

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee to Promote Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 29 December 2003 at 9.30 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor M Nicholls in the Chair.

Members of the Sub-Committee:

Councillor Barker, Blenkinsopp, Coates, Douthwaite, E Foster, Howarth, E Hunter, G Hunter, O'Donnell, Priestley, Quigley, Rodgers, Stradling and Wright.

Co-opted Members:

Mrs H Gibbon and Mr K Ibbotson.

Other Members:

Councillor Pye.

Observer:

Mr B Ferguson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Armstrong and Cordon.

A1 “MINDING THE GAP” MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION FOR 16-25 YEAR OLDS AND THEIR CARERS

The Sub-Committee considered the report and presentation by the Head of Overview and Scrutiny together with the report of the Mental Health Scrutiny Working Group entitled “Minding the Gap” (Mental Health Provision for 16-25 year olds and their Carers) (for report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

Tom Bolton, Senior Scrutiny Support Officer informed the Sub-Committee that a Working Group which had been considering Mental Health provision for 16-25 year olds had produced the attached report “Minding the Gap” for consideration by the Sub-Committee. He continued by highlighting the following during the presentation:

- (i) Terms of reference
- (ii) Structure of report
- (iii) Recommendations – Themes
 - Early identification and intervention
 - Really considering young people’s needs
 - A greater role for young people
 - More education about mental health issues
 - More support for looked after children
 - More joined up delivery of service
 - Improved support through funding/training
 - Better assistance for carers
 - Review

He then identified by various issues in relation to the above main themes.

Councillor Nicholls, Chairman of the Sub-Committee, congratulated the Chairman of the Working Group, members and officers on the quality of the report.

Councillor Stradling continued by commenting that the report was an excellent and should be classed as a flagship project of the authority. He also suggested that the report should be submitted to the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee for consideration at a future meeting.

Councillor Mrs Howarth made reference to the review stage and the preparation of a draft action plan to assist the Executive and emphasised that review is an essential part of the process and highlighted the need for members to be involved in the preparation of the action plan.

Tom Bolton, Senior Scrutiny Support Officer, informed members that once the recommendations contained in the report have been agreed then work will commence on the development of the action plan which will then be submitted to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Ferguson, Labour Party observer, commented that the report carried on the work previously undertaken by the Community Health Councils and suggested that the Working Group should liaise with the Health Commission in relation to the findings contained in the report.

Frank Whitelock, Operations Manager, Children Services, informed the Sub-Committee that the Commissioning Group have recently agreed the provision of a Mental Health Service for 16-18 year old teenagers with the recruitment of a project manager taking place shortly. In addition the Group is looking for a child psychiatrist to lead the project with an appointment hopefully taking place during May 2004.

Tom Bolton, Senior Scrutiny Support Officer commented that engagement will take place with the Health Trusts concerning the formulation of the Development Plan which will then be also forwarded for consideration to the Executive. It is intended that Durham will host a seminar to discuss the content of the report.

Resolved:-

That the report of the Mental Health Scrutiny Working Group be approved for submission to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.