

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Health Scrutiny Panel</b>	<b>20 December 2005</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>009/056</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Report of: Sara Williams Assistant Chief Executive</b>		<b>Title : Delivering Choosing Health Review – update report</b>		
<b>Originating Officer(s) : Alan Steward, Scrutiny Policy Manager</b>		<b>Ward(s) affected: N/A</b>		

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides the Panel with an update on the Delivering Choosing Health scrutiny review.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Committee:
- 1 consider and note the report
  - 2 nominate two members to work with the PPI forum representatives on evaluating the Healthy Lifestyles Project.

---

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)  
LIST OF “BACKGROUND PAPERS” USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

Brief description of “background paper”

Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection

**Choosing Health scrutiny review file**

**Scrutiny Policy Team, Town Hall  
0207 364 4767**

### **3. Background**

3.1 The Health Scrutiny Panel's main review this year is on partnership arrangements between the Council and the NHS to deliver Choosing Health. This is being explored by using obesity in young people as a case study. As part of this the Health Scrutiny Panel was successful in securing upto £20,000 from the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to support its work. This report provides an update on the review since the last meeting (28 Sep 05).

### **4. Focus Groups**

4.1 Five focus groups were held in October to find out what local people thought about eating, exercise and obesity. They looked at how local and national services can work with communities to deliver information and services that will help them lead healthier lifestyles.

4.2 Two focus groups were made up of adults from the Council's Residents' Panel coming from LAP5 and LAP6. Three were with young people who were:

- on the Healthy Lifestyles Programme aimed at overweight young people
- signed up for the "Be Fit" card, giving discounts on leisure services
- low or non-users of leisure services

Abiola Ogunsola from the University of East London facilitated the focus groups, with those for young people co-facilitated by two young people from Youth Services. Appendix 1 has a brief summary of the main points raised.

4.3 The key areas of concern were around:

- supporting parents to choose healthy lifestyles and be role models
- the role of schools in encouraging young people to lead healthy lifestyles
- the role of organisations like the Council and the PCT
- ensuring that messages, information and campaigns are effective
- encouraging young people to take more physical activity
- learning from good practice and making sure that the Council and its partners fully exploit the opportunities that the Olympics will bring to the borough

### **5. Roundtable Seminar**

5.1 These six issues were put to service providers on Friday 25 November at a successful breakfast seminar held at St John Bread and Wine in Spitalfields. To make sure energy levels were high, delegates at the seminar had a choice of healthy breakfasts including porridge and prunes, kedgeree and piklets and jams.

5.2 There were nearly 30 organisations and services represented at the seminar. The Council was well represented with both Executive and backbench councillors and officers from Education, Social Services, Youth and Community Learning and Environment and Culture. The PCT, the Tower Hamlets Partnership, Greenwich Leisure, Community Organisations Forum (COF), East London and the City Mental Health Trust and a number of voluntary and community organisations were also present.

5.3 The seminar participants selected topics to discuss in smaller groups and were asked to identify three priorities to feedback at the end of the seminar. The final report will be available later this month but some of the suggested priorities were:

- school based healthy eating sessions for parents and young people
- better focus on eating and physical activity in schools
- the "Be Fit" card is an excellent scheme and it should be built on
- using local images in public health promotions and campaigns

- working jointly across Olympic boroughs using the Youth Parliament as a vehicle for gathering views
- greater partnership working with voluntary and community groups in the promotion and delivery of healthy lifestyle services.

## **6. E-panel and weblog**

- 6.1 The website is available at [www.e-consultation.net/health](http://www.e-consultation.net/health). This includes a deliberative poll around whether young people should be encouraged to diet, as well as discussion forums around eating, exercise and obesity. The website has been publicised through Eastend Life, a news release, an email to all members of AMP (the Young People's website) and through the Council's internal staff noticeboard. An article was also included within the Scrutiny Champions bulletin produced by the CfPS (Appendix 2) and has featured in the East London Advertiser.
- 6.2 Since it was set up 263 people from across the world have visited the website and over 20 replies have been posted. The deliberative poll shows that 65% thought that young people who were overweight should be encouraged to diet.
- 6.3 There is a weblog that is providing information on events and some of the lessons learnt as we go along. This is available from the home page of the website. It is an attempt to keep not only local people informed but is also part of the action learning aspect of the project for the wider scrutiny community.

