

Report to: **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Date: **27th November 2008**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check results 2007/08**

Purpose of report: **To update HOSC on the results of the annual health check process for 2007/08 and to agree any action required.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOSC is recommended to:

- 1. Agree that East Sussex Primary Care Trusts be requested to present their action plans for addressing areas of concern highlighted in the Annual Health Check to HOSC at a dedicated seminar on Wednesday 10th December 2008.**
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1. The Annual Health Check Process

1.1 In 2005/06 the Healthcare Commission introduced a new system for assessing the performance of NHS organisations, known as the 'Annual Health Check'. This requires all NHS organisations to submit a self-assessment against the national 'Standards for Better Health'. The Health Check also incorporates an assessment of financial management and the organisation's performance against national targets.

1.2 As part of this process, NHS organisations are required to invite third parties including HOSCs, Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) and Strategic Health Authorities to make any comments on the organisation's performance against the standards based on evidence gathered during the year. HOSC was not able to provide a commentary on local organisations' performance as part of the 2007/08 process as HOSC resources and work programme had been fully occupied with the 'Fit for the Future' process and very limited evidence had been gathered in relation to other areas for this reason.

1.3 The Healthcare Commission then cross-checks the self-assessments against nationally held data and any comments received by third parties to identify inconsistencies and any areas of non-compliance with the standards. On the basis of this analysis, around 10% of organisations receive a detailed inspection on the basis that they have an increased risk of non-compliance. A further 10% of organisations are selected entirely at random to receive an inspection.

1.4 The Healthcare Commission uses the self-assessments, their analysis and any inspection findings to calculate two ratings for each organisation – one for the quality of services and one for the use of resources. Ratings are on a four point scale – weak, fair, good or excellent.

2. Results for 2007/08

2.1 The outcomes of the 2007/08 process were announced in October 2008. Each organisation's headline ratings for quality of services and use of resources were published on the Healthcare Commission website (www.healthcarecommission.org.uk), together with a further breakdown of how these ratings had been arrived at and results for individual standards and targets. A summary list of each local NHS organisation's ratings is attached at appendix 1. These ratings relate to the organisation's status during the year April 2007 to March 2008.

2.2 Nationally, NHS provider Trusts fared better in terms of overall ratings than Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). This pattern is largely reflected locally, with local provider Trusts tending to receive higher ratings, although this was not entirely the case.

2.3 Perhaps the most noticeable rating is East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT's deterioration from 'fair' in 2006/07 to 'weak' in 2007/08 for quality of services. The PCT did improve from 'weak' to 'fair' for use of resources however. Hastings and Rother PCT maintained its 2006/07 rating of 'fair' for quality of services and improved from 'fair' to 'good' for use of resources.

2.4 It should be noted that the quality of services rating incorporates a wide range of issues and targets. Organisations receiving a lower rating can be performing well in some of these but poorly in others which results in the overall rating of 'weak'. It does not necessarily mean that all services, or aspects of services are weak. Likewise, there are likely to be areas requiring improvement even when an organisation receives an 'excellent' rating. A 'weak' rating therefore merits fuller investigation to identify where the specific areas of concern are and to ensure that these particular issues are being addressed.

2.5 HOSC may wish to investigate the reasons for the deterioration in East Sussex Downs and Weald's rating and ensure that both PCTs have robust plans in place to address areas of concern and to improve ratings in future years. In order to devote sufficient time to this, with the involvement of the new PCT Chief Executive, it is recommended that the PCTs are requested to attend a dedicated seminar for this purpose on Wednesday 10th December 2008.

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Summary of Annual Health Check ratings for local NHS organisations

Organisation	2007/08		2006/07	
	Quality of services	Use of resources	Quality of services	Use of resources
East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT	Weak	Fair	Fair	Weak
Hastings and Rother PCT	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair
East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust	Fair	Good	Fair	Weak
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	Excellent	Fair	Fair	Weak
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	Weak	Fair	Weak	Weak
Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
South East Coast Ambulance NHS Trust	Good	Good	Fair	Fair