

Adults, Well-being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



20 December 2010

UPDATE:

- A) Health Inequalities Scrutiny Review;
- B) Regional Scrutiny Project on Ex Service Communities

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

To update members on:

- a) a scrutiny review on health inequalities with a focus on physical activity;
- b) a regional scrutiny review with a focus on ex service communities.

Information

a) Health Inequalities –Physical Activity

On 11th October a health inequalities event was held to provide the context for a scrutiny review into action to tackle health inequalities in County Durham. A key aspect of the review is to consider where the most significant positive impacts can be made through interventions to address health inequalities, in the context of financial constraint in the public sector, that is, what are cost effective interventions and where should the Council and its partners focus effort in future.

On the 18 November members of a task and finish group met to consider the scope for such a review and agreed (based on the evidence before the meeting) that there is a compelling case to focus on physical activity.

Officers have been tasked to draft terms of reference with key lines of enquiry supported by a robust project plan for this piece of work. These will be discussed at the next meeting of the group (5th January 2011).

(Members should note that the recent white paper on public health - Nov 2010- will be an important document in assisting the group with its discussions. An Executive summary has been circulated separately for information.)

NHS Durham and Darlington and the County Council have identified officers from their respective organisations to support the task and finish group in an expert advisor capacity.

Dates for the task and finish group have been agreed. The project aims to report back to the Adult well being and health OSC and then Cabinet in May 2011.

b) Regional Health Scrutiny project on ex service communities

This is the first time that the twelve local authorities in the North East of England have got together to undertake a joint scrutiny review about a matter of common concern, and especially about an aspect of health inequalities in the region.

In 2009, the network members agreed to establish a standing Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. An invitation by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) for joint bids by groups of local authorities to become Scrutiny Development Areas in the field of health inequalities acted as a catalyst. The network's bid was successful and the CfPS/IDeA provided support in the form of £5,000 and 6.5 free days support from an advisor. In return, this review is contributing to the CfPS/IDeA health inequality scrutiny toolkit.

The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have adopted a protocol and terms of reference to formalise its governance arrangements, which will be of value in any future joint scrutiny.

The subject of the joint review was quickly agreed, winning support across all twelve local authorities in the region. Reviewing ways to improve the health and social care of the ex-service community was not just a matter which fired the enthusiasm of Councillors, it would bring a local and regional perspective to the initiatives being taken nationally by the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Health and their partners, as set out in the Command Paper *The Nation's Commitment*.

Once the overall direction of the project was set by Councillors, officers started to research background information and to identify contacts.

At the end of June, 22 scrutiny Councillors from the 12 different local authorities and 34 guests a range of national, regional and local organisations gathered in Durham to discuss the health needs of the ex-service community at an evidence-gathering overview day.

They listened to and questioned speakers from government departments, the armed forces, the Royal British Legion, the regional Strategic Health Authority, one of the Directors of Adult Services in the North East, and the Career Transition Partnership, and they took part in round-table discussion with public health specialists, commissioners and clinicians.

Following the overview day, Councillors split into three work stream groups, looking at physical health, mental health, and socio-economic wellbeing.

A chair and lead authority was identified for each of these work streams, but they were otherwise open to Councillors from any authority, irrespective of political alignment. Each work stream was supported by officers from four local authorities. The socio-economic wellbeing group was chaired by Councillor Stuart Green (Gateshead),

the mental health group by Councillor Robin Todd (Durham) and the physical health group by Councillor Eddie Dryden (Middlesbrough).

Each work stream undertook its own work programme, including interviews, focus groups and site visits. These are detailed further in the individual reports of the work streams. A project support group of officers was set up to help co-ordinate the project and avoid duplication. This was made up of officers from the work stream lead authorities, from Newcastle, which acted as overall project lead, and from Redcar & Cleveland, which handled publicity.

All the work stream reports, together with the overall project report, will be considered by the Joint Committee in its role as project board, and shared with as many contributors as possible before publication.

The date for next meeting of the Joint Committee is being arranged. This meeting will consider the final report and associated recommendations. This report will be shared with the Adults well being and health OSC in the near future.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note progress on the projects identified in this Report.

Background Paper(s)

NONE

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

None for this update

Staffing

None for this update

Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment for the Health Inequalities Review will be undertaken in line with our approach on Equalities legislation.

Accommodation

None for this update

Crime and Disorder

None for this update

Human Rights

None for this update

Consultation

None for this update

Procurement

None for this update

Disability Discrimination Act

None for this update

Legal Implications

None for this update