

Health & Adult Scrutiny Committee – 4 Year Overview

Report of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Members

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to confirmation by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation

That after the elections the new Council recognises the value of effective Scrutiny and continues the work this Scrutiny Committee has led on over the last 4 years.

Preface

I would like to thank the members, officers and professionals for their support and guidance over the last four years. It has been challenging, difficult and rewarding getting to grip with the world of Health and Adult Social Care. Members, I am sure like me you are grateful for the time and explanations given to us on our quest to ensure residents receive timely and good quality care when it is most needed.

The Committee has probed, questioned and at times disagreed with the pace of change or decisions taken. Despite this, I am grateful for the civil well-mannered approach adopted during our meetings.

The work of the Committee is never done, and the incoming members will no doubt pick up the baton and continue to chase for better care for all residents of Devon.

Thank you to all for your contribution.

**Councillor Sara Randall Johnson, Chair
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee**

Introduction

Following elections and a new Council in May 2017, a new Scrutiny Committee structure was adopted giving the Council three Scrutiny committees: Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services, Children's and Health and Adult Care.

The effectiveness of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee rests on the ability of its members to upskill themselves and be knowledgeable about the way the health service locally implements National Government (via NHS England) policy. In its work, the Committee, has been mindful of the difference between NHS Devon CCG, as the managers of the system with NHS England in control of their funding, performance and targets and the local social care set up which is within Local Government control and hence democratically accountable to its residents through member representation.

Over the last 4 years this Committee has taken their responsibility to do this seriously, recognising the importance of understanding the inherent complexities of the system. As a Standing Overview Group (as well as a Scrutiny committee) they have participated in information sharing and member development sessions which has helped them to appropriately and significantly hold both the health service and social care service to account at local level.

The Scrutiny Committee has worked well at raising the awareness of both Devon's health service and the Devon County Council's social services to the multiple perspectives of residents. Residents can come to the Committee and present their views directly as well as indirectly through their county councillor. Through this process decisions have been reconsidered.

National policy has promoted and incentivized an Integrated Care System which has to encompass the two different financial budgets and budget controls and protocols of Local Government and the NHS. Interrogating, scrutinising and challenging this development has been the major ongoing theme of the committee throughout the 4-year term. The work undertaken is described in this report.

The Committee believes that it has had an influence on both the NHS and Devon County Council perspective on nascent integrated care developments through, for example, reviewing the Better Care Fund and challenging the NHS on their Long Term Plan.

The structure and function of this Committee has left a worthy heritage for the new Committee to effectively scrutinise the Integrated Care System that will be legislated on later this year.

COVID-19 obviously had a significant impact not only on the agenda of the Committee, but also in terms of changing the way in which members could discharge their Scrutiny role. Prior to the pandemic, it was agreed that members would undertake a series of visits to health and care settings across the County. Councillors wanted to get a first-hand account from staff of where the system is working well, how supported they feel and where there may be issues of concern. The visits were about members getting a better understanding of the way in which the model of care in Devon was working operationally and the key issues affecting services from a frontline perspective. Clearly in this final year of the Council, Scrutiny members visiting health and adult social care settings has not been practical, but there is huge value when it is possible again to that opportunity for councillors to triangulate theory with practice and patient experience.

The pandemic naturally effected the way in which Health and Adult Care Scrutiny could operate, but the function quickly evolved to ensure that members were sighted in terms of planning and service delivery, as well as still maintaining that vital challenge to the system. The Committee has remained mindful to try to retain a focus on performance across the wider health and care system.

Committee Members

- Councillor Sara Randall-Johnson (Chair)
- Councillor Hilary Ackland (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Marina Asvachin
- Councillor John Berry
- Councillor Paul Crabb
- Councillor Ron Peart
- Councillor Sylvia Russell
- Councillor Philip Sanders
- Councillor Andrew Saywell
- Councillor Martin Shaw
- Councillor Richard Scott
- Councillor Jeff Trail BEM
- Councillor Phillip Twiss
- Councillor Nick Way
- Councillor Claire Wright
- Councillor Jeremy Yabsley
- Cllr Evans (District Council Representative)

Health Providers

The Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee have over the last 4 years been working with the following key health providers in the County to improve their performance:

- The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
- Devon Partnership Trust NHS Trust
- South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust

Members have regularly met providers through the Quality Account process. Quality Accounts are a mandated requirement from NHS Improvement, with a set structure, framework and content with an approval process which involves reports being laid before Parliament. Quality Accounts detail quality and safety improvements from the previous year as well as planned improvements for the year to come. NHS providers regularly held sessions with the members of the [Standing Overview Group](#), on their Quality Accounts and their priorities in terms of improvement. The feedback from members has been used to inform the Quality Account statements.

