

COMMITTEE: SCRUTINY BOARD

DATE: 3rd MARCH 2009

SUBJECT: HEALTHCARE COMMISSION - ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS 2008-09

REPORT BY: SCRUTINY OFFICER

CONTACT OFFICER: BERT SIONG 01582 546781

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL		CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING		OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE

1. To inform the Committee about the Healthcare Commission's annual health checks 2008-09 process, to enable Members to consider and make comments on the performance of local NHS Trusts, relating to the Government's core standards.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. The Scrutiny Board is recommended to consider and agree what comments, if any, it wish to submit about the performance of any of the local NHS Trusts, relating to any of the Government's core standards.

BACKGROUND

3. Every year, all NHS Trusts are required to submit a declaration of their self-assessment of compliance with the Government's core standards to the Healthcare Commission. Their deadline for the 2008-09 declarations is 1st May 2009.

4. The Healthcare Commission has invited third parties, including health overview and scrutiny committees, to submit comments, if any, to their NHS Trusts about issues relating to the core standards.
5. The Commission's guidance about the process and information on the Government's core standards are summarised at Appendix A. *(Note: Based on a briefing paper on the subject circulated to Members on 8th January 2009)*

REPORT

6. The Scrutiny Board has the opportunity to submit comments on the core standards relating to any of the NHS Trusts serving Luton. The relevant Trusts are as follows:
 - NHS Luton (formerly Luton tPCT)
 - Luton and Dunstable Hospital Foundation Trust
 - Bedfordshire and Luton Mental Health and Social Care Partnership Trust
 - East of England Ambulance Service Trust
7. Although Trusts do not have to share their declarations with the committee, draft indicative reports are anticipated. If received, these will be summarised orally by the Scrutiny officer at the meeting. Similarly, minutes of meetings are being reviewed and any relevant information will be also provided at the meeting.
8. The Scrutiny Board was informed of the need for Members to consider what information/ evidence they may have about any of the Trusts' performance against the core standards. Comments could be about examples of good performance and areas of concerns, linked to one or more of the standards. The Healthcare Commission will consider such feedback in their assessment of the relevant Trusts. Comments supported by evidence carry more weight with the Commission.
9. As the annual health check submissions from the Trusts need to be with the Healthcare Commission by 1st May 2009, the Scrutiny Board needs to consider what comments to make at its meeting on 3rd March 2009. Its 30th April meeting would be too late. If appropriate, the Board may choose not to make any comments.
10. If intent on making comments, the Board may wish to delegate the drafting of these to the Scrutiny officer, in consultation with the Chair. This would enable the comments to be submitted to the appropriate Trusts in good time to be included in their submissions.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

11. The Scrutiny Board has two options as follows:

- i. To consider information/ evidence at its disposal and make appropriate comments about the performance of any of the local NHS Trusts relative to the Government's core standards;
- ii. If information/ evidence to support a view about good or bad service/ practice is not available, choose not to make any comments.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12. The Government's core standards for NHS Trusts include a number designed to ensure fairness and equity in accessing healthcare, to promote equality and respect for human rights and to address health inequalities.
13. Given the recognised health inequality issues within Luton's diverse communities, ensuring compliance to the core standards, through the health checks have important implications for local people.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no legal implications with this report and this has been agreed by Richard Stevens in Legal Services on 17th February 2009.

APPENDIX

15. Briefing Note

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

Healthcare Commission Guidance documents:

- Your part in the annual health check 2008-09;
- Annual Health Check 2008/2009 - Top tips for third party commentaries.