## **7. Action learning**

- 7.1 An important part of the review is provided by Gladius Kulothungan from the Centre for Institutional Studies at the University of East London. He is tracking the project to provide some action learning from the review. The findings will also feed into the national evaluation of action learning projects being conducted by Manchester University, as commissioned by the CfPS.
- 7.2 The initial feedback on the focus groups has been positive with the following highlights:
- focus groups worked well and the young people and adults who attended were really enthusiastic
  - questions that were posed generated a wide-ranging discussion that resulted in lots of comments and ideas to analyse
  - using two young people to help facilitate the focus groups encouraged the other young people to contribute to the discussions
  - Cllr Khan's attendance at the second focus group for young people had a positive impact on the group discussion.
- 7.3 The main area to improve was that the groups were not as representative of the borough as they could have been. The adult focus groups were largely white with little or no representation from the Bangladeshi community. In contrast, the young people's focus groups had an over-representation of Bangladeshi young people.

## **8. Next Steps**

- 8.1 The next stage is to look at how partnership working helped develop the Healthy Lifestyles programme. This encourages GPs to refer overweight young people onto a special exercise programme run by the Council's Leisure Services. This will involve members of the Health Scrutiny Panel working with the representatives from the Public Patient Involvement (PPI) Forums. It is hoped to run this early in January 2006.

8.2 The review is running effectively and to timetable. It is collecting considerable evidence for members to consider. The findings from the various strands of the review including the focus groups, roundtable seminar and session on the Healthy Lifestyles project, will be brought together for members to discuss and agree recommendations at the March meeting.

**9. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

9.1 This work is part-funded through external resources secured from the Centre for Public Scrutiny. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**10. Concurrent report of the Chief Legal Officer**

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**11. Anti-poverty and equal opportunity implications**

11.1 Equal opportunities and reducing poverty are central to the work of the Health Scrutiny Panel. The review focuses on young people and will suggest how to improve services to this group.

**12. Recommendations**

12.1 That Committee:

- 1 consider and note the report
- 2 nominate two members to work with the PPI forum representatives on evaluating the Healthy Lifestyles Project.

## Main Findings from the Focus Groups

There was a general consensus that health was mainly the individual's responsibility but a whole range of agencies have a part to play.

A healthy lifestyle was felt to be one of eating in a balanced way and being active but the adult groups also stressed attitudes, the nature of the community and the environment.

Communications, information and networks were viewed as crucial if people are to engage in healthier activities and lifestyles. Posters and other information needed to include both positive and negative messages. It was really important to use local images - people and places - in campaigns. Tower Hamlets was a very diverse community and the different communities and cultures needed to be represented. Young people also stressed the importance of targeting information, campaigns and support at parents. Fun was seen as an essential part of making the information and support attractive to local people.

Many people mentioned television programmes like Jamie Oliver's School Dinners and the film Supersize Me. They felt that when these were in the media and people were talking about them, the Council and NHS needed to exploit the opportunity to get local messages over.

Schools were seen as playing a pivotal role, particularly for young people. Not only did they provide a meal for many young people, but they could also help with skills and knowledge about eating and cooking. Schools could also help give more opportunities for exercise. But it was not just about the young people in schools, they needed to involve parents as well.

Youth clubs could help promote healthy eating and exercise but the facilities needed to be improved. People felt that leisure facilities could be intimidating for people who are overweight particularly communal dressing rooms and swimwear.

People felt that there was a lack of time to do the shopping and cooking involved in healthy eating and there was also concern about the large numbers of fast food outlets in the borough.

The main things the Council and NHS should focus on were felt to be:

- providing information including through the internet, Eastend Life and Idea Stores
- providing support and activities that helped promote eating and exercise including looking at holding markets and encouraging different food suppliers to come into the borough
- improving and extending facilities and services such as open spaces, playgrounds, leisure centres and leisure passes
- providing leadership around campaigns and working actively to influence and support parents change the way they eat and exercise
- help celebrate the good things and successes

Innovative ways to encourage people to be healthy and engage in balanced and healthy choices were suggested and there was general agreement that the Council should be at the helm of this innovation.

