

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE PLAN

Report of the Director of Adult Care Services

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Executive Member:- Julia Price

1. Purpose of Report

To outline the key issues for the County Council arising from the proposals contained in the NHS Plan published on 27 July 2000, and actions required in respect of those proposals.

2. Summary

2.1 The NHS Plan sets out the vision for the health service for the 21st Century and outlines the plans for investment and reform which will combine to deliver the vision.

2.2 This report highlights the proposals contained in the plan, which will have a direct impact on Hertfordshire County Council and the way in which it organises and delivers services.

2.3 Key proposals include:-

- A new scrutiny role for local authorities
- A requirement to pool budgets and provide or commission services jointly with health
- The option of establishing "Care Trusts" - a development of Primary Care Trusts to encompass responsibility for social care
- Joint Best Value inspections of health and social care
- An extra £900m investment in intermediate care by 2003/4

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- Changes to the way in which long term care is funded (in response to the report of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care).

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The County Council needs to determine how to fulfil its new scrutiny role and which portfolio holder(s) will take responsibility for liaison with the health service on the wider implementation of the plan. The content of the Plan as it relates to the County Council is largely adult focused, but there are targets relating particularly to children in care. It may be appropriate for the Adult Care Services Select Committee to undertake the scrutiny role and for the Adult Care Services Portfolio Holder to take the lead on matters relating to the NHS Plan in liaison with the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 3.2 The current reconfiguration of the County Council's services for older and physically disabled people around PCT boundaries is entirely in line with the requirements in the NHS Plan for joint working. Once PCTs are established, there will be a need to move very quickly towards the pooling of budgets and to consider whether the establishment of Care Trusts is appropriate.

1. Background

- 1.1 The NHS Plan sets out detailed proposals for investment in and reform of the NHS to produce a modernised health service, designed around the needs of patients. The plan is underpinned by a set of core principles, including the provision of universal, comprehensive, high quality services, shaped around the needs of users, with access based on need, not ability to pay. There is an emphasis on valuing and supporting staff and working with others, particularly in the social care sector, to provide seamless services. There is a commitment to focus on prevention as well as treatment.
- 1.2 The Government has also published its response to the Royal Commission on Long Term Care and proposals to be taken forward are included in the plan.
- 1.3 There are some key areas of the plan which require closer working with local authorities.

2. Proposals which require closer working with Local Authorities

- 2.1 The Plan aims to improve the scrutiny of the NHS, and local government will be given the power to scrutinise the NHS locally. Chief Executives of NHS organisations will be required to attend the main local authority scrutiny all-party committee at least twice annually, if requested. In future, major planned changes to the NHS will be referred to this local authority committee, instead of to Community Health Councils (CHCs) which are to be disbanded subject to primary legislation and probably from April 2002. The County Council will have to decide where to undertake the scrutiny role. It may be appropriate for the responsibility to rest with the Adult Care Services Select Committee.
- 2.2 It will be a requirement that Social Services Departments pool budgets and jointly commission and provide services jointly with local Health partners. There is a particular emphasis on effectively joining up services for older people. The plan provides £900m to increase the provision of intermediate care and related services for older people, and the use of this resource will be a joint responsibility, with a number of specific required deliverables. There is an expectation that Primary Care Trusts will provide a vehicle for enhanced joint working and there will be a new level of Primary Care Trust, which could take responsibility for health and social care, to be known as a "Care Trust". The establishment of Care Trusts will not be compulsory, but could be imposed, if insufficient progress is made in establishing effective joint partnerships.
- 2.3 In line with the focus on access to services for older people, there will be revised funding and charging arrangements for both residential and nursing home care and for home and day care services. This will mean changes in the

responsibilities of the County Council and in the current arrangements in place for charging and collecting income.

- 2.4 The Best Value system will be used by The Commission for Health Improvement, the SSI and the Audit Commission jointly to inspect health and social care organisations.
- 2.5 There is a focus in the Plan on health improvement and prevention and Local Strategic Partnerships involving local authorities will be developed. Some specific measures, such as free fruit for infant school children, will impact directly on the County Council.
- 2.6 The Plan sets out a small, focused set of targets to drive the changes and some of these are for the NHS and Social Services together and some are specific to Social Services. The joint targets relate to prevention and rehabilitation for older people and to participation in drug treatment programmes, and the Social Services targets relate entirely to improving the life chances of children in care.
- 2.7 Overall, the proposals as they relate to the County Council are very much in line with the strategic direction of the authority. As the majority of the proposals relate to Adult Services, it may be appropriate for the County Council links to the Plan to be dealt with by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care Services in liaison with the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Background information used by the author in compiling this report

The NHS Plan – a plan for investment and return – July 2000.

If you require further information on the points raised in this report, please contact Sarah Pickup, Assistant Director of Social Services on 01992 556350, e-mail sarah.pickup@hertscc.gov.uk, fax 01992 556323.