

**COUNCIL MEETING
22 NOVEMBER 2000**

**PROGRESS REPORT ON HEALTH ISSUES
(Chairman of the Health Panel – Councillor Mills)**

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the work of the Health Panel during the period since the last Full Council Meeting.

There has been one meeting since July at which consideration was given to several issues which have a significant bearing on the future development of Health Care Services in Bracknell Forest.

The NHS Plan

The Panel considered a report on the key points arising from the NHS Plan on how the Local Authority/Health interface should work. It was noted that the Plan had very many and far reaching impacts on how the health service should be delivered in the future - the key areas of specific relevance for the Local Authority interface were highlighted as being:

- Waiting times
- Inspection/incentives for joint working
- Scrutiny
- Patients perspectives
- Joint working

In discussing the future arrangements it was acknowledged that there was already a significant amount of joint working underway and that the Council would need to have regard to establishing an appropriate framework for supporting joint working as part of its consideration of the new decision-making structures as well as its enhanced scrutiny role over the health service proposed in the Plan.

It was also noted that Bracknell Primary Care Group had decided to defer its bid for Trust status until April 2002.

Health Improvement Programme (HImP)

The Clinical Governance & Health Improvement Programme Facilitator (part-funded by the Borough Council), updated the Panel on actions identified in the Bracknell HImP for 2000/01. The key areas being tackled are Coronary Heart Disease, Teenage Health, Health of the Elderly and Mental Health. 2 workshops have been held for stakeholders to air their views on how best to address the key topics. These were well received but highlighted the need for improved communication and information-giving, between the agencies and with the community itself. Amongst the ideas for sharing of good practice were using web technology; Town & Country; parish and church magazines; the local press; conferences/forums for public involvement; local environment fair; expanding the use of the council tax leaflet; providing a HImP telephone number and awareness weeks.

Overall, we believe the progress reported demonstrates excellent partnership working between the local health service and local authority, highlighting the multi-agency role in improving the health of our community.

Bracknell Forest Health Questionnaire – Action Plan

Further work has been undertaken in conjunction with the Primary Care Group to assess the data gathered from the questionnaire and an Action Plan has been approved for using this information. Amongst the key steps to be taken are:

- To identify Health Services which can be provided more locally than Heatherwood Hospital.
- To consider what joint actions can be undertaken/strengthened to prevent accidental injuries to children.
- To commission a study of transport issues for accessing healthcare.

These will build on the progress made already which includes:

- The development of Chest Pain Clinics at Heatherwood Hospital.
- The provision of an additional 8 Rehabilitation Beds for the elderly at Heatherwood.
- 5 Practices working with the PCG to explore how they can improve access to GPs for their patients, through the National Primary Care Collaborative
- All practices having Phlebotomy Services in house purchased by the PCG to reduce trips to hospital for blood testing.
- All practices being accredited to offer INR monitoring in-house preventing many repeated visits to hospital.

Bracknell Health Improvement Project

The Council's Health Improvement Officer (jointly funded by the Borough Council and the PCG), who had been appointed in December 1999 to promote physical activity within the borough on behalf of the Council and the Primary Care Group made her first progress report to the Panel. An assessment centre has been established at the Bracknell Sport & Leisure Centre (BSLC) and an improved GP Referral Scheme called "Activate" has been operating since June. Launched with the slogan "Actively benefiting the community", Activate has adopted a methodology which takes account of good practice from other schemes and Health Education Authority recommendations. Since its launch, All practices have registered on the scheme and to date 88 referrals have been made with participants being seen either at BSLC or Edgbarrow Sports Centre. The officer has also been active in promoting physical activity throughout the Borough both in formal seminars for specific groups, such as practice nurses, and generally at events such as the Environment Fair and the Sandhurst Fitness Funday. In addition, the promotion of health walks and cycling initiatives is currently being considered.

CONCLUSION

The above report reflects a very positive step forward in the joint working between the council and our health service partners, on which we will aim to build in the coming months for the benefit of all the residents of Bracknell Forest and this will include further discussion on how the Council can pursue its policy seeking the provision of a hospital for Bracknell.

Councillor T Mills
Chairman – Health Panel