strategic deep dives** – providing an opportunity to explore an aspect of a priority in more detail and understand where the HWB is required in order to achieve greater system impact
 - c) **Focus on where the HWB can have the most impact** – recognising the wide range of system partnership focusing on specific areas of health and wellbeing, so utilising the HWB to really focus on where it can provide a new perspective
 - d) **Ensuring a clear interface between HWB & One Herefordshire Health and Care Partnership Board**
 - e) **Focus on truly system wide, population health and wellbeing issues** – Avoiding agenda items which require a single agency response. Ensuring HWB agenda items are not purely for information but provide the opportunity for multiagency discussion and cross organisational responsibility
 - f) **Addressing health inequalities** – this should be evident through all agenda items for the HWB
 - g) **A commitment to workshop development sessions** – recognising the value of development session and ensuring there are at least two of these each year
 - h) **A commitment to in-person meetings**
 - i) **Ensuring that lived experience is heard by the HWB to inform decisions**
 - j) **Allowing time for meaningful HWB discussion** – ensuring fewer agenda items, with brief papers or presentations and allowing ample time for discussion and decisions
 - k) **Prevention focused** – looking across the whole spectrum of prevention but always considering how we focus further upstream
 - l) **Sponsor to be identified for each priority** - strengthening HWB member responsibilities and accountability.
10. During the development session, there was also consideration to refining the role of the HWB in terms of whether it is driving, sponsoring or observing:
- **Drive:** these are the core priorities that the HWB actively leads and invests its energy in. Limited to two or three strategic issues, these are the areas where the board sets direction, coordinates action and tracks delivery. Driving means the HWB is directly involved in shaping outcomes, aligning partners and monitoring progress. These priorities define the board's identity and focus.
 - **Sponsor:** these are important areas where the HWB holds a level of strategic oversight or assurance, but the delivery is led elsewhere - often by other partnerships or groups. The HWB may be required to endorse decisions, receive updates or provide authority, but it does not manage day-to-day operations. Reporting is light-touch, typically limited to annual summaries or escalations when strategic input is needed.
 - **Observe:** these are relevant but peripheral issues that the HWB acknowledges but does not actively engage with unless there is a significant concern. These areas are managed entirely by other bodies and the board does not require routine updates. Observation is passive unless performance deteriorates to a level that demands strategic intervention.

11. Next steps:

- Refine and agree the principles for ways of working
- Further develop each of these principles
- Develop a schedule of workshop development sessions with the recommendation to start with a workshop in September focusing on how lived experience is heard by the HWB

Community impact

12. A well-functioning Health and Wellbeing Board will have a positive impact on communities by improving the health and wellbeing of Herefordshire residents.

Environmental impact

13. Whilst this is a report concerning the Health and Wellbeing Board ways of working and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

14. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies. The initial equality impact screening checklist indicates a minimal impact at this stage because this report concerns the HWB ways of working rather than direct service change.

Resource implications

15. The board improvement process requires the time of Health and Wellbeing Board members to engage with the findings of the previous LGA run workshop in February 2026 and attend next workshops. The LGA facilitation is offered free to the Council.

Legal implications

16. The functions of the Health and Wellbeing Board are set out in paragraph 3.5.25 of the Council's constitution.

Risk management

17. None identified

Consultees

18. None identified

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report

ADASS - Association of Directors of Adult Social Services
DHSC - Department of Health and Social Care
HWB – Health and Wellbeing Board
LGA - Local Government Association