

Tower Hamlets Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Briefing for Health Scrutiny Panel – September 2008

The purpose of this paper is to brief the Health Scrutiny Panel on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment process. This is a new duty commenced on the the 1st of April and the paper outlines what the JSNA is; what it involves; progress so far and next steps. The JSNA will be a critical process to inform the work and agenda of the Scrutiny Panel.

1. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – What is it?

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is a new duty placed on local authorities and PCTs that commenced on 1st April 2008.

The purpose of the JSNA is to ensure that local authorities and PCTs work together to understand the 'big picture' in terms of the extent to which their strategies are having an impact on meeting the health and wellbeing needs of the population.

This requires bringing local authority and PCT data together in new and innovative ways in order to get a richer understanding of how PCT and local authority initiatives are improving health and wellbeing and where there are gaps in our commissioning.

It also means listening to those people who are in need of services or interventions that improve or maintain their wellbeing and understanding the extent to which these needs are being met.

The JSNA is at the heart of the process that informs our targets and commissioning priorities and is driven jointly by the Director of Public Health, Director of Adult Social Services and Director of Children's Services.

2. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – What does it involve?

JSNA is a continuous process. However, it can be thought of in terms of the following questions:

What are the health and wellbeing needs in the population?

The Department of Health have defined a 'core dataset' that set out the minimal requirement to inform JSNA¹ and understand the health need in the population.

This covers data around:

- population trends (eg births, age structure ethnicity, population growth)
- the social and environment context (eg poverty, housing, employment, transport)
- lifestyle factors (eg smoking, diet, physical activity, alcohol)

¹ Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Department of Health
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_081097

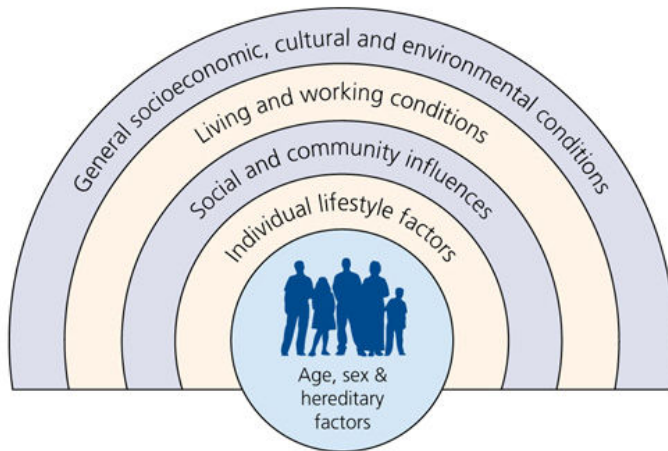
- diseases (eg diabetes, heart disease, cancer, lung disease)
- use of health and social care services including user perspectives

We expect to go well beyond this core dataset by using our local data as effectively as possible through a joint health intelligence function across the PCT and local authority. In addition, we need to look at ways to add 'community intelligence' into our local dataset. This means having a systematic and representative process to understand health and wellbeing need from the perspective of people living and working the Borough. The recently established Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) will therefore play a critical role in informing the JSNA

What are we doing to meet health and wellbeing needs in Tower Hamlets?

This involves getting a clear understanding of the strategies and plans across the Partnership that have an impact on health and wellbeing in Tower Hamlets and ensuring that these are properly linked and joined up. It is important to recognise that the most powerful factors affecting health are the wider determinants of health such as economic status, education, poverty, environmental conditions and lifestyle (fig 1).

Figure 1 The wider determinants of health



A wide range of strategies will therefore need to be assessed (box 1)

Box 1 Examples of strategies and plans linking to JSNA²

- PCT and Local Authority commissioning strategies
- PCT Local Delivery Plans
- Children and Young People's plans
- Practice Based Commissioning plans
- Local Development Plans
- Community regeneration strategies
- Supporting People strategies
- Housing strategies
- Community safety strategies

How well are we meeting need and what are the gaps?

This involves assessing the extent to which the broad sweep of strategies across the partnership are having an impact on improving health and wellbeing in Tower Hamlets based on bringing together our best intelligence of population need and an assessment of the impact of our strategies. This assessment will highlight what is going well and where we are not addressing the needs of people in Tower Hamlets. It will look at ways we can effectively impact on unmet need and improve existing services. It will also identify areas where we need to gather more information to understand particular issues better.

How can we engage with the population on these issues?

Community engagement is central to the JSNA process. This means involvement of communities in Tower Hamlets throughout the process. There are three distinct elements to this as follows:

- Working with communities to identify the questions or issues that the JSNA should address
- Gathering community perspectives in relation to specific questions emerging from the JSNA
- Consultation of the public around documents emerging from the JSNA process

This will need to build on existing engagement and consultation strategies.

3. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in Tower Hamlets - progress

There has been considerable work on developing the JSNA process in Tower Hamlets.

- The Core Data set collection outlined in section 2 was completed in July 2008
- Following this a JSNA workshop was attended by stakeholders across the PCT and Local Authority in order to explore how the JSNA process should be embedded in

² Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Department of Health
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_081097

Tower Hamlets. This agreed a six stage process for the JSNA for the initial phase of JSNA this year

- Production of core dataset
 - Audit of commissioning strategies
 - Gap analysis
 - 'Foundation JSNA' setting out findings
 - Consultation on Foundation JSNA
 - Summary JSNA – a summary of the key issues and recommendations
- The Foundation JSNA document is due to be produced by the end of October
 - There is current discussion around aligning the consultation around the Improving Health and Wellbeing strategy refresh with the JSNA consultation
 - A Joint Intelligence Group has been set up across the local authority and PCT

4. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – the longer term

As highlighted above, JSNA is an ongoing process and the process does not end with the production of a document. The key priority is to embed joint strategic needs as the basis for jointly establishing local priorities to improve health and wellbeing in Tower Hamlets.

In order to achieve this, the next steps are as follows

- To formalise the Steering Group whose membership reflects the breadth of agendas that the JSNA will need to address.
- To establish a streamlined process for the collation and further development of a routine dataset to inform JSNA on an ongoing basis (using the Humana dataset as a basis)
- To agree an analytical work plan for 2008/9 – using the Humana work to establish further analyses for the year
- To agree a plan for community engagement around the JSNA for 2008/9
- To communicate plans at high strategic level across the PCT, LA and Partnership
- To ensure that processes are in place to enable JSNA to routinely inform commissioning priorities.

The JSNA process will be a key resource for the Health Scrutiny Panel over the long term to understand the impact of partnership strategies impacting on health and wellbeing in Tower Hamlets and emerging issues.