
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.

Perfect Week Darlington Memorial Hospital

3. Scrutiny received a presentation from County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust on Perfect Week, part of a whole systems approach to transforming emergency care.
4. Members were informed that the aims of the Trust were to deliver the best possible care across the whole patient pathway; right care first time, every time, to improve the experience of patients and staff; better collaboration and team working; working smarter and leaner; and shared learning, working together for sustainable improvements.
5. Perfect Week provided a system overview at both Durham and Darlington acute sites and community hospitals with over 825 issues being raised and resolved in real time, over 200 volunteers completing over 400 shifts as a Liaison Officer, over 700 staff and patient surveys being completed, 40 different clinical areas in scope; and 15 different external partners including Clinical Commissioning Groups, local authorities and Ambulance Services.
6. The top three issues were highlighted as medical/speciality review, availability of beds and access to diagnostics/results. Members were concerned that the early discharge rate and weekend discharge rates were lower than expected highlighting that more pro-active discharge planning and greater use of discharge lounge and criteria-led discharges were still required. Members hoped that these issues would be addressed and the targets in the Trusts Quality Accounts will be met.
7. Members requested an update on Perfect Week once all data has been fully analysed and a progress report is available.

Mental Health Crisis Concordat

8. Scrutiny also received a presentation from Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys Foundation Trust in relation to progress on the Crisis Care Concordat which was launched in October 2014 to develop joined up service responses to people in crisis.
9. Members were provided with progress within each of the five objectives of commissioning to allow earlier intervention and responsive crisis services, access to support before crisis, urgent and emergency access to crisis care, quality of treatment and care when in crisis, and recovery and staying well/preventing future crisis.
10. The Committee was pleased to note progress to date and will continue to monitor the service.

Better Health Programme

11. A further presentation was received from North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) in relation the Better Health Programme (BHP), a programme of clinically led work that considers the future of health services in Darlington, Durham and Tees.
12. The key challenges are the changing health needs of local people; meeting recommended clinical standards; availability of highly trained and skilled staff; high quality seven-day services; providing care closer to home; and making the best use of money.
13. Members were informed that people are living longer and have different conditions and health needs, some conditions have become major challenges with more people having long-term health conditions and needing support and management, often for many years.
14. Nationally there is a shortage of doctors and locally Trusts have struggled to recruit to consultant posts, there are pressures on the availability of nurses and GP practices also have difficulties in recruiting doctors to meet the needs of local people.
15. Over 100 clinicians were asked to consider what the best possible care would look like for patients across Darlington, Durham and Tees at the hospital services of Acute Medicine, Acute Surgery, Accident and Emergency, Critical Care, Acute Paediatrics, Maternity and Neonatology (services for very small babies) and Interventional Radiology as well as care outside of hospital including services and support which would help reduce the number of people who required hospital care, and help people maintain independent lives in their homes or normal places of residence.
16. Members will continue to receive regular updates and briefings.

Obesity Strategy

17. We considered a report providing an overview of obesity in Darlington together with national evidence in relation to tackling obesity, including the Sugar Reduction report.
18. Members were advised that obesity is a major public health challenge and risk to the health and wellbeing of the population both now and in future years. Tackling obesity will have substantial and far reaching health benefits.
19. Darlington is working at a local and regional level to tackle obesity, in line with national guidance, and is taking a 'whole systems approach' by working together with partners to address the obesogenic environment which encourages people to eat unhealthily and do not undertake enough physical activity
20. Members noted that sugar is a significant contributory factor in the intake of excess calories in children and adults and as such, sugar reduction must be considered as part of the package of measures taken to tackle obesity.
21. Directors of Public Health and local authority obesity leads have begun discussions about opportunities for local action and action at a North East level and a range of suggestions include maximising opportunities for sugar reduction in families through health visiting/early years services and across local authority children's services and adopting, implementing and monitoring the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services across Health and Wellbeing Board partners.
22. Members will be undertaking a special Task and Finish Review Group meeting to consider the problem of obesity and, in the light of significant reductions to public spending, how innovative action can be taken to convey forceful messages to the public about the health implications of obesity.
23. The forthcoming national Childhood Obesity Strategy will help inform the collation of the Darlington specific Obesity Strategy which will build on the work of the previous Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Obesity Task and Finish Group.
24. Members participated in an interactive exercise using a Sugar App which advised how much sugar was in certain foods and drinks. We were surprised at how much sugar was in certain foods labelled as healthy and noted that low fat products did not necessarily mean less sugar.

Councillor Wendy Newall
Chair of the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee