

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

Setting the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme 2021/2022

22 JUNE 2021

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Health Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

BACKGROUND

2. At the start of each Municipal Year, Scrutiny Panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year.
3. Work programmes are useful as they provide some structure to a Scrutiny Panel's activity and allow for the effective planning and preparation of work.
4. As part of the process for establishing the work programme, support officers gather information/views and suggestions from a number of sources. Below is a list of topics which are anticipated to be of particular interest to the Scrutiny Panel. Members are advised that the list of possible topics is not exhaustive and that additional topics can be added and considered at the Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Topical Issues and Suggestions

Topic/Suggestion	Details
Health inequalities – accessibility to health care	<p>In October 2020 South Tees Healthwatch launched a GPs, Ongoing Treatments and Wellbeing survey following the intelligence received from its previous lockdown report which suggested the following issues required more exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP access; • The impact of ongoing treatments and cancelled or postponed operations; • Mental health and access to support services. <p>South Tees Healthwatch wanted to gain a deeper insight into how people's access to and engagement with services had changed</p>

	<p>since the initial reaction to the pandemic, and what lessons could be learned and shared. Responses were received from 395 individuals and a series of focus groups with the deaf community were held, which were attended by six members and relevant local professionals. A summary of the key findings are highlighted below and it has been suggested that the issues raised could be further explored by the Health Scrutiny Panel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attitude of staff, reception staff in particular, had a negative impact on the experience of patients, especially when trying to access an appointment; • The telephone booking system is problematic and can deter people from accessing care due to not having the capacity to wait in the queue for an appointment; • Telephone appointments aren't always appropriate for patient's accessibility needs and health concerns; • A large majority of our respondents hadn't been offered an evening or weekend appointment – increasing this could reduce waiting times and enable more people to access care; • Patients are turning to pharmacies if they have waited too long for a GP appointment causing increased pressures on this service; • Communication is vital to keep patients updated with any changes to the surgery in ways that are accessible and suitable for all to understand; • People feel safe when accessing a face-to-face appointment if guidelines are clearly followed and practiced by everyone when attending the surgery, including staff. <p>(Suggestion from Healthwatch South Tees)</p>
SEND families support	<p>On 1 April 2021 a new 'Neurodevelopmental pathway' for children and young people (aged 5-18 years old) came into effect across South Tees and replaced the Children's Autism pathway. The new pathway covers autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).</p> <p>Healthwatch South Tees was asked to engage with parents and carers to find out their views, so family experiences could directly influence the new pathway. A number of issues were highlighted including concerns about proposals to remove the 'self-referral' option, and ambiguity regarding 'diagnosis, on the new pathway.</p> <p>In addition to the above information about limiting the new pathway to autism and ADHD has also caused significant response after the consultation period. There is apprehension about not having a clear</p>

	<p>identified route for children with other neurodevelopmental conditions including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Parent carers are concerned there is a lack of skill within the system to recognise other neurodevelopmental conditions and feel the proposal to identify these conditions at referral stage is therefore fundamentally flawed. There is a fear that children who don't fit the autism/ADHD assessment criteria will not be properly assessed with far reaching negative consequences.</p> <p>In light of the above the suggestion has been forward that these issues could be picked up by the Health Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>(Suggestion from Healthwatch South Tees)</p>
PFI scheme at James Cook Hospital	<p>One of the key issues which spans the totality of the Trust's activity and service to the local community is the PFI scheme on the James Cook Hospital. The current cost of the historic scheme to the trust and its patients is approximately £1 million per week. The trust has calculated that the PFI scheme is adding approximately £17.5 million each year to the Trust's expenditure when compared to a hospital provided by public capital/borrowing. The reason for suggesting this as a potential item for scrutiny is the all-encompassing impact the PFI scheme has on the trust's ability to fund services and capital investments.</p> <p>(Suggestion from South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust).</p>
Women's health and infant feeding	<p>Women's health, it can take women up to 8 years to be given a diagnosis for pain related conditions, whereas men can be diagnosed within a year of symptoms.</p> <p>The impact on infant feeding due to the lack of breastfeeding support in Middlesbrough and the lack of tongue tie referrals and how this also impacts on infant feeding.</p> <p>(Suggestion from a Councillor).</p>
Dental health	<p>How Covid-19 has impacted on dental health in Middlesbrough, as many people, including children, were unable to access dental care during the pandemic.</p> <p>(Suggestion from a Councillor).</p>

Updates

Vulnerable and Fragile Health Services	To receive an update in relation to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel's previous review of Vulnerable and Fragile Health Services.
Breast Radiology Diagnostic	To receive an update in relation to the outstanding NHS consultation in respect of Breast Radiology Diagnostic Services in South Tees.

Services	
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5. It should be noted that the topics outlined above are suggestions and the content of the Scrutiny Panel's work programme is a decision for the Panel. When considering its 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.
6. In addition to undertaking the agreed work programme, Scrutiny Panels have also previously responded on an ad-hoc basis to emerging issues - such as considering relevant new legislation, guidance or Government consultation documents. This approach occasionally results in further topics being identified for investigation or review throughout the year.
7. On occasion ad-hoc scrutiny panels may also be established throughout the year to undertake additional investigations, for example to examine areas of work which overlap more than one Scrutiny Panel.
8. The Scrutiny Panel is also advised that, under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities have a responsibility of community leadership and a power to secure the effective promotion of community well-being. Therefore, in addition to the Scrutiny Panel's generally recognised powers (of holding the Executive to account, reviewing service provision, developing policy, considering budget plans and performance and financial monitoring), Panels also have the power to consider **any** matters which are not the responsibility of the Council but which affect the local authority **or** the inhabitants of its area. For example, nationally, local authorities have undertaken scrutiny work on issues such as post office closures, rural bus services, policing matters and flood defence schemes.

Scrutiny work plan prioritisation aid

9. Members may wish to use the aid attached at **Appendix 1** to prioritise issues where scrutiny can make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

10. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2020/21 Municipal Year. The Director of Public Health (South Tees) will be in attendance to assist the Panel by highlighting priority areas/issues and challenges.
11. When considering its work programme, the Scrutiny Panel is asked to ensure that topics agreed for inclusion:-
 - Affect a group of people living within the Middlesbrough area.
 - Relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence.
 - Are not issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board or the Scrutiny Panels have considered during the last 12 months.
 - Do not relate to an individual service complaint; and

- Do not relate to matters dealt with by another Council Committee, unless the issue deals with procedure.
12. It is suggested that the Scrutiny Panel has a mixture of working styles in its programme. This can include detailed and in-depth reviews, shorter topics, or one-off investigations.
 13. Once the Scrutiny Panel has identified the areas of priority, support staff will draw those topics into a programme for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RECOMMENDATION

14. That the Scrutiny Panel identifies the areas of focus/topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2021/22, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

15. Throughout the report, reference is made to documents published by the Department of Health, Public Health England (PHE), the NHS and Middlesbrough Council.

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APPENDIX 1

