

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL	Agenda Item No. 9
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Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

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STANDARDS FOR BETTER HEALTH (ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK 2008/09) - APPROACH

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce the annual health check process for 2008/09 to the Panel and to seek agreement that the Group Representatives are delegated to develop the Panel's response to the declarations of local health care organisations to the Healthcare Commission's targets.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Panel agree that the Group Representatives undertake the development of the Panel's final responses to the declarations of local health care organisations to the Healthcare Commission's core standards.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Healthcare Commission (HC) is an independent body responsible for reviewing the quality of healthcare and public health in England and Wales. In England, it is responsible for assessing and reporting on the performance of NHS and independent healthcare organisations.
- 3.2 A new system of assessment for the NHS, the annual health check, was introduced in 2006 (to replace the star ratings system) and all Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and NHS Trusts are required to declare publicly the extent to which they met the 24 core standards set by the Government for the year from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.
- 3.3 The annual health check looks at a much broader range of performance than the previous system of star ratings and enables the Healthcare Commission to paint a more comprehensive picture than ever before of what is happening in healthcare.

4 KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The performance of each healthcare organisation (acute, ambulance, mental health, learning disability and care trusts, including foundation trusts) is assessed by reference to government standards and targets. The standards are set out by the Department of Health and describe the basic, core standards which patients have a right to expect, such as safety and effective clinical care and the developmental standards that outline the level of quality to which healthcare organisations are expected to aspire. Results of the assessments are published each October by the Healthcare Commission. The results for local Trusts for 2007/08 are outlined below:

Healthcare Organisation	Quality of Services	Use of Resources
Peterborough Primary Care Trust	Fair	Fair
Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Weak	Excellent
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust	Excellent	Good
East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust	Weak	Weak

- 4.2 Self-assessments and declarations about performance against core and developmental standards can be supplemented by comments from representatives of patients and other partners in the community such as patient and public involvement forums, local authority health overview and scrutiny committees, the boards of governors of foundation trusts and Strategic Health Authorities. These are important for substantiating the self-assessments and ensuring that different perspectives are incorporated into the final assessment. Health overview and scrutiny committees and other third parties provide important and useful feedback from communities and from the experiences and views of patients that can help the Healthcare Commission to understand how trusts are performing. More importantly the third party comments can help the Commission to ensure that trusts are putting patients and the public in the heart of everything they do.

5. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 5.1 That the Panel agree that the Group Representatives undertake the development of the Panel's responses to the trusts' self assessments against the core standards with the intention of providing a commentary (based on evidence provided through health scrutiny reviews etc) for inclusion with each trust's declaration.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 It is not a requirement for health overview and scrutiny committees to comment but the Healthcare Commission is keen to ensure that the views of communities, as identified by councillors in their role as democratically elected community leaders, are incorporated in the final trust assessments.
- 6.2 A commentary on a trust is an opportunity for the Panel to collate information about its engagement with the trust over the year and to link it to the standards of performance that the trust has to meet.
- 6.3 The Panel may wish to use the health check to inform its work programme, e.g. to follow up issues identified in the previous year's assessment and as a focus for discussions with the trusts during the year.

7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

The annual health check – a guide for health overview and scrutiny committees – Centre for Public Scrutiny.