

HEALTH SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Report By: Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the Committee's work programme.

Financial Implications

2. There may be resource implications arising from the implementation of reviews identified in the work programme. These will be quantified, and resources sought, when the detailed scoping of individual reviews is undertaken.

Background

3. The Committee last formulated a work programme for itself in November 2003, subsequently keeping the programme under review at its informal meetings. This is attached at Appendix 1.
4. The programme made allowance for the fact that the Committee might need to respond to major consultations in accordance with the relevant Regulations, reports from the Patients Forums and other matters which might emerge requiring consideration.
5. The Committee structured this work programme around three main areas:
 - Managing public expectations and public involvement
(It was agreed it would be helpful for the Committee to understand the nature of public and patient involvement in Herefordshire and meet the Primary Care Trust's and Hospital Trust's co-ordinators, Euan McPherson and Stephanie Pennington. One of the issues that the Committee could then look at was Councillors' potential role in managing public expectation within their constituencies.)
 - Improving public health
(It was agreed that it would be helpful to receive a more detailed briefing on the work of the public health team and at a later date look at the extent to which the Director of Public Health's recommendations had actually influenced the policy and decision making of public agencies within the County)
 - Access and waiting
(It was agreed it would be helpful for the Committee to understand how this national issue impacted at a local level and where there were particular bottlenecks.) It was noted that the Hospital Trust was involved in a national initiative aimed at identifying and reducing waits in the system and it was thought it may be useful for the Project

Manager to brief the Committee on the outcomes of the initiative to date.) A review of Emergency Care Access was proposed within this context.

Progress and Potential Items for the Work Programme

Managing Public Expectations and Public Involvement

6. This theme was identified as important and remains so in the context of public involvement and patient choice, the growing public expectations regarding the level of service provided by NHS bodies and the need for those to be managed in the context of the limited resources available. A development event was held in February 2004 led by Mr Euan McPherson (Patient Advice and Liaison Service and Involving People Manager for Herefordshire Primary Care Trust) and Stephanie Pennington (Patient Advice and Liaison Officer for the Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust).
7. There is scope as part of the work programme to follow up on this and consider in more detail Councillors' potential role in managing public expectation within their constituencies.

Improving Public Health

8. Improving public health remains a significant local and national issue. The Committee received a detailed briefing on the work of the public health team in November 2003 and in July 2004 invited the Director of Public Health to attend a meeting of the Committee to present his Annual Report and answer questions upon it.
9. It is proposed that a standing invitation to the Director of Public Health should be built into the programme. (The scrutiny of this report would include reviewing the formal responses that PCTs and local authorities will formally make to annual reports from Directors of Public Health.)

Access and Waiting

10. Access to NHS services and waiting times again remains a significant local and national issue. The Committee received a presentation on the national initiative aimed at reducing waiting times in June 2004.
11. The Committee has approved a scoping statement for a review of emergency care access but the matter has not been progressed as envisaged because of other commitments.

Other Business

12. In addition to identifying work in the three areas above the Committee also agreed to undertake a review of Communication and Morale. The Committee has approved a scoping statement for a review but the matter has not been progressed as envisaged because of other commitments.
13. The Committee also included in the programme a review of delays in discharging patients from hospital: the safely home review. The matter has not been progressed as envisaged because of other commitments and changing circumstances.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny) on 01432 260239

14. It is suggested that it would be of benefit both to the Committee and to the Chief Executives of the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and Chief Executive of the Herefordshire Hospitals NHS Trust if provision was made in this and future programmes for them to attend a meeting of the Committee to allow them to advise the Committee of the work of the Trusts in the preceding year and future plans and thoughts. Clarification is being sought as to when this meeting could most productively be scheduled.
15. The Committee has responded to a consultation on the provision of Ear, Nose and Throat services and reviewed the response to the outbreak of Legionnaires Disease in Hereford City. It is suggested that provision should be made in the work programme to review the position in relation to these two matters.
16. The Committee was informed at its last meeting of the NHS planning cycle and the requirement to produce a Local Development Plan on a rolling three-year basis. It is suggested that provision should be made in this and future work programmes to consider this Plan.
17. The Committee had previously identified the need to review the operation of the new GP contracts, particularly in relation to the provision of out of hours services, and it is suggested that, given the contracts were introduced in April, 2004, provision is made for this in the work programme in September rather than in April as originally programmed.
18. A draft work programme making provision for consideration of the issues referred to above is attached for consideration at appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee considers its work programme and recommends a programme to the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None