

Information/Discussion Paper

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 21st February 2005

Update on the work of Gloucestershire NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 As your representative on the Gloucestershire NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the Committee), I feel it is important to update you on the recent work of the Committee, and the work plan for 2005. I would welcome Councillors' comments in general, and in particular on the future items suggested for consideration, and I will feed those comments back to the Committee.

2. Recent issues

- 2.1 The Committee's agendas are made up of two main types of work. Firstly, we are a statutory consultee, so have to respond to any of the consultations undertaken by any of the NHS Trusts in Gloucestershire. Secondly, we are attempting to undertake three major proactive scrutiny reviews per year in the form of Inquiries. In addition, we are briefed on any major service changes, and we also have workshops on major issues affecting the NHS.
- 2.2 Recently the Committee has set up sub groups to respond to a number of consultations:
- **Childrens and Maternity Services:** This was the consultation on the proposal to centralise in-patient children's services and neo-natal intensive care at Gloucester Royal Hospital. The sub-group reported to the last meeting, and its report reluctantly supported the centralisation of services in Gloucester. However, the report also called for Battledown Ward to be kept open for 24-hour in-patient care, as a nurse-led unit, and made serious criticisms of the way the consultation had been conducted.

- **Out of Hours Services:** Social and Community O&S Committee was briefed about these changes at a recent meeting.
- **Older People's Mental Health Services:** This consultation is underway
- **Residential Care Services for People with Learning Difficulties:** This consultation is underway

2.3 In 2004, the Committee undertook two major scrutiny reviews, and published detailed reports, which the Health Community have welcomed and promised to consider seriously. These were:

- **Alcohol Misuse Amongst Young People** – reported to Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5th July 2004
- **Transport to NHS Services**

In each case, groups from within the NHS were interviewed, as were those working outside the NHS in the voluntary sector, and in local authorities. They were extremely comprehensive and worthwhile exercises, and valuable lessons were learned. Both reports are available on request, and contain detailed recommendations.

2.4 In addition, the Committee has been briefed on matters such as the forthcoming consultation on Ambulance Services in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Avon, and on the temporary closure of community hospital beds in Moreton-in-Marsh. On a strategic level, we have discussed the Government's plans for Patient Choice and Payment by Results, and also the impact of the European Working Time Directive.

3. Future Agenda Items

3.1 Items for consideration in coming months include:

- Changes to Ambulance Services in Gloucestershire, Avon and Wiltshire
- Access to NHS Dentistry – an update in June on the NHS Dental Action Plan
- Recruitment and retention of healthcare workers
- Level of user satisfaction with the Partnership Trust (providers of Mental Health Services)

3.2 Scope for further Inquiries/Scrutiny Reviews

- The first major review will be Drug and substance Misuse in Gloucestershire, and this is beginning with initial meetings scheduled with Gloucestershire Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS); Gloucestershire Re-integration Service; the Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service, and the Service Users Support Group. Meetings with the NHS Trusts responsible will be scheduled for the next few weeks.

- Other topics under consideration for a major review include: Obesity, Physical Activity and Healthy Eating (a number of other Committees across the country are looking at this area); Teenage Pregnancy in Gloucestershire; Fall Prevention; Diabetes. Dentistry and MRSA have also been considered, but initial investigations have suggested that the Health Community is already undertaking major work in these areas, and the Committee has decided to monitor progress rather than to undertake a full review.

4. Conculsion

This is just a brief summary of the work and I will happily answer any questions, and provide any further information, as well as feeding back any comments members may have on various issues.

Background Papers

The reports referred to are available on the County Council's website, or by emailing Richard.thorn@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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