Members have also undertaken site visits to providers developing their understanding of service delivery and patient experience. Health providers have also regularly been invited to contribute to members series of masterclasses as well as formally reporting to Committee.

Task Groups

Better Care Through Integration? An Investigation into the Working of The Better Care Fund in Devon

In 2016 NHS organisations and local councils came together to form 44 Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) covering the whole of England, and set out proposals to improve health and care for patients. Integrated care, close collaboration of health and social care, is firmly on the agenda and gathering pace. The purpose of the Better Care Fund (BCF) was to ensure a transformation in integrated health and social care through the creation of a single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together. As an important forerunner to an integrated care system, the Task Group was set up to come to a deeper understanding about the BCF and how it can help to inform quality working practices in this move to full integration. On 7 June 2018 the Task Group published its [final report](#).

Spotlight Reviews

NHS Inquiry

This [Spotlight Review](#), was conducted to explore some key themes that members of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee were particularly concerned about following a Notice of Motion submitted to Cabinet:

While applauding the care provided by all our NHS medical staff the County Council is concerned at the current state of the NHS in Devon, the impact the NHS "Success Regime" is having and studies suggesting many GP's will be retiring, being examples of areas for concern. Accordingly the County Council agrees to establish a local public inquiry to consider the state of the NHS in Devon.

Members reported their findings back to Committee in January 2018 not, at this time, calling for a public inquiry but continuing to monitor the impact of the STP and the move to an Accountable Care System.

The Emerging Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy – A Scrutiny Members Perspective

On 11 October 2018 members [reviewed](#) the visions and priorities of the draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Rapid Response Spotlight Review

On 22 November 2018 the [Rapid Response Spotlight Review](#) was published, which covered how the Rapid Response system should work and how it was working; a survey among GPs in Devon to ascertain if the concerns raised were typical of other primary care practitioners; and identification of pressure points in the system and what action might be taken to ameliorate them.

Carers Spotlight Review

In July 2018 members undertook a [visit](#) to Westbank Community Care Services, Exminster to further their understanding of the approach to Carers' Support Services, key features of the new service "Caring Well in Devon" and the carer offer, as well as the County Council's response to the views of carers expressed in the biennial Carer Survey. It was following this piece of work that the Committee agreed a further, and more detailed review of carer services in Devon.

The [Carers Spotlight Review](#) took the voice of the carer and presented the issues that matter most to them in a detailed study that spoke to more than 120 unpaid carers across Devon. Foremost this piece of work recognises and celebrates the role of the carer.

Modernising Health and Care Services in Teignmouth and Dawlish

The Health and Adult Scrutiny Committee carried out a Spotlight Review on 14 December 2020 of the consultation process on the Devon CCG's proposals for *Modernising Health and Care Services in the Dawlish and Teignmouth Areas*. The Review concentrated on the efficacy of the consultation process. Members met with the Healthwatch team to discuss their report and with the CCG to interrogate the process undertaken to consider the other possible options.

Members did not believe that the consultation, from the evidence presented, offered a credible case for change that both clinicians and residents advocate. The Spotlight Review resulted in a series of [recommendations](#) being presented to Committee in January 2021, following which members agreed to make an informal approach to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel seeking its advice and views about the issues and concerns raised in regard to the proposals (and whether the proposals serve the best interest of health services in the area) and the adequacy of the consultation process.

Standing Overview Group

The Standing Overview Group of the Health and Adult Scrutiny Committee meets as an information sharing and member development session where issues are presented to members to raise awareness and increase knowledge. Any action points arising from the sessions are reported back to the formal Committee meeting.

The Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty

On 20 February 2019 the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee's Standing Overview Group held a session with officers on the [Mental Capacity Act](#) and deprivation of liberty safeguards. The session explored the implications for practice, the organisation and the management of associated risks.

Long Term Plan

On [18 October 2019](#) and [24 February 2020](#) the Standing Overview Group received presentations on work relating to the Devon NHS Long Term Plan.

Devon System Winter Plan

On 23 October 2020 members held a meeting to review the [Devon System Winter Plan](#).

Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership

Members undertook a session to [review](#) the Partnership's response to the pandemic and the 2019/20 Annual Report.

