

## **Scrutiny of Localities**

**Head of Service:** Tim Capper

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**Recommendation: that the Committee consider the proposals on the scrutiny of localities from the County Council's Health and Well- Being Scrutiny Committee.**

### **BACKGROUND**

As a result of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Health and Social Care Act 2001 consolidated in the National Health Service Act 2006 the County Council has a duty to scrutinise matters relating to health services in the county.

The County Council has chosen to do this through its Health and Well - Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It comprises of 7 County Council Members and 6 co-opted District Council Members (one from each district). The Chair is a County Council Member whilst the Vice-Chair a District Council Member.

This Council's representative on the Committee is Councillor G Garrity with Councillor Cllr C Giel as substitute.

The Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing provision and operation of healthcare services in Cumbria
- Reviewing any relevant issues concerning health care

This Committee at its meeting on 3 January 2008 considered a report on a suggested model for scrutiny arrangements of health and health services at District level. A copy of that decision is at Appendix "A".

### **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Act received Royal Assent on 30 October 2007.

### **LINKs**

The Act abolishes Patient and Public Involvement Forums and introduces Local Involvement Networks (LINKs). LINKs will be networks of local people and groups that will ensure local communities can monitor service provision,

influence key decisions and have a stronger voice in the process of commissioning health and social care. LINKs will cover the geographical area of Local Authorities that have social services responsibilities. To enhance their independence, LINKs must be hosted by a body other than a Local Authority or an NHS body. The task of finding the Host has been given to Local Authorities.

The activities to be carried out by LINKs are:

Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services (health care and social care).

Enabling people to monitor and review the commissioning and provision of local care services relating to:

- the standard of provision;
- whether and how local care services could be improved; and
- whether and how local care services ought to be improved.

Obtaining the views of people about their needs for and their experiences of local care services.

Making such views known and making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved to people responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinizing local care services.

### **National Health Service Act 2006.**

County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (HOSCs) with responsibility for health are now able to make recommendations and report on matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of local health services and can require local NHS representatives to attend meetings and answer questions. This power allows for HOSCs to focus on particular services or facilities or on broader issues such as health inequalities.

The National Health Service Act 2006 places a duty on strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts to make arrangements to consult patients and the public about on-going service planning, on proposals for service development and change and on decisions that may affect how services operate.

### **Conclusion**

Good practice in health scrutiny from local authorities around the country indicates that the inclusion of topics on the overview and scrutiny committee review programme should be, wherever possible, as a result of joint working between local authorities, the NHS, patients' groups and community representatives.

In light of this, the County's proposals to involve the District/Borough Councils in its work should be welcomed. The Committee is requested to consider these proposals and advise the County Council on what arrangements it would wish to see in Copeland.

**List of Appendices**

Appendix "A" – Health Overview and Scrutiny - A suggested model for scrutiny arrangements of health and health services at District level

**List of Background Documents:**

None