CHOOSING HEALTH? – CONSULTATION ON IMPROVING PEOPLE'S HEALTH

1 SUMMARY

1.1 To invite Members to consider a Government Consultation on improving public health.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Secretary of State for Health has published a consultation document on improving public health, opening up a debate on how individuals, communities, NHS organisations and others can work together to create opportunities for everyone to enjoy the best health that is possible for them.

2.2 The consultation period ends on 28 May 2004. A copy of the full consultation document has been placed in the Members' Library.

2.3 The consultation covers issues impacting on public health such as:-

- Accidents
- Alcohol misuse
- Diet
- Drugs
- Exercise
- Inequalities
- Mental health
- Obesity
- Sexual health
- Smoking

2.4 The consultation document invites responses from individuals, communities, organisations, public health professionals, universities and the NHS, and a series of questions is included for the various groups, to prompt debate and feedback. For organisations such as the Council, the questions are as appended.

2.5 Arrangements are being made for a representative from the Primary Care Trust to attend the meeting.

3   **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

3.1   **Strategic Risk/Operational Risk**

The consultation may lead to changes in priorities for programmes of action both nationally and locally which impact on the Council.

4   **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1   None at this stage, but the consultation may lead to requirements or recommendations to implement programmes of action.

5   **RECOMMENDATION**

5.1   It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To consider the consultation on improving people's health and to make comments as appropriate.

G P Woolhouse

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Background Papers:

None.

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APPENDIX

Questions for Organisations

Organisations have an impact on health through their interactions with the public, employees and society

What action can industry, voluntary and community organisations, the public sector take to improve health:

- in offering healthier choices in the products they provide?
- In influencing choices through advertising?
- As employers?
- Improving access to services?

How can we better enable and support everyone, taking account of differences in social and ethnic background, to lead healthy lives by:

- increasing knowledge of what makes a difference?
- Encouraging a positive attitude to health?
- Making healthy choices available?
- Discouraging destructive choices in: diet, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, exposure to the sun?
  Encouraging take up of screening programmes for early detection of diseases?
- Improving access to and quality of NHS services, especially for people in disadvantaged groups and areas and people who are harder to reach?
- making sure people understand the risks and consequences of the choices they make?
- Through better management of sickness absence and improving access and opportunities to people with long-term conditions or disabilities?

What should be given priority and why? How should progress be measured? What might the barriers to progress be and how could they be tackled? Who should take the lead?

Creating and maintaining a healthy environment

What can be done to better identify, prevent and tackle inequalities to ensure that individuals, groups or communities are not unduly disadvantaged in their access to decent local environments (built and natural) and the environmentally related services and facilities needed for healthy lifestyles?

What can be done to create and maintain an environment that enables and encourages healthy lifestyle choices:

- in nurseries, schools and higher education facilities?

- In places where health and social care are provided?
- In other public buildings and enclosed spaces?
- Through improvements to public transport?
- In shops?
- In places people go for leisure activities?
- Where people work?
- In homes and communities?
- In residential streets and public communal places?
- Through improvements to the environment and environmental quality?

What should be given priority and why?

How should progress be measured? What might the barriers to progress be and how could they be tackled? Who should take the lead?

Helping people deal with the stresses of life

What can be done to help people in all social and ethnic groups to cope with the stresses of life by supporting them:

In getting a good start to emotional development and developing and maintaining protective mechanisms such as:

- Meaningful relationships: e.g. at school, at home, if they are looked – after, when they leave home?
- Developing and maintaining meaningful social and occupational roles?
- Achieving a work/like balance?
- In dealing with transitions: e.g. leaving home for work or university, having children, when a partner or child dies, break-up of a partnership, losing a job, retiring?

What should be given priority and why? Who should take the lead?

Working together to support healthy choices

What information does your organisation need to improve health and tackle health inequalities? What opportunities are there to influence healthy choices by:

- Parents?
- Friends?
- Schools and higher education?
- Employers?
- Faith communities?
- Health and social care professionals?
- Local government, including housing, education and the environment?
- Residents associations?
- Voluntary and community organisations?
- Retailers?

-    Industry?   7.5
-    Trades Unions?
-    The media?
-    Leisure organisations?
-    National government?

What should be given priority? Where could more be achieved by working together?