The Quick Guide to

Health Devolution – London

In 2015, London Boroughs came together with the Mayor of London, HM Treasury and the Departments of Health and Communities and Local Government to sign a Health and Care Devolution Agreement, committing to work towards a final devolution settlement.

Local, London and national partners have since worked together to examine transfer of powers, decision and resources to a more local level. Five London pilots explored different spatial and focus areas of how devolution could work for health and social care. Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge (BHR) were chosen as a pilot for Integration and development of an Accountable Care Organisation.

Following the work of the pilots, the London ‘Health and Care Devolution Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)’ was signed by the Mayor of London, Health Secretary and other health leaders on the 16 November 2017. This provides London boroughs with a number of opportunities around integration and reform of health and care services, and a transfer of greater control for health services to local areas.

The agreement is quite general and in effect, is a suite of powers that can be ‘called down’ to local areas as and when they reach a point where they are needed. The key areas include:

Capital and estates – (though the London Estates Board)
Delivery of a clearer vision and decision-making structures for the timely management of the NHS estate in London. This will review investments required and that can be made available to deliver services such as through re-investing funds from estate sales back into London.

Workforce and skills – (through the London Workforce Board)
New models of care require roles that can cross-cut boundaries and organisations. Contracts, professional requirements and pay scale all need to be joined up. Issues around recruitment and retention will be reviewed to forge improvements particularly in social care, primary care and mental health.

Prevention – (through the London Prevention Board)
Preventing ill health by tackling major causes of illness early. Key areas include: obesity, creating healthier environments and forging links between good health and employment.

Integration - Commissioning and Regulation
There are opportunities for joint commissioning of primary medical services and options for some specialised service. The approach to regulation requires change to reflect more integrated working such as through the delivery of more streamlines guidance, rules and regulations ensuring it is easier for organisations to work better together.

The London Health Board and the London Health and Care Strategic Partnership Board provides pan-London governance to the devolution agenda.