
Health Scrutiny Committee

5th January 2009

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Annual Health Check 2008/2009

Summary

1. This report asks Members of the Committee to consider how they wish to respond to the Healthcare Commission's request for comments on the Annual Health Check 2008/2009.

Background

2. The Healthcare Commission is an independent body, which is responsible for assessing and reporting on the performance of NHS and other health care organisations.
3. The Annual Health Check is the system that the Healthcare Commission uses to assess the performance of all NHS trusts and a few other types of organisation in the NHS in England. In 2008/2009 it will be assessing:
 - Acute Trusts (including Foundation Trusts)
 - Ambulance Trusts
 - Mental Health Trusts (including Foundation Trusts)
 - Learning Disability Trusts
 - Primary Care Trusts (both as providers and commissioners of care)
 - Care Trusts
 - The Health Protection Agency
 - NHS Direct
 - NHS Blood & Transplant
4. The Healthcare Commission has a statutory duty to publish an annual rating of performance for each organisation. This is done in two parts. The first is a score for quality of services. For most organisations, this is in two parts: an assessment of compliance with core standards set by the Department of Health, on whether requirements have been met, and an assessment based on indicators. The core standards set out the basic standards of healthcare that patients can expect to receive. They cover areas of real importance to patients

such as the safety and quality of care and the accessibility of services. The indicators are based on a set of 'vital signs' that are published by the Department of Health to provide a national framework of priority issues within which local services are to be planned and provided.

5. In 2008/2009, a score on the quality of financial management, derived from work done by the Audit Commission for non-Foundation Trusts and Monitor for Foundation Trusts, will form the second part of the rating. This replaces the 'use of resources' score in previous years.
6. To demonstrate achievement of the core standards NHS Trust boards are required to make a self-assessment and a public declaration on the extent to which they consider that they have met the standards. These declarations can be supplemented by third party comments from partners in the community such as Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These are considered to be important as they substantiate the self-assessments and ensure that different perspectives are included in the returns.
7. The Annual Health Check will now separately assess Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in their roles as commissioners and providers of services. A document entitled 'The Annual Health Check 2008/09 – Assessing and Rating the NHS' is attached at Annex A to this report. This gives an overview of what the Annual Health Check is about. It also highlights changes that have been made to the Check since 2007/2008. Further information can be found on the Healthcare Commission website which will be updated as and when further information is available:

<http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk>

8. A provisional timetable provided by the Healthcare Commission is attached at Annex B to this report. The Committee will need to be mindful of preparing their comments in good time for them to be included with the Trusts' declarations. Under the current provisional timetable Trusts must submit their declarations to the Healthcare Commission between 15th and 30th April 2009. Representatives of the Trusts have been invited to this meeting to advise Members of their own timetables for producing their declarations.

Consultation

9. The Health Scrutiny Committee will need to undertake extensive consultation with the three Trusts in order to formulate their comments.
10. Overview and Scrutiny Committees can provide important feedback to the Healthcare Commission on behalf of their communities and elected Members can help develop understanding as to how the Trusts are performing. Third party commentaries help the Commission to ensure that Trusts are putting patients and the public at the heart of everything they do.
11. Patients and the public want to be involved in decisions about health and healthcare. Core Standard C17 requires that Trusts take the view of patients,

their carers and others into account in designing, planning, delivering and improving healthcare services.

12. In 2008/2009 the Annual Health Check will gather the views and experiences of patients and the public through (amongst others):
 - The new Local Involvement Networks (LINks)
 - Commentaries received from Overview & Scrutiny Committees and the boards of governors of Foundation Trusts.

Options

13. Members should consider:
 - Whether they wish to contribute to the Annual Health Check of the three NHS Trusts
 - If so; then to consider delegating the preparation of their commentaries to the Chair and one other representative of the Committee in conjunction with the Scrutiny Officer.

Analysis

14. Evidence based information about how patients and the public are experiencing NHS services forms a valuable contribution to the Trusts' self-assessment. Overview and Scrutiny Committees are invited to comment because the Healthcare Commission recognises that information collected in Scrutiny reviews and through discussions between Health Scrutiny Committees and NHS Trusts can provide a patient and public experience that cannot be collected from anywhere else.

Corporate Priorities

15. This relates to the following Corporate Priority:

'Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.'

Implications

16. There are no known Financial, Human Resources (HR), Equalities, Legal, Crime & Disorder, IT or other implications

Risk Management

17. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no known risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

18. Members are asked to consider:

- Creating a commentary on the declarations of any of the NHS Trusts that they feel appropriate and to delegate this responsibility to the Chair and one other representative of the Committee in conjunction with the Scrutiny Officer.

Reason: To enable the Health Scrutiny Committee to carry out their duty to promote the health needs of the people they represent.

Contact Details

Author:

Tracy Wallis
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services
Tel: 01904 551714

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Quentin Baker
Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services
Tel: 01904 551004

Report Approved Date 18.12.2008

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A The Annual Health Check 2008/09 – Assessing and Rating the NHS
Annex B Provisional Timetable provided by the Healthcare Commission