
Public Board Meeting, Thursday 21 February 2008

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust Public Health Strategy

to receive a report that detailing the Trusts response to the public health agenda

Report by: **Graham Ramsay, Director of Patient Safety and Medical Director**

1 Purpose

For the last two Standards For Better Health declarations submitted by the Trust non-compliance against the public health standards have been recorded. There are a number of public health related elements of the new national standards that form part of the Healthcare Commission's Annual Health Check. In the last assessment the Trust were identified as weak in many of these.

Primary Care Trusts have the principal responsibility for improving public health. In Hertfordshire the PCTs have produced a single public health strategy for the County. The Trust strategy very much dovetails with this. In line with national policy, the strategy covers key areas and identifies what the Trust needs to do in order to play its part in contributing to the overall improvement in public health.

2 Focus of the Strategy

The Trust has to ensure that how the acute hospital services respond to the public health agenda becomes part of the culture of the Trust. It needs to ensure that it is:

- Developing a health promoting culture
- Making every encounter with patients count as a health promoting opportunity
- Providing opportunities for patients and staff to have health promotion needs assessments
- Developing and supporting new initiatives to improve health
- Identifying prevention as a priority for service and disease management
- Working in partnership with appropriate external stakeholders

The strategy is focussed on the Department of Health's key priorities of:

- Increasing life expectancy
- Achieving a reduction in mortality
- Achieving a reduction in Inequalities
- Tackling the underlying determinants of health

Consequently the main areas of work that the Trust will concentrate on are:

- Smoking cessation
- Food, nutrition and obesity
- Sexual health
- Substance misuse
- Children and young people
- Older people
- Homelessness
- Redressing inequalities
- Improving mental health and well being

3 Proposed Working Arrangements

Given the importance of a close working relationship with the PCT it is proposed to set up a joint Trust and PCT Public Health Forum. The Forum will provide the focus for discussion on the effective implementation of the strategy, implications on practice and consequences of any changes required, and provide a regular cross reference to any new national policy requirements that need to be auctioned.

4 Action Required By the Board

The Board is asked to endorse the strategy and the approach being taken jointly with the West Hertfordshire PCT.

Graham Ramsay
Director of Patient Safety and Medical Director

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