From the CfPS Scrutiny Champions December Bulletin

### **Tower Hamlets: eating, exercise and obesity**

Having won one of the CfPS Health Scrutiny Action Learning projects we were well-chuffed. We're always working hard to develop the effectiveness of scrutiny in Tower Hamlets and this was a significant landmark. But then - of course - you've got to turn good ideas into real improvements benefiting local people.

Last year we completed a successful review around access for young people to sexual health services so we were keen to maintain the focus on under 25s. We saw the Government's proposals around Choosing Health as significant and interesting because they highlighted not only the main health issues but also partnership - the core of how Tower Hamlets works. We wanted to explore what this means for the Council, NHS organisations and local communities. How are the different organisations working together? How are services changing and improving for local people?

We decided to focus on obesity in young people. Highlighted by Government, healthy eating is a popular concern as reflected in Jamie's School Dinners and the film *Supersize me*. Within Tower Hamlets, our Local Area Partnerships (with residents) have also picked up on this and are taking action on awareness programmes around obesity, lifestyle and exercise programmes and increased promotion of walking and other exercise in parks.

Obesity is a complex area to investigate as no one agency or organisation takes the lead. But obesity raises important issues of personal responsibility as well. The Council, GPs and NHS can have the best promotional campaigns and facilities, but it also comes down to individual and family choices over eating and exercise.

We set the review up to probe all this by:

- talking to local residents in two of our Local Area Partnerships that have markedly different communities, as well as organisational infrastructures, to explore the impact this has
- holding focus groups with different groups of young people. Some who are on an intensive programme to reduce their weight, others have the Council's 'be fit' leisure cards with discounted access to sports and leisure facilities and some who are not engaged at all
- setting up an interactive website with a challenging deliberative forum. People can not only give their views but post reactions to other opinions and get a debate going. As an incentive, we're offering a prize draw of an iPod Nano for all those who take part

In the focus groups young people said that:

- they recognise moving forward is a joint responsibility between individuals and organisations
- particularly those of Bengali origin (64 per cent of population under 20 years) want organisations respected by their parents to champion healthy eating
- exploring more ambitious partnerships, for example with rural areas, could encourage farmers' markets bringing more fresh food into the borough
- using the preparations for the Olympics will help sell the healthy lifestyles message and encourage the whole community to get involved

Drawing together the findings it's time for an in-depth discussion with local service providers about what they do, and how they can take local views into account. Working on the assumption that the way to a stakeholder's heart is through their stomach, we're doing this with a breakfast seminar, complete with porridge and kedgeree, in the world famous local restaurant, St John's Bread and Wine, renowned for its nose-to-tail eating.

Alongside this we are "live" tracking a partnership project. With our local Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum reps working with a member of the Health Scrutiny Panel, we will look at the Healthy Lifestyles programme where local GPs refer obese young people onto the Council's leisure services exercise programme. This innovative project was the first in London.

In February we will bring together the different strands. Our aim is to identify the successes and barriers that all local partners will need to consider to deliver effective healthy lifestyles services for young people.

Of course, it's not just about the outcome of the review; it's also about how scrutiny enhances the community leadership of councillors.

To help do this we are getting out of the town hall. Sometimes Scrutiny can still feel too much like a committee - something some of us are still too comfortable with! Health Scrutiny Panel members are working with young people on the focus groups, as well as considering the more formal reports.

Gladius Kulothungan from the Centre for Institutional Studies at the University of East London is providing an outside challenge by tracking the project. He has already provided positive feedback about using young people to facilitate the focus groups as well as highlighting the need to make sure participants really reflect local communities.

We want to share how things are going as they happen so we've added a blog to our interactive website for feedback. It's the first time we've done this so have a look and let us know what you think. As the CfPS project is about swapping good practice be part of the learning process as well as reading about the outcomes.