

Wandsworth Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Vision Statement

The vision

We have a commitment to using health scrutiny to improve the quality of health services for Wandsworth residents. We believe that all Wandsworth residents and other users of local health services are entitled to:

- (a) treatment that attains the highest possible clinical standards;
- (b) respect and sensitivity from healthcare providers;
- (c) timely access to services; and
- (d) choice between providers and, where appropriate, treatment options.

We believe that none of these aims can be achieved without involving the users of healthcare in the decisions about service delivery and their own care.

In reviewing health services and proposals for service change, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be guided particularly by the following priorities:

- (a) accessibility of services should be to benefit patients, not to meet targets;
- (b) services should be made to fit patients, not patients to fit services; and
- (c) realistic improvements in services are of more value than idealistic plans.

Achieving the vision

We will seek to achieve improvements by:

- (a) ensuring that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee maintains a high public profile and that its role as advocate for patient and public interests is well known;
- (b) actively seeking the views of patients and the public;
- (c) monitoring the performance of health services;
- (d) holding health service managers to account and campaigning on agreed priorities.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is committed to working with the Patient and Public Involvement Fora so that all parties make the best use of their complementary statutory powers. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will maintain a broad oversight of the services available to Wandsworth Residents and will exercise its powers to hold health service managers to account for their actions, whereas the Patient and Public Involvement Fora will take the lead role in investigating the services provided by the NHS body with which they are concerned and in ensuring that the views of service users are being sought.

In support of our complementary statutory powers, we will:

- (a) share information about the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's plans and activities;
- (b) seek to agree with the Patient and Public Involvement Fora common priorities and co-ordinate action on them;
- (c) acknowledge the Patient and Public Involvement Forum role in our publicity; and
- (d) support the Patient and Public Involvement Fora, as far as possible, with the specialist expertise and resources that we have at our disposal.

We recognise that local NHS managers share our commitment to improving services, and we will seek to work in partnership with them. Whilst there will, from time to time, be differences of opinion, we will attempt wherever possible to resolve them by mutual agreement.

Statutory Background

The powers and responsibilities of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and the Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002; those of Patient and Public Involvement Fora are set out in the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002 and the Patients' Forums (Functions) Regulations 2003.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees have the power:

- (a) to require NHS bodies to provide it with information;
- (b) to review and make recommendations about services to which the relevant NHS body will be required to respond;
- (c) to require NHS officers to attend its meetings and answer questions; and
- (d) to be consulted on any proposal for a development or substantial change in health service provision and to ask the Secretary of State for Health to intervene if it is not satisfied with the consultation or the proposal itself.

Patient and Public Involvement Fora share the first two of these and have additional specific powers:

- (a) to enter and inspect health service premises; and
- (b) to ascertain the adequacy of the arrangements made by NHS bodies to consult with service users.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to seek the views of the relevant Patients' Forum when reviewing services provided by an NHS body, whilst, if a Patient and Public Involvement Forum is not satisfied with the arrangements that an NHS body has made to consult its users, it can refer the matter to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.