

Regional Health Issues Update

Summary

Members are asked to note progress in relation to the ongoing regional health scrutiny projects.

Detail

CfPS Expert Advisory Team Support

1. The Select Committee has in the past taken advantage of the free support days provided by the Centre for Public Centre to deliver Member training on Health Scrutiny. The current programme of support from the Centre comprises 10 free days to Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) in each Strategic Health Authority area. An application to use this support was made on behalf of the region and was successful; advisor placements are intended to support OSCs working together on common issues across whole regions or sub regions.
2. The Committee may recall that it was envisaged that this support would be used to develop health scrutiny structures on a regional basis. On 28 February a joint meeting of health scrutiny chairs from across the region was held to discuss a draft protocol and possible working arrangements.
3. As part of the process it was also agreed to hold a light touch review of an issue that affected the region as a whole, in order to assist with the process of developing scrutiny on a regional basis. It was identified that alcohol issues were of concern across the region, and that it would be beneficial to investigate the role of the Strategic Health Authority in this regard. The SHA has a particular duty to share good practice and promote innovation across the region in relation to alcohol misuse services.
4. A joint Member meeting has been arranged for this purpose on 31 March and representation will be sought from the North East Public Health Observatory, NHS North East (the Strategic Health Authority), and Balance (the regional alcohol office).

Health Inequality Scrutiny Programme – The health needs of veterans

5. The Committee have previously been informed of the proposed bid for support from the CfPS under their Health Inequality Scrutiny Programme. A regional bid was prepared based on undertaking a piece of regional scrutiny work on the Health Needs of Veterans. This bid was successful and the project planning for the review has begun.

6. The review is to examine the physical, mental and broader health needs of ex-servicemen and women, their families and communities, how they are being assessed and met, and how far ex-service personnel and their families are aware of the support available to them.
7. The project was also discussed at the meeting of 28 February and it is proposed to hold a 'baseline day' following the forthcoming local government elections in order to set the scene for the review, with the majority of the project being delivered in the summer and autumn of this year. It is envisaged that the work will be delivered by a number of working groups across the region and Members will be informed of the opportunities to take part in due course.
8. The same CfPS adviser, Mr Shaun Gordon, has been allocated to support both projects.

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