

Select Committee on Good Health, 28th September 2005

Report of Head of Personnel and Support Services, Lead Officer for Health Scrutiny

The Role of Health Scrutiny in the Process Surrounding the Healthcare Commissions Annual Health Check of NHS Trusts

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform members about the role the Select Committee on Good Health in the HealthCare Commission's Annual Health Check of NHS Trusts.

Background

- 2 In August 2004 the Department of Health published the document 'National Standards, Local Action'. This document sets out the framework for all National Health Services organisations and Social Services Authorities to use in planning over the next three years. 'Standards for Better Health' is part of this document and will form a key part of the performance assessment by the Healthcare Commission of health care organisations. "Standards for Better Health" intends to ensure that health care is both safe and of good quality and that there is a continuous improvement in health care, year after year.

- The Standards are contained within seven domains:

1. Safety
2. Clinical and Cost Effectiveness
3. Governance
4. Patient Focus
5. Accessible and responsive care
6. Amenities and the Care Environment
7. Public Health

- **There are two types of standards:**

- **Core Standards**

NHS organisations are expected to comply with core standards from August 2004.

- **Developmental Standards**

These standards are broad based and comprehensive. Progress against these standards will be closely monitored by the Healthcare Commission and by Trusts themselves.

- **Assessment for Improvement**

For 2005/06 the Healthcare Commission will focus on the core standards. Trusts will be required to make a public declaration in September 2005 on the extent to which their organisation meets the core standards. The declaration will need to include the views of patients and other partners in the local health community, including the Select Committee on Good Health. The Healthcare Commission will then check that declarations are consistent with other available information on a Trust's performance, such as patient survey, staff survey and assessment from other regulatory bodies.

Formal visits and inspections from the Healthcare Commission will be the exception although around 10% of organisations who are thought to have problems will be subject to formal investigation and similarly 10% of high achievers will also be visited.

The former star rating system of zero, 1, 2 or 3 stars will be replaced by a 5 point scale for rating the various components of the assessment framework. This will be:

- * Very good performance
- * Good performance
- * Satisfactory Performance
- * Unsatisfactory performance
- * Serious concerns about performance

- **Involvement of the Select Committee on Good Health**

There is a requirement that NHS Trusts invite comments from Health Scrutiny Committees and Patients' Forums about how they think Trusts have done in respect of core and developmental standards. Trusts are obliged to include statements from scrutiny committees and patients' forums within their own declarations and may not edit those comments. Scrutiny Committees and Patients' Forums do not have to make comments and may choose not to do so.

- The Select Committee on Good Health, no doubt, will wish to monitor how local NHS Trusts deal with both core and developmental standards. These standards should provide Members with a useful frame of reference for investigating the work of local NHSTrusts. If the Committee chooses to make statements about the work of the Trusts, it is very important that such statements are fair and based on sound evidence.
- The first statement is due in October 2005. We have sufficient evidence this year about the Trusts involved to make reasonable brief statements, at least about aspects of patient care and financial management. There are four Trusts: Dudley Group of Hospitals; the two Primary Care Trusts and the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Finance

- 3 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law

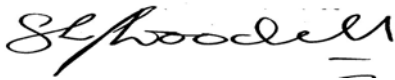
- 4 The relevant statutory provisions regarding the Council's Constitution are contained in Part 11 of the Local Government Act 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Equality Impact

- 5 This report complies with the Council's equality and diversity policy.

Recommendation

- 6 That the proposals set out in paragraph 2.5 above be approved and in addition that Committee delegates the preparation of the Statements to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and two other members.



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List of Background Papers

No Background Papers.