Understanding the Model of Care Visits

It was agreed that members would undertake a series of visits to health and care settings across the County. Councillors wanted to get a first hand account from staff of where the system is working well, how supported they feel and where there may be issues of concern. The visits were about members getting a better understanding of the way in which the model of care in Devon was working operationally and the key issues affecting services from a frontline perspective.

Community Health and Care Teams

In May / June 2018 members [visited](#) community health and care teams in Exeter, Holsworthy and Teignmouth. Councillors reported that resources needed to be spent on prevention and keeping people well. Physical health is a key factor in having good mental health. Social prescribing or community referrals, need to be used as a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services which promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

Residential Care / Personal Care

In October / November 2018 councillors undertook [visits](#) to 5 residential care homes in Seaton, Exmouth, Barnstaple and Torrington, as well as meeting with a home care provider and service user.

Sidmouth / Axminster / Seaton Cluster

On 22 May 2019 councillors undertook visits to the community health and care teams in [Sidmouth, Axminster and Seaton](#). The visits focussed on how to keep people living safely at home and promote their independence through good physical and mental health. Members felt it essential the voluntary community sector is recognised and resourced to fulfil its invaluable role connecting and supporting the most vulnerable, lonely and isolated.

West Devon Community Services / The Ness Dementia Centre

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Members visits to community health and care teams in the Tavistock Community Hospital and the Tavistock Wellbeing Hub, on 2 July 2019 and on 5 August 2019 to the Ness Dementia Centre, a therapeutic specialist space designed to support the family and individual.

Holsworthy Medical Group / Chiddenbrook Surgery

On 25 September 2019 and 25 February 2020 members site visits to GP practices in [Crediton](#) and Holsworthy to develop the Committee's understanding issues affecting Primary Care.

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

On 1 April 2019 members visited [South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust \(SWASFT\)](#) headquarters which provided valuable insight into the way in which the ambulance service works from an operational perspective and furthered members awareness of the challenges they face.

Masterclasses

Masterclasses are information sharing sessions where issues are presented informally to members to raise awareness and increase knowledge. Members held the following sessions over the last 4 years:

- 21 September 2017 - New Models of Care illustrated by ICE
- 21 September 2017 - Healthwatch Devon, introductions and work over the next year
- 21 November 2017 - Introduction to the CQC
- 21 November 2017 – Mental Health
- 22 March 2018 – Devon Safeguarding Adults Board
- 7 June 2018 – Fair Funding in the NHS
- 20 September 2018 - Transitions (Young People from Children's to Adult Services)
- 20 September 2018 - Urgent Community Care
- 22 November 2018 - Living Well at Home – Regulated Personal Care in Devon
- 22 November 2018 - STP Workforce Review and Priorities
- 21 March 2019 - Developing a Long Term Plan for Devon - NHS Local 1 year / 5 Year Plan / Long Term Plan: Implications and opportunities for scrutiny
- 21 March 2019 - Adult Social Care Support for Prisoners
- 18 June 2019 – Role of NHS England / NHS Improvement
- 18 June 2019 - Dementia
- 23 September 2019 – Future of Hospital Services
- 28 November 2019 - Using Technology and Digitally Connected Care and Support
- 27 May 2020 – CCG COVID 19 Response Webinar – Joint Scrutiny with Torbay and Plymouth
- 29 October 2020 - Mental Health
- 29 January 2021 – Out of Hospital Care
- 24 February 2021– Recovery & Restoration in the NHS

Specialist Advisor

The Committee has for the last 3 years benefited from the expertise of a specialised advisor supporting members in their Scrutiny role. Members would like to thank Anthony Farnsworth for his remarkably insightful contribution over those 3 years and welcome Margaret Willcox OBE who has taken over the post in March 2021.

Conclusion

The Committee appreciate the culture Cabinet and officers of both the County Council and NHS Devon CCG have helped to establish with the Scrutiny function; recognising Scrutiny as key to good governance and in turn good outcomes for local people. The Scrutiny challenge is welcomed by the County Council, which in turn gives those members without a portfolio an important role holding the Executive function to account and making a difference to ensure the most vulnerable people are cared for. Better Scrutiny leads to more effective decision-making, reduced risk and ultimately, improved outcomes.

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers

Contact for Enquiries: Dan Looker / Tel No: (01392) 382232

Background Paper	Date	File Ref
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Nil

There are no equality issues associated with this report