
**SCRUTINY OF HEALTH AND THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE
IN WILTSHIRE**

Purpose of the Report

1. To respond to the resolution of the County Council of 6th September, 2001, that the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee should consider how the County Council should best exercise its new powers on health scrutiny.
2. To update elected members on how it is proposed to take forward health scrutiny in Wiltshire.

Background

3. The Education and Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee, on 27th September, 2001, considered a report on Scrutiny of the National Health Service.
4. The sub-committee on 27th September, 2001, resolved:-
 - (1) To note this important new function and the Government's intentions for NHS reform set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report, which described the Health and Social Care Act 2001, which envisages a "patient centred" future NHS.
 - (2) To endorse the next steps proposed in paragraphs 8-10 of the report, including strategic, operational and member level contact with the other agencies involved in health scrutiny, learning from pilot authorities, attendance at seminars and responding to future Government guidance. This paper to be used as the basis of that initial contact.
 - (3) To note the potential resource implications of this new function and agree that the proposed review of health service scrutiny processes and of the resources required should be carried out.
 - (4) To report to County Council on 20th November 2001, on the basis of the report and on the progress made, and to receive further reports when appropriate. This to include an update at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on 25th October 2001, and to ask that sufficient officer resource is made available for the preparation of the report, including the direct input of the Director of Social Services prior to his departure.

Key Features for Health Scrutiny in Wiltshire

5. These can be summarised as:
 - 5.1 The process is to scrutinise health and health improvement as well as the National Health Service in Wiltshire.

- 5.2 The lead role in setting up health scrutiny arrangements in Wiltshire resides with the County Council by dint of its status as the Social Services authority for Wiltshire.
- 5.3 The County Council should exercise an inclusive application of this lead role through partnership working and we are already well placed:
- health is one of the eight key themes identified in the Wiltshire and Swindon Partnership Panel assessment of partnership arrangements.
 - we need to make use of existing strategic partnerships at county, district, community area and neighbourhood levels.
 - so the District Councils, Health Trusts, and new Strategic Health Authority are key partners.
- 5.4 Adequate resourcing of health scrutiny is a major challenge – we need to seek resources through the SSA from central government and provide resources from the County Council, District Councils and the health service, so that scrutiny will be effective.
- 5.5 Members and officers will need support and development in conducting health scrutiny.
- 5.6 Health Scrutiny will be a major task, perhaps the major task, for the County Council's new Overview and Scrutiny Managing Board to address.

Health Scrutiny in Context

6. The new role of the Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee in health scrutiny is just one element in what the government sees as a variety of new ways for public and patient involvement in health. These are shown in the diagram attached as Appendix 1. The County Council will need to make early contact with others involved in health to help establish effective ways of working within this framework.

Current Position

7. The Education and Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 25th October, 2001, resolved to recommend to the County Council on 20th November, 2001:-
- (1) To note the decision taken at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee regarding the next steps and the potential resource implications for the Council of this major new function from April 2002.
 - (2) In respect of the update report and the further comments of the Director of Social Services, to approve phase one of a project plan covering:
 - (i) the research work identified in the report including the mapping exercise and attendance at seminars and Network meetings;
 - (ii) the use of the existing infrastructure in the County to progress health scrutiny including WASPP and community area planning at the earliest opportunity;

- (iii) the future residual role of Social Services following merger and the organisation of professional advice available to scrutiny; and,
 - (iv) an assessment of the resources required to initially manage the project the project plan and for the Council to meet its statutory obligations to scrutinise health;
- (3) In recognition of the County Council's lead responsibility for this new function, to consult on the basis of establishing up to four health scrutiny standing panels to cover the primary care trusts, in partnership with the district councils, under the direction of the County Council's new Overview and Scrutiny Managing Board.

NOTE: The four health scrutiny standing panels would reflect the four district areas in Wiltshire – North Wiltshire, Kennet, West Wiltshire and Salisbury.

Recommendations

8. The County Council is recommended:-

- (i) To endorse the recommendations from Education and Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee set out at paragraph 7 above.
- (ii) To support an approach towards health scrutiny in Wiltshire which incorporates the key features set out in this report.
- (iii) To request that a report on the implications of health scrutiny for the County Council, including resource implications, should be prepared as soon as possible, to fit in with the budget process for 2002/3. Similar reports would be needed by the district councils, setting out the resources they will need for health scrutiny.
- (iv) To consult with the four district councils, the Primary Care Trusts and others in each district area on the proposal to establish four health scrutiny standing panels or sub-committees, one in each district council area. This would reflect the increasing importance from April 2002 of the Primary Care Trusts across Wiltshire.
- (v) To request that work be undertaken from now to establish local health scrutiny arrangements by April 2002, when local authority overview and scrutiny committees will have a new power to address health scrutiny.

PETER SMITH
Director of Corporate Services

Unpublished documents relied upon in the production of this report: Background paper – LGA Circular 319/01.

Environmental impact of the recommendations contained in this report: NONE.