
Scrutiny Management Committee

23rd February 2009

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services

Update on the Work of Health Scrutiny Committee

Summary

1. This report presents a summary of the work undertaken by Health Scrutiny Committee since November 2008.

Background

2. The Health Scrutiny Committee was formed in May 2006 to carry out the statutory health scrutiny function, which was previously under the remit of the Social Services and Health Scrutiny Board.

Consultation

3. Since November 2008 the Committee have been working on the following topics:

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

4. LINKs are the independent, formally constituted bodies that have now replaced the Patient and Public Involvement Forums previously attached to all NHS Trusts. LINKs differ from previous systems as they are based on broad networks rather than on small specialist groups, involving representatives from organisations as well as individuals, and addressing issues across health and social care rather than focussing on individual organisations or services.
5. Since the last update to SMC governance arrangements for the LINK have been identified and agreed. Protocols covering complaints, membership, standards of conduct and expenses have also been established. Work is currently being undertaken on profiling of the local community, its health needs and current service provision. Work has been undertaken to look at how the LINK will complement existing networks and partnerships and identify hard to reach groups.
6. As it begins to build its own work plan, consultation between the LINK, the Health Scrutiny Committee and other strategic partnerships in the city is key. Following on from the LINKs workshop in November 2008, representatives of the Health Scrutiny Committee, City of York Council, LINK and Healthy City Board met in January 2009 to discuss these matters further. It was agreed that

the guidelines for each constituent player were not yet completely clear and that further joint work planning was necessary.

7. Feasibility studies are presently conducted to gather information on newly registered scrutiny topics. This study is then presented to the Health Scrutiny Committee to enable them to make an informed decision on whether a scrutiny review should go ahead or not. In the immediate future it was suggested that the LINK could act as a consultee, and feed information into the feasibility studies via the Scrutiny Officer. Negotiations regarding the possibility of implementing this are still ongoing.
8. The LINK is due to have its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 26th March 2009 when a formal steering group will be established.

Annual Health Check

9. The Annual Health Check is the system that the Healthcare Commission used to assess the performance of various NHS Trusts. In York this relates to the York Hospitals Foundation Trust, The Yorkshire Ambulance Service and North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust. For the first time the Annual Health Check will separately assess Primary Care Trusts in their roles as commissioners and providers of services.
10. Members of the Health Scrutiny Committee have agreed to submit commentaries on the three Trusts' declarations and this will be done in liaison with all the relevant Trusts in time for the submission deadline of 30th April 2009.

Quarterly Updates on Dental Provision

11. The Health Scrutiny Committee has a keen interest in dental provision within the York area. Following on from previous discussions with NYYPCT the Committee has now received its first update on the new style reporting template. There was still work to be done regarding how the information should be presented, especially in terms of illustrating trends and the geographical split of the information. Members have requested that the NYYPCT report back to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

Dementia Review

12. This has now been signed off by all the appropriate bodies and the Scrutiny Officer will shortly be circulating the report to all parties involved as well as those bodies suggested by SMC and the Executive.

Feasibility Studies

13. Since the last report back to SMC the Health Scrutiny Committee have received three feasibility reports on newly registered scrutiny topics. The Committee decided not to go ahead with these for the following reasons:

Outreach Workers

14. This topic was registered by Councillor James Alexander and concerned the scrutiny of the availability, funding and uniform distribution of access to outreach workers. The Committee decided not to proceed with the review at the present time but asked the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services to provide an update report at a later date detailing the outcome of discussions with stakeholders, representative agencies and providers about the commissioning of services and partnership working. On receipt of this report the Committee would then look at whether it was feasible to proceed with the topic.

Access to Dental Services

15. This topic was registered by Councillor Richard Moore and concerned access to dental services in York. The Committee decided to defer this topic until a further quarterly update on dental provision had been received from NYYPCT. At the meeting where this topic was discussed it came to light that the LINK may also put this on their work plan and in order not to duplicate work it was decided to wait until after their AGM in March 2009. Representatives of NYYPCT also informed the Committee that North Yorkshire County Council might well undertake some work in this area in summer 2009. Possibilities of running a joint scrutiny review would need to be explored. Some information on the system of 'Units of Dental Activity' was also requested, especially in relation to how Doncaster PCT implemented this.

Alcohol Reduction Strategy

16. This topic was registered by Councillor Susan Galloway and concerned the performance and value for money of the NYYPCT's alcohol treatment services, particularly in relation to the hospital admissions. After due consideration of all the evidence before them Members decided to request a briefing note from NYYPCT providing further information before making a decision on whether to proceed with this topic or not.

Other

17. Outside and informal events are a large part of Health Scrutiny. Various Members of the Committee and the Scrutiny Officer attend related external events wherever possible. The Committee now receive a quarterly information report outlining these. Events attended since the last report to SMC include a Members visit to York Hospital, a Scrutinising Health Inequalities Event and a half-day training on the Darzi Report.

General Work Planning

18. The Health Scrutiny Committee has an ongoing work plan, which is attached, at Annex A to this report. This is a fluid, working document and constantly changes to reflect the upcoming issues to be determined at future Committee meetings.

Options

19. This report is for information only.

Analysis

20. This report is for information only

Corporate Values

21. This report is relevant to the following Corporate Value:

'Encouraging improvement in everything we do'

Implications

22. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime & Disorder, IT or other implications associated with this report.

Risk Management

23. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

24. Members are asked to note the report.

Reason: To inform Scrutiny Management Committee of the work and progress of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

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Report Approved



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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A – Copy of the Current Work Plan for the Health Scrutiny Committee