
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Work Programme 2015/16

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2015/16 and possible review topics, the work programme is a rolling work programme and items can be added as necessary.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valley CQC Inspection

3. A representative of TEWV Mental Health Foundation Trust informed Members that the results of the CQC Inspection held at the end of January were now available. Members considered a document which summarised the results, service areas/domains and the rating scales allocated to each service. The overall rating for TEWV was good with positive feedback being received and many examples of good practice, care and patience to service users.
4. It was reported that changes had been made where issues had been raised. Members commended the Trust on the results of the Inspection.

Winter Planning and Preparedness

5. Scrutiny received a Presentation from Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on Winter Planning and Preparedness which detailed how winter pressures were managed across the region, the problems encountered, actions taken and the effectiveness of those actions and the lessons learned for the coming winter.
6. Members were informed that it was a challenge to target funds appropriately as winter planning is an all year issue and not just for the winter months.
7. Among the problems highlighted were levels of attendance at A&E both ambulant and by ambulance transfer, increased number of patients with complex needs requiring a longer length of stay and delays in both ambulance hand over and discharge of patients.
8. Actions taken in the short term included effective communication between partners and importantly increased numbers of clinicians supporting 111 call handlers.
9. Longer term actions included NEAS clinical liaison officers helping to co-ordinate ambulance handovers at A&E, review of bed provision to support the Rapid

Enhanced Assessment Clinical Team (REACT) and evaluation of winter monies to ensure money is targeted where the system benefitted most.

10. Members welcomed the multi-partnership Systems Resilience Group, the work being undertaken by the Better Care Fund, Community Matrons and the Multi-Disciplinary Team and Prime Ministers Challenge Fund projects to care for people at home to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

Infrastructure Review

11. The Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Review Group to consider the performance of those organisations receiving Strategic Grants from the Council. This led to an examination of current infrastructure to the Voluntary Sector in Darlington.
12. An independent consultant's review was commissioned and an action plan developed to enable the existing infrastructure support organisation to move towards an alternative delivery plan over a period of six months. The Council has worked with Evolution over the past six months to support delivery of this plan.
13. Members agreed that the importance of ongoing support to work with the voluntary sector is crucial if Darlington is going to be able to support the most vulnerable in society. It is also important for provision of arts, culture, heritage and green spaces and the activities that add value to our lives.
14. Scrutiny verified the need for the voluntary and public sectors to work together to provide this support and welcomed the proposals to develop financial support with the sector in the next couple of months.

Performance Management Quarter 4

15. Members received a further presentation from the Head of Organisational Planning on the Performance Management Framework which included statistical data around the key performance indicators that were relevant to this Scrutiny Committee. Members were advised that indicators would, in future, reflect the new Ward boundaries.
16. Members were concerned to learn that life expectancy in the north east had decreased for the first time in ten years and to date no evidence has been presented to indicate the reasons why but Members hope that this will be researched as a matter of urgency.
17. We were pleased to note the reduced rate of mortality from preventable causes which was due to the good health care provided by Darlington health partners and we noted that smoking prevalence was declining with Darlington mirroring England.
18. Individual Scrutiny Committees will continue to receive relevant performance management information on a six-monthly basis and we will continue to monitor the

overall picture.

Members' Toolkit

19. As Members may be aware, a Members' Toolkit is currently being developed to assist Members in their community roles. The next stage in its development is to consult with Members to ascertain their views and a working party is being established, comprising a mix of Scrutiny, Cabinet, new, existing and rural Members. We have appointed Councillor J Taylor, Vice-Chair, to represent Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

Breast Clinic

20. Members expressed their concerns to the representative of County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust on the further delay on the implementation of the plan to install new equipment in the Darlington Memorial Hospital to reopen the Breast Clinic. We were originally told the Breast Clinic would be open and operational in April. It was then reported by the Trust that it would be up and running by July. It is now likely to be autumn.
21. Members asked that they be kept informed of progress and stressed the importance of communicating with patients on developments.

Councillor Wendy Newall
Chair of the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee