



**meeting      HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE**

**date              21 March 2006              agenda item number**

## **Report of the Chair of the Health Select Committee**

### **Annual Health Checks – Final Comments**

#### **Purpose of the report**

1. To invite Members to consider comments received from District and Borough Councils regarding their relevant Primary Care and/or Acute Care Trusts (PCT) and to decide on comments to provide to the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) regarding the annual health check declarations.

#### **Background**

2. The annual health check has been created by the Healthcare Commission as an entirely new approach to assessing and reporting on the performance of NHS Trusts. From this year the annual health check will replace the star ratings assessment system.
3. The health check measures Trusts' performance against 24 core standards which are divided into seven key areas: safety, clinical and cost effectiveness, governance, patient focus, accessible and responsive care, care environment and amenities and public health. Trusts assess their performance against a number of statements, determine whether they are in compliance, whether they have not met the standard or whether they can provide insufficient assurance either way and then publish their findings in a declaration. Where they have not met the standard, action plans must be put in place. The Healthcare Commission will then cross-check the declaration and carry out selective inspections, both random and targeted at those who have identified areas of risk.
4. For this year only, Trusts have been asked to prepare draft declarations which were submitted by 31 October 2005. Declarations are now expected on an annual basis from 1 April 2006.
5. Of particular significance to the Committee, the Commission has announced its intention to require NHS Trusts to seek comments from relevant third party organisations:

- Patient & Public Involvement Forums
  - Health Overview & Scrutiny Committees
  - Strategic Health Authorities
6. Trusts will then be expected to include the comments received in their submission to the Commission.
  7. Overview and Scrutiny Committees are not being asked to comment on the whole declaration, although they can do if they so choose. The Committee also has the option of not making a comment at all. However all Trusts with a responsibility to the Committee are required to invite comments from the Committee as part of their overall process. Should the Committee decline to comment, the Healthcare Commission have requested that reasons are given as to why this was decided. However, the Commission stressed that neither the Trusts nor the Committee would be criticised if Members declined to comment.
  8. The Committee is more specifically being asked to use the evidence they have gathered during the course of their existing work to comment on specific areas of Trust activity, particularly where that work relates to the core standards.
  9. The 24 Core Standards have been drawn up by the Healthcare Commission and reflect their key concerns relating to the provision of healthcare. They cover issues such as infection control, consultation, child protection and health inequalities.

## **Issues**

10. At the Health Select Committee of 27 September 2005, it was agreed to seek the views of District and Borough Councils as part of this process. Written comments were sought by 30 January 2006.
11. At its meeting of 13 December 2005, the Select Committee endorsed the establishment of a study group to progress any comments that the Committee would like to make.
12. The Study Group, comprising of Councillor Napier and Councillor Mrs Cutts, met on 24 January and discussed the various declarations as they currently stood.
13. District Councillors and/or officers were invited to attend the Health Select Committee on 7 February 2006 to observe the tabling of their written comments, any debate regarding their PCT(s) annual health check and answer any questions from Members of the Committee.
14. At the meeting on 7 February the Health Select Committee agreed to include a strategic comment on each Trust's Health Check. The Select

Committee also agreed to add an individual comment for each Trust. Drafts of these comments are attached at Appendix 1.

15. The draft comments have been conveyed to each Trust to provide them with an opportunity to respond prior to the Health Select Committee meeting on 21 March. Any responses that have been received follow directly from the proposed comments in Appendix 1.
16. Newark and Sherwood PCT have expressed disappointment at some of the comments proposed and have highlighted the public disclosure of information. The PCT has requested that the Select Committee review the proposed comments in light of the response they have provided.
17. The Select Committee considered the Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust Annual Health Check at the meeting on 13 December 2005. The Trust has provided a response to the issues identified by the Select Committee.
18. The Select Committee has not considered the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust's submission is attached at Appendix 2.

## **Options**

19. The Select Committee has agreed to submit each District or Borough Council's comments to the SHA. Additionally it has agreed to provide further comments to the SHA on all of the Trusts' declarations and to provide a strategic set of comments covering Trusts' performance across the County as a whole.
20. The Health Select Committee could:
  - agree and submit the comments as listed in Appendix 1; or
  - agree and submit alternative or additional comments, which could reflect any responses that have been provided by a Trust.
21. The Health Select Committee could also:
  - consider the Annual Health Check submission from Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and provide comments.

## **Recommendations**

22. It is recommended that

The Health Select Committee agree comments for the Annual Health Checks of the following NHS Trusts:

- Ashfield PCT
- Bassetlaw PCT
- Broxtowe and Hucknall PCT
- Gedling PCT
- Mansfield PCT
- Newark and Sherwood PCT
- Rushcliffe PCT
  
- Doncaster and Bassetlaw Foundation Hospitals NHS Trust
- Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust

**Councillor James T Napier**  
**Chair, Health Select Committee**

Background papers :

- “The Annual Health Check: Guidance on the Assessment of Core Standards” The Healthcare Commission  
<http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/assetRoot/04/01/84/98/04018498.pdf>
- “Assessment for Improvement: The Annual Health Check. Criteria for Assessing the Core Standards” The Healthcare Commission  
<http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/assetRoot/04/01/74/27/04017427.pdf>