
HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel was held on 25 November 2004.

PRESENT: Councillor Dryden (Chair), Councillors Biswas and Lancaster.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington and J Ord.

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors McIntyre, Mrs H Pearson, Regan and K Walker.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel held on 18 October 2004 were submitted and approved.

HEALTHY LIVING REVIEW - UPDATE

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report, which listed the evidence, which had been received so far regarding the current review on Healthy Living.

Specific reference was made to the Healthy Living seminar, which had been held on 15 November 2004 the notes from which had subsequently been circulated to the Panel. The facilitators at the Seminar and the areas upon which they had focussed were as follows:

Prof. Peter Kelly, Director of Public Health, Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust:
Current healthy living initiatives for promoting a healthier lifestyle

Dr David Chappel, North East Public Health Observatory:
Measuring outcomes and impacts of healthy living initiatives

Dr Ifti Lone, General Practitioner and member of Professional Executive Committee, Middlesbrough PCT:
GP's perspective on healthy living initiatives.

The Panel discussed the way forward in terms of formulating recommendations in the light of the evidence received so far. It was agreed that in general there was evidence of joint working across the agencies in terms of submitting joint bids and accessing resources for the development and implementation of projects. It was considered however, that there were reservations about co-ordination in terms of sustainability of projects; accessing mainstream funding and the extent to which outcomes were measured and assisted in raising health levels in Middlesbrough.

AGREED that in order to assist in the formulation of recommendations the Mayor and Prof. Peter Kelly, Director of Public Health, Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust be invited to attend a further meeting of the Panel to discuss their perspective of the extent to which the level of sustainability and outcomes of healthy living initiatives were co-ordinated.

EMERGENCY ADMISSIONS - JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report concerning the next topic of review on Emergency Admissions into James Cook University Hospital.

By way of introduction initial information was provided on various Government, Department of Health documents which sought improvements.

It was considered that there was significant anecdotal evidence to suggest that the rate of Emergency Admissions nationally was so high as to be a cause for concern and that Middlesbrough's rate was particularly high. A key part of any review was seen as investigating the reasons behind the rate of emergency admissions and whether an emergency admission was always the most appropriate way to deal with a matter, or if an alternative could be suggested.

The Panel considered the suggested terms of reference outlined in the report.

In terms of possible witnesses it was suggested that representatives from the following be asked to provide evidence: -

Health Community:

Primary Care Trusts, South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust, Ambulance Trust, Social Services, Executive Member, Strategic Health Authority

Independent:

North East Public Health Observatory, Patient Forums, Voluntary Sector, University academics.

As part of the compilation of evidence it was suggested that information be sought on best practice and from a comparable area to Middlesbrough.

AGREED that the terms of reference be as follows: -

- a) To establish the rate of emergency admissions into James Cook University Hospital, relative to the national annual rate.
- b) To investigate why the numbers of emergency admissions into James Cook University Hospital are at their current level.
- c) To investigate methods of reducing the amount of 'unnecessary' emergency admissions.
- d) To examine if the local NHS could organise elective surgery in such a way so as to accommodate emergency admissions more appropriately.
- e) To investigate the impact of developments such as Out of Hours, Minor Injury Units, Walk in Centres and Emergency Prevention has or could have on emergency admissions into James Cook University Hospital.
- f) To investigate to what extent a 'revolving door syndrome' exists, whereby the same people are admitted and discharged from hospital on a regular basis and the costs this incurs.
- g) To examine performance indicator information relative to the interface between the NHS and Social Services in dealing with patients coming out of acute care into primary care.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS - SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

The Chair referred to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 16 November 2004 when consideration had been given to a request received from a Non-Executive Member relating to the possibility of implementing a ban on smoking in enclosed public areas within Middlesbrough.

The Panel was advised that the Board had agreed that following the submission of a report from the Executive in relation to smoking in public places the matter be referred to the Health Scrutiny Panel for their determination as to whether or not to undertake its own scrutiny investigation or to submit a response on the Council's proposals.

AGREED that the Panel awaits the outcome of the Executive report concerning smoking in public places and considers formulating a response on the proposals.