Section 1: Summary

This report provides Members of the Committee with an up-date on the progress achieved over the last year with regard to local implementation of the National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People. The report is from the Council’s National Service Framework for Older People’s Champion. It is the fourth report to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee on NSF implementation.

Decision Required

Recommendation:
That Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee note the report

Reason for report

- The NSF is a key element of national policy in relation to health and social care services for older people. Monitoring of the NSF standards and milestones makes an important contribution to the Government’s formal performance appraisal of the Council and of local NHS agencies.
- Implementation of the NSF effectively forms a key component of the current Community Strategy and the Council’s Corporate Plan; and supports delivery of the Council’s key priority: “Impact through Harrow’s partnerships: working with partners to improve the health of Harrow people”.
Benefits

Not applicable.

Cost of Proposals

There are no specific costs arising from this decision.

Risks

Not applicable.

Implications if recommendations rejected

Not applicable.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Background

The NSF for Older People was published in March 2001. It sets out eight specific “standards” which aim to improve the equity of service delivery to older people from all relevant agencies, and to raise the quality of services provided and care offered.

The NSF requires Councils with Social Services responsibility to appoint an elected Member as champion “who will lead for older people … ensuring that older people become and remain a priority within their own organisation, and supporting the implementation of the NSF”.

Non-executive Directors of the relevant NHS bodies are also required to appoint an Older Person’s Champion. Practice and clinician champions have also been appointed, and a Champion’s Network established.

I last reported to the Sub Committee in June 2004. Since then, I have continued to attend meetings of the Local NSF Implementation Team, although we have not met since September 2004. I have also attended meetings for Champions, both in Harrow and those organised by the Department of Health.

I also attend meetings of the PCT Board as the Council’s formal observer which gives me a good over-view of the work the Harrow PCT is undertaking for older people, which is a priority in their Local Delivery Plan for 2003 to 2006.
As a Trustee of Age Concern and of the Harrow Association for Disability, and as Hon. President and Chair of the Harrow & Hillingdon Alzheimer's Society, I am well placed to use my role as Champion to link issues of concern to those and other organisations concerned with older persons’ issues, particularly those raised at the Supporting People and POP Panels.

The NSF defines eight standards that local health and social care services should seek to attain in their implementation work. Some of these standards have mile-stone dates set for when key developments should be in place. However, overall, the Government sees the work on the standards as ongoing until the end of the decade.

Attached as Appendix 1 is the latest Annual Report (for 2004/05) prepared by the PCT in conjunction with the Council; this is presented in the standard format now in use within the NHS. The Report details progress achieved over the last year and describes the main outstanding challenges, as detailed against each of the NSF standards and the four milestones related to medicines management.

2.2 The Council’s Contribution

Relevant Council Directorates are actively involved in working to help deliver NSF requirements (especially those which are not exclusively NHS issues), and there are now a considerable range of joint working mechanisms in place:

- Delivery of the key NSF standards is incorporated within the current Business Plan for the Community Care Department within People First.

- There is substantial on-going commitment to working with local NHS agencies and other stakeholders in developing local whole-system planning processes, in line with key themes within current Government policy and Guidance.

- The Council plays its full part in funding and managing the work of the Joint Commissioning Unit, developing the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People’s Services, etc.

- Management of the Integrated Community Equipment Service (Standard 2) is being led from within the Council, and this arrangement is now covered by a recently concluded Section 31 agreement between the Council and the PCT.

- Work to develop other approaches to developing further joint working and service integration are being actively progressed.

2.3 Voluntary Sector Involvement

Voluntary sector partners play an important role in helping to deliver NSF requirements, especially in relation to providing support to those older people (and their carers) who do not currently meet the eligibility criteria for the range of services directly delivered or commissioned by the Council. Many such organisations also make a key contribution within local joint-planning processes.
Age Concern are active in developing and delivering a number of preventative support schemes, being especially involved in initiatives which support the local Falls Prevention programme (Standard 6); and the Alzheimer’s Society play a key role in supporting those older people who experience mental health problems, and their carers (Standard 7).

2.4 Conclusion

Overall, encouraging progress is being made, with only 4 report elements out of 18 showing severe problems - 2 of which relate to ‘medicines management’. However, a number of significant challenges still remain with many of these reflecting current funding pressures, in particular for either the PCT or the North West London Hospitals Trust.

I propose to submit a further up-date report in a year’s time.

2.5 Consultation

None that is specifically relevant to this report.

2.6 Financial Implications

None.

2.7 Legal Implications

None.

2.8 Equalities Impact

Action to address age-related discrimination is an integral part of the NSF itself (Standard 1).
Section 3: Supporting Information / Background Documents

Appendix 1:


This appendix is a colour document and is therefore being circulated separately from the main agenda to Members and Reserves only. Copies are available on request from Nick Wale 020 8424 1323 / nick.wale@harrow.gov.uk

List information that is on deposit in Group Offices, can be viewed on the web and will be available for inspection at the meeting:

None

List other background papers that are available on request (statutory requirement):

None

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