

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee (JHOSC)

7 April 2008



Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check: 2007/08 Declaration

Report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny

Purpose

1. To receive a presentation from the NHS family in County Durham on their 2007/08 Health Check submissions to the Healthcare Commission (HCC).
2. To comment on performance of NHS Trusts serving County Durham as part of the Health Check process.

Information

3. Health check represents a major opportunity for Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) to have an influence on local health services.
4. Comments from JHOSC will be reproduced verbatim in the declaration and used by the Healthcare Commission to cross-check the veracity of the declaration.
5. NHS Trusts are measured against 24 core standards in 7 domains of :-
 - Safety
 - Clinical & Cost Effectiveness
 - Governance
 - Patient Focus
 - Accessible & Responsive Care
 - Care Environment & Amenities
 - Public Health

(These collectively are seen as the basics of care - see APPENDIX 1)
6. Self-assessment by Trusts are submitted to Health OSCs and 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

7. 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.
8. Whilst many core standards relate to detailed process, the Department of Health believes OSCs - together with Patient & Public Involvement Forums – can add to the total evidence base from their community-focussed work.
9. Feedback on 2005/06 (the first year of the new system) indicates a big response to this opportunity. Of 1,985 comments sent to the HCC, 807 were from OSCs. Comments, once weighted, were classified as: 49 'high' quality intelligence, 1,245 'medium' & 814 'low'.
10. To assist Councillors, the Health Care Commission (HCC) suggest OSCs focus on the following areas.:
 - **C13 - 16: Information and respect for patients and the complaints system**
 - **C17: Involvement of patients & the public in planning, delivery and improving services. [This attracting most comment across all contributors in 2005/06]**
 - **C22 - 24: Public health**

The Process

11. The NHS Trusts will present their Annual Health Checks/Declarations to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) on 7 April 2008. The NHS will comment on each of the standards, declaring whether they are compliant or non-compliant.
12. Areas of non-compliance should be identified in a future work programme for the JHOSC so that the committee is able to monitor progress and consider the actions taken to address the particular issue.
13. The HCC has again not applied a rigid template, but it is suggested Members focus on activity they have been directly involved with. Advice would also be that all comment - whatever core standard it applied to - must be evidenced so the Committee can satisfy itself its verbatim comments accurately reflect experience.

Recommendation

17. That the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the presentation on the Annual Health Care Declaration for each NHS Trust operating in County Durham.
18. That members of the committee receive the Annual Health Care Declaration for each NHS Trust in our area, with a view to commenting,

