

Facilitator's Comments

Primary Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop set out to review the progress of Health Scrutiny in Wiltshire and illustrate options for further development. The review reflected past experience and lessons learned over the last 18 months or so. The workshop was designed to allow people to consider a range of issues including the benefits of an advance work programme based on priorities and the most effective way of considering topics such as using a task group format. Importantly the workshop ensured people, groups and organisations involved in Health Scrutiny were consulted and invited to contribute to future developments.

Workshop Process

Following presentations by John Thomson, chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee and Stephen Thorpe of the Strategic Health Authority, workshop participants formed 4 working groups to consider the development of Health Scrutiny. The groups were asked to work on the following topics:

- Clarifying the structure of the Health Scrutiny process
- Prioritising criteria and the development of a work programme
- Resource implications of scrutinising local health issues
- Future relationship between Health OSC and Patient Forum structures

During these sessions participants shared views and experiences and explored the benefits of approaching the work in a different way. They were able to consider comments, issues and problems from a variety of perspectives and had the opportunity to challenge and question each other's views.

Within the groups participants worked in an open and constructive way and, through debate and questioning, made proposals to progress the main issues discussed. These were highlighted in the feedback session from the groups.

Conclusions

The workshop was extremely well received and was regarded as a substantial success by the majority of participants. In particular it was noted that the workshop gave elected members and representatives of organisations their first opportunity to engage with members of the Patients Forum.

One of the outcomes suggesting a move to a task group process (in place of area panels) was extremely well supported with the recognition that this process would engender inclusiveness, flexibility, more efficient use of resources and greater representation for the organisations and groups involved.

Although proposals and suggestions were put forward, it was also recognised that there were still some problems and issues to be resolved to ensure a smooth transition and to gain maximum benefits from the implementation of a revised structure and process, including task group working.

