

## Health Select Committee

A meeting of Health Select Committee was held on Friday, 24th November, 2006.

**Present:** Cllr Mrs M B Womphrey (Chair), Cllr Mrs J L Apedaile, Cllr P Baker, Cllr C Coombs, Cllr K Dixon, Cllr T Laing (Vice Councillor Sherris), Cllr K Lupton, Cllr Mrs E A Nesbitt, Cllr J M Roberts, Cllr Mrs B Robinson.

**Officers:** Mrs T Harrison and Mrs J Trainer (LD).

**Also in attendance:** Mrs S Allen, Mr G Gill and Mrs M Irvine (Healthcare Commission); Mrs J Atkinson and Mrs C Pearson (NHS and Hartlepool Trust).

**Apologies:** Cllr D Harrington, Cllr Miss B Inman, Cllr A Sherris and Cllr N Teasdale.

### **962 Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October, 2006**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2006.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of 16th October 2006 be agreed as a correct record and forwarded onto the next Council meeting for approval.

### **963 Presentation – Healthcare Commission – Changes to the Annual Health Check**

Members were provided with a presentation from Mrs Irvine (North East Team Leader, Healthcare Commission) with input from Mr Gill and Mrs Allen (Senior Assessment Managers, Healthcare Commission), which covered the following topics:

- The role of the Healthcare Commission
- Role of Assessment Managers
- Annual Health Checks
- How Overview and Scrutiny Committees comments informed Annual Health Checks
- Ensuring Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments had the most impact

Members raised the following questions and issues:

- When was the Healthcare Commission started?
- How did they assess what mattered?
- How did they prioritise?
- What was the background and qualifications of the employees of the Healthcare Commission?
- Who funded the Healthcare Commission?
- What was their link with the Dazi report?
- Where was their local office?
- Were self assessments completed in a standard format
- Factual information was often difficult to obtain as the local trusts only met twice.

Members were advised that the Healthcare Commission was established in April 2004 following the merger of the Commission of Health and Audit.

A representative of the local Trust confirmed that the documents were published

on the internet and copies were available in Libraries.

Members were advised that the Department of Health prioritised some issues for local trusts for the annual health checks, however local trusts prioritised as issues indicated whilst considering their targets.

The background of employees of the Healthcare Commission varied between Nursing, Research, Pharmacy, Human Resources and Management. They all worked generically except when their specialised knowledge was required.

The NHS was funded by the Department of Health and private health paid a registration and annual fee.

Members were advised that the Healthcare Commission were not currently involved with the Dazi report.

The local Healthcare Commission office was based in Leeds.

Self Assessments were completed on a standard form.

Members were advised that Patient Forums found it easier to focus on 2 or 3 standards rather than the full 24 in the Annual Health Check which was more achievable and enabled greater focus on a few standards rather than limited focus on all 24 standards.

It was suggested that Scrutiny Committee could adopt a similar approach and include a standing item on the agendas.

Mrs Atkinson (Head of PPI) and Mrs Pearson (Deputy Director Clinical Governance) addressed Members as representatives of the local Trust. They advised that they appreciated the Health Select Committees comments.

They advised that they had received a 'good' rating from the results of last years health check in respect of quality and they were pleased with the result.

They would be declaring compliance in full in all areas with the exception of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (N.I.C.E) but were having a meeting with the institute in November, which would help provide clarity.

The Trusts were faced with the problem that the guidance for the health checks for December had not yet been published therefore their workplan would be affected.

There were 24 core standards; however there would be new development standards next year but the tool kit would not be ready which would result in Trusts having to rush the assessments.

In December it was their plan of action to re-assess performance against core standards, their focus would be on the safety, clinical and cost effectiveness domains.

Mrs Atkinson and Mrs Pearson suggested that they return to Health Select Committee in February to talk further with the Committee following publication of

the guidance and tool kit.

Members observed the importance of the tool kits being produced in plenty of time and that the lateness of the guidance made the process of an annual health check difficult if Trusts were not given sufficient time or information.

The Trust representatives confirmed that representation from the Scrutiny Committee could improve the speed in which the guidance is received by Trusts and assured Members that patient care was not affected.

Councillor Coombs formally moved that the Health Select Committee submit formal representation requesting that guidance for the annual health checks be published within sufficient time to enable the Trusts to familiarise themselves with the guidance and undertake the health check without being rushed as they received the guidance much later than required. Councillor Coombs request was seconded by Councillor Mrs Robinson.

The Chair thanked all the representatives for attending.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The presentation be noted.
2. Representation would be made to the Healthcare Commission requesting that Trusts and Scrutiny Committees received the guidance for the annual health checks much earlier to enable them each to familiarise themselves with the guidance and undertake the annual health check, thus enabling the check to be carried out thoroughly and effectively.

## **964 Work Programme**

The following topics were proposed for consideration as possible new topics for 2007/08:-

- Ritalin
- Hospital Parking
- Alcoholism
- Access to Drug Treatment (Councillor Mrs Apedaile wanted it noted that she had requested that the topic be addressed by the Committee on several occasions and again submitted a request)

CONCLUDED that the topics would be submitted to Executive Scrutiny for consideration.