

Health and Social Services Committee

HSS(2)-13-06(p.3)

Meeting date: Thursday 28 September 2006

Venue: Committee Room 1, Senedd, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Update on the National Assembly for Wales Annual Equality Report - Health and Social Services Perspective

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with the Health and Social Services component of the National Assembly for Wales Annual Equality Report for scrutiny prior to submission of the complete report to the Equal Opportunity Committee in October 2006.

2. Background

The Assembly's Annual Report on Equality Section 120 of the Government of Wales Act states:

"120. – (1) The Assembly shall make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that its functions are exercised with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people.

(2) After each financial year the Assembly shall publish a report containing-

(a) a statement of the arrangements made in pursuance of subsection (1) which had effect during that financial year, and

(b) an assessment of how effective those arrangements were in promoting equality of opportunity."

The Equality Opportunity Committee plays a key role in meeting this statutory requirement. As all Assembly Subject Committees have an interest in this subject the Panel of Chairs have discussed how all Committees can contribute to the scrutiny of this report. The Panel agreed that this Committee will scrutinise the health and social services section of the Welsh Assembly Government's Annual Report on Equality (05-06).

3. Recommendation

The Committee is invited to note the content of this paper, and discuss the attached National Assembly for Wales Equality Annual Report 2005-06, Health and Social Services Perspective between pages 25 and 31, and comment as appropriate. Feedback to be forwarded to Gavin Moore in

SEDU and Denise Puckett, DHSS Equality Champion.

4. Update

A Health and Social Services Equality Annual Report submission detailing all of the progress during 2005-06 was used by SEDU to inform the relevant section of the report and will be used as an appendix in the main report, and as such will not be available translated. SEDU will use information submitted from all Welsh Assembly Government departments to compile the National Assembly for Wales Equality Annual Report 2005-06.

SEDU will be putting the full report to the Equal Opportunities Committee in October 2006.

This paper highlights some of the progress achieved during 2005-06, further information is available in the attached Health and Social Services perspective.

4.1 Progress in equality terms against the identified top 5 department strategic objectives for both DHSS and OCMO included:

Department of Health & Social Services

Free Prescriptions

The series of staged reductions in prescriptions charges continued, following a manifesto commitment to ensure equal access to medication for all in Wales, and on April 1st 05, the charge was reduced again to £4 per item as oppose to £6.50 in England. From 1st April 06, the prescription charge was reduced again to £3, complete abolition of charges will take place on 1st April 07.

Policy & Implementation for Tackling Cancer

The age range for breast screening programme was extended from 50 to 64 to women aged 50-70.

Implement Strategy for Older People

Under the Older Persons Strategy, the Assembly Government has undertaken literature and scoping reviews on researching the needs of Lesbian, Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT), older people. Funding from the strategy has also facilitated two older people networks, one for BME community and one for LGBT. A research project was undertaken by Salford University looking at the specific needs of Black and Minority Ethnic elders.

Establishment of Children and Young People Specialist Services Standards

The consultation period for the first 3 specialised service documents ended in June 2005. In September 2005, consultation events to link in with parent of children accessing specialised services through 'Contact a Family Wales' commenced.

£550m for Modernising GP Surgeries and Hospitals

All NHS Trusts are developing their iterative processes of employing accredited consultants to conduct surveys of their estates and produce a prioritised programme of actions required to comply with the DDA. Many of these programmes have been shared with local Community Health Councils.

All Independent contracting GPs have been issued with guidance on meeting DDA compliance, which is considered as part of the approval process for all bids for central capital funding.

Office of the Chief Medical Officer

a) Development of food and fitness implementation plan for children and young people

The task group included representatives from a wide range of organisations in Wales and included the voluntary organisation MEWN (Minority Ethnic Women's Network). Young people's views were obtained through focus groups across Wales and the consultation included a special children's version. Specific actions arising are: a modified physical activity resource for use in special schools, making resources for parents available in minority languages and incorporating disabled access into the mobile cookery classroom commissioned for Wales.

b) Reducing smoking-related harm

The Service Level Agreement with the National Public Health Service for smoking cessation services in Wales specifies the need to target clients from socially disadvantaged groups with particular attention being paid to pregnant smokers and smokers from manual socio-economic groups. Television advertising was introduced to raise awareness and broaden knowledge of smoking cessation services.

The commitment to a comprehensive ban on smoking in public places will ensure the health benefits of the ban reach areas of social deprivation.

c) Inequalities in Health Fund

There are currently 62 live projects across Wales's most disadvantaged communities. Projects are focussing on coronary heart disease (CHD). All projects are providing evidence of making a positive difference. Examples include providing screening services and assessment services in areas where they did not exist before, helping people to lose weight through advice on diet and exercise, four Black and Ethnic Minority projects which have succeeded in developing gender specific exercise classes and also in tailoring health and well being advice in a culturally sensitive way.

d) Health Challenge Wales Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme

This scheme provides funding for 19 organisations with the aim to improving the health and well-

being of their client groups through various initiatives.

Specific examples of successful project funding for the above two schemes include the Barefoot Health Workers project helping local communities in Cardiff to examine culturally appropriate ways to improve health, the Heartbeat Dharkan project in Newport to engage local black and ethnic minority communities through literature in a variety of languages and events involving 4000 people in the Travellers project in Wrexham which has enabled over 200 Gypsy Travellers to be offered health screening advice and support. Other examples include MEWN Cymru who are helping ethnic minority women to access health care services, and Learning Disability Wales who are educating GPs about the challenges faced by people with learning difficulties when accessing health care

e) To ensure that childhood and adult vaccination programmes are delivered and that take-up rates remain high

During 2005/06 immunisation materials were prepared in Braille and also 21 minority languages. Information will also be made available in an audio tape format in 2006/07.

5. Work has commenced on the 2006/07 Equality Annual Report, identifying main priorities, and areas of work as they progress.

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