

Adults, Well Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17th April 2009

Care Quality Commission Annual Health Check: 2008/09 Declaration



Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose

1. To advise Members of the Adults, Well Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH) of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) annual Health Check Declaration process.
2. To present information received from NHS Trusts in County Durham on their 2008/09 Health Check Declarations for submission to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
3. To advise Members of the Committee of the Care Quality Commission's Core Standards and on issues considered by Health Scrutiny over the past year on which they may wish to comment in relation to the performance of NHS Trusts serving County Durham, as part of the Health Check process.

Background

4. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) was formed on 1 April 2009 from an amalgamation of the Healthcare Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and Mental Health Act Commission. It is now the statutory body responsible for assessing the annual performance of each NHS Trusts and it is in relation to the annual Health Check of NHS Trusts that the committee is receiving this report for comment.
5. The Health Check Core Standards will continue to apply to NHS Trusts and currently there is no similar declaration process for social care providers requiring comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs).

The Annual Health Check and the Declaration process

6. The Annual Health Check assessment process uses a combination of trust self-declarations, cross checking with national data, inspections and performance against government targets including the use of resources as well as third party commentaries.

7. The Health Check represents a major opportunity for OSCs to have an influence on local health services and comments from AWH will be reproduced verbatim in the declaration which they must submit by noon on 1 May 2009 - and will be used by the HCC/CQC to cross-check the veracity of the declarations. Whilst many core standards relate to detailed process, the Department of Health believes the views of OSCs, together with other third party commentaries, are valuable in adding to the evidence base when deciding which bodies will receive a follow-up inspection.
8. Feedback on 2007/08 process indicates that 1,930 comments from third parties were received giving 8,779 specific 'items of information'. These were weighted as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' in relation to their association with a particular standard and the evidence provided. In total 451 (5%) of the items were weighted at 'high', 5,206 (59%) as 'low' and 3,122 as 'medium'.
9. Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) are asked to contribute to the annual health check but it is recognised by CQC that as they are still developing and establishing themselves they may not be in a position to do this. County Durham LINK has indicated that they are at this stage and will not be providing comment this year.
10. NHS Trusts are measured against 24 Core Standards in 7 domains:
 - Safety
 - Clinical & Cost Effectiveness
 - Governance
 - Patient Focus
 - Accessible & Responsive Care
 - Care Environment & Amenities
 - Public Health

Collectively these are seen as the basics of care - see Appendix 1 for a full summary of the Core Standards.
11. Self-assessment by NHS Trusts are submitted to OSCs – they have been judged against whether:
 - Standards have been met without significant lapses
 - Standards for which assurances received make it clear there may have been significant lapses
 - Standards by which a lack of assurances leave the Board unclear as to whether there have been significant lapses.
12. It is for Trust Boards to decide if a lapse is significant and not NHS managers. In coming to a decision, Boards consider the extent of risk to patients, staff and the public and the duration and impact of any lapse.

13. The NHS Trusts will present on their performance in relation to the Core Standards as part of the annual Health Check Declarations to the Adults, Well Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17th April 2008. NHS Trusts will explain how they have reached their assessment of compliance/non-compliance.
14. Any areas of non-compliance could be identified in a future work programme for AWH so that the committee is able to monitor progress and consider the actions taken to address the particular issue.

Health Check Declarations from NHS Trusts for 2008-2009

15. Declarations are made by NHS organisations in relation to the CQC Annual Health Check for the period 1 April to 31 March 2009.
16. Declarations have been received and will be presented to the committee. This information is included in the Appendices as follows:
 - North East Ambulance Service: Appendix 2.
 - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust: Appendix 3.
 - NHS County Durham: Appendix 4.
 - NHS Darlington: Appendix 5. (copy to follow)
 - County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust: Appendix 6. (copy to follow)

Care Quality Commission Core Standards and comments from Scrutiny

17. The CQC does not apply a rigid template for comments but it is suggested Members focus on activity they have been directly involved with, and all comment - whatever core standard it applied to - must be evidenced so that comments accurately reflect experience.
18. Guidance suggests that OSC involvement should provide a 'reality check' on the Trust's assessment and demonstrate links between services and experiences of local people; enable comment on any aspect of the performance of a Trust against any of the Core Standards, however comments can be limited to those areas where reviews have been undertaken or services monitored or where there has been considerable discussion with the Trust.
19. To assist Councillors guidance suggests OSCs focus on the following Core Standards – see Appendix 1:
 - C13 - 16: Information and respect for patients and the complaints system
 - C17: Involvement of patients & the public in planning, delivery and improving services. [This often attracts most comment from contributors].

- C22 - 24: Public health

20. Issues considered by Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee from April 08 to March 09 which Members may wish to consider for comment are attached as Appendix 7.

Recommendation

21. The Adults, Well Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH) are asked to:
- a) Note the process and core standards for the annual Health Check and Declarations.
 - b) Note and comment on the information received from NHS Trusts in County Durham on their 2008/09 Health Check Declarations for submission to the Care Quality Commission.

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