

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 4

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

12 JUNE 2013

WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Health Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2013/14 municipal year.

Recommendations

2. That the Panel considers which topics it would like to consider in its work programme for the 2013/14 municipal year.
3. That the Panel, following discussion, identifies the topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2013/14.

Consideration

4. At the start of every municipal year, Scrutiny Panels consider the topics that they would like to consider during the coming municipal year. It is useful to establish Work programmes, as they provide some structure to a Scrutiny Panel's activity and allow for the effective planning and preparation of work.
5. As part of the process for establishing the work programme, support officers gather views from a number of sources about the topics that they feel would be beneficial for Scrutiny to consider. The following is a list of topics, which have been suggested as of particular interest to the Panel, to consider in the coming year.
 - 5.1 **Mental health services capacity** – A defining feature of mental health policy over the last decade or so, has been the drive to reduce the number of inpatients beds and to reduce the Length of Stay (LOS) of all inpatients, where clinically appropriate. By examining this topic, the Panel could investigate whether that policy has delivered the better patient outcomes and efficiency savings anticipated. The Panel could also explore whether this service configuration remains the best for the challenges faced by Mental Health services today, and the extent to which local people are placed in out of area placements.

- 5.2 **Winter pressures** – The Health Scrutiny Panel has already considered the pressures placed on the local health and social care economy by winter and specifically the demands of the local acute sector. The Panel has received a great deal of information about the 2012/13 winter period and produced a final report on the topic, with a series of recommendations. It is suggested that the Panel would like to consider how the local healthcare system is preparing for the 2013/4 winter period. Following its consideration of the preparations for 2013/14 winter period, it is suggested that the Panel may also wish to track the winter period closely.
- 5.3 **Patient transport to hospital** – It has recently been suggested to the Panel that increasing numbers of private ambulances and police vehicles are being used to transport patients into hospital, who require treatment. It is suggested that the Panel may wish to investigate this suggestion and establish what the reality is. This would require consideration of current and anticipated demand for services, as well as current service capacity.
- 5.4 **Quality standards in the Independent sector** – The Panel will be aware that national policy is increasingly promoting the concept of ‘Any Qualified Provider’, in commissioning decisions. It is suggested that the Panel may wish to spend some time investigating how NHS Commissioners assure themselves that the quality and safety of services commissioned from the independent sector.
- 5.5 **Healthcare Associated Infections** – The Panel receives periodic updates on this topic and it is suggested that this continues during 2013/14. It is suggested that this is important for the Panel to assure itself of how JCUH is performing in relation to Healthcare Associated Infections.
- 5.6 **NHS Finances** – The Panel will be acutely aware of the financial pressures facing the NHS for the foreseeable future. It is suggested that the Panel may wish to cover this subject in more detailed, by way of policy briefings from experts in the healthcare finance field, which would aid its overall understanding of the topic and add context to its other work.
6. It should be noted that the suggested topics outlined above are exactly that, suggestions, and the content of the Panel’s work programme is entirely a decision for the Panel to make. When considering the work programme, the Panel is advised to select topics that are of interest to it, as well as topics that the Panel feels by considering, it could add value to the local authority’s work.
7. At today’s meeting, the Panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2013/14 municipal year.

8. The Panel is also advised to consider whether it would like to have a mix of working styles in its programme, whereby it can consider some topics in a fairly in depth manner, as well as some topics that it deals with in a fairly short, sharp style.
9. The Panel is asked to discuss and agree the topics it would like to consider in the work programme for the coming year. Once the Panel has identified the areas of priority, support staff will draw those topics into a programme for approval.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. No background papers were used to prepare this briefing paper.

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