

Social Care and Health Standing Committee

The Role of Public Health

Agenda Item: 5

Purpose

1. To outline the roles and activities of Public Health and describe the forthcoming transition to the local authority. The paper is supported by the Public Health Business Plan which provides detailed information on the role of Public Health.

Information

2. Public Health is:

"The science and art of promoting and protecting health and well-being, preventing ill-health and prolonging life through the organised efforts of society" (Faculty of Public Health).

3. It can be divided into three main areas or 'domains' as follows:
 - a. Health improvement, including people's lifestyles as well as inequalities in health and the wider social influences of health.
 - b. Health protection, including infectious diseases, environmental hazards and emergency preparedness.
 - c. Population health services, including service planning, efficiency, audit and evaluation.
4. Subject to the passing of the Health and Social Care Bill, Public Health staff will transfer employment to Nottinghamshire County Council on 1st April 2013. The Council will also take on the duty to promote the health of their population, including commissioning responsibility for the following public health functions:
 - a. Tobacco control and smoking cessation services
 - b. Alcohol and drug misuse services
 - c. Public health services for children and young people aged 5-19 years (NB: this is subject to further debate.)
 - d. The national child measurement programme
 - e. Interventions to tackle obesity such as community lifestyle and weight management services

- f. Locally led nutrition services
 - g. Increasing levels of physical activity in the local population
 - h. NHS Health Check assessments
 - i. Public mental health services
 - j. Dental public health services
 - k. Accidental injury prevention
 - l. Population level interventions to reduce and prevent birth defects
 - m. Behavioural and lifestyle campaigns to prevent cancer and long-term conditions
 - n. Local initiatives on workplace health
 - o. Supporting, reviewing and challenging delivery of key public health funded and NHS delivered services such as immunisation and screening programmes
 - p. Comprehensive sexual health services (NB: This is subject to further debate.)
 - q. Local initiatives to reduce excess deaths as a result of seasonal mortality.
 - r. The local authority role in dealing with health protection incidents, outbreaks and emergencies
 - s. Public health aspects of promotion of community safety, violence prevention and response
 - t. Public aspects of local initiatives to tackle social exclusion
 - u. Local initiatives that reduce public health impacts of environmental risks.
5. A Public Health business plan has been developed to define the roles and responsibilities of Public Health. It outlines the process for maintaining delivery of Public Health during the transition and prepares for the new ways of working after 2013.
 6. The Business Plan includes examples of previous work, an implementation plan to monitor delivery during 2012-13, and memorandum of understanding to describe the roles and responsibilities of Public Health during the transition.
 7. The transition is already well underway and the transition plan is being refreshed to add further detail to the next stages of the planning process.
 8. The changes to public health are part of a wider scale of changes. The Health and Social Care Bill will also impact on other elements of public health and commissioning system as follows:
 - a. **Public Health England (PHE):** PHE will be formed as an executive agency of the Department of Health and will provide national leadership for Public Health and take on some of the Public Health functions that need to be carried out over a larger geographical area, such as health protection.
 - b. **Local Authorities:** In addition to their responsibilities for public health, upper tier local authorities also need to establish local Health and Wellbeing Boards to lead

commissioning of local services to improve health and wellbeing. A paper was presented on the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board on the 9th January 2012.

- c. **Commissioning Board:** It is likely that the current Primary Care Trust Cluster will form the local Commissioning Board unit. This will hold Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to account for their performance and will also undertake duties, such as primary care contracting that are not transferring to CCGs.
 - d. **Clinical Commissioning Groups:** CCGs will take on the commissioning of health services previously carried out by Primary Care Trusts. CCGs will continue to require Public Health support to carry out their function.
9. There is still national discussion taking place over some aspects of the new system. Further national guidance is expected over the coming month around human resources, public health allocation and public health outcomes framework.

Recommendation:

Members are requested to consider the information provided.

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Background Papers:
Public Health Business Plan – October 2011 – March 2013.

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