

Wychavon's Healthy Communities Peer Review

What it's all about?

The healthy communities peer review is a new product from the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) that is funded by the Department of Health. It's a peer review product looking at our health role and joint working with partners. Indeed we are closely working with the PCT, Dr Richard Harling, the Director of Public Health, is very supportive and is involved in the review.

The review involves a self-assessment where we set out what we currently do on healthy communities and give pointers for where we can improve. We complete a self-assessment against an 'ideal local authority position' and a team of experts come in and assess our progress and identify areas we can improve on. The on site visit (and lots of interviews with key people) takes place from 4 - 6 March 2008. Our peer team is not yet quite finalised, however we are lucky to have Judith Wright from Cannock Chase and a member from Kent already confirmed. Other than officer time to write the self-assessment and organise the visit, the peer review is free – and funded by the Department of Health.

Why do it?

In short it's free, useful and will help us improve!

It's also timely as we are placing health as one of our 5 council priorities so defining what that means will be helped by the review.

It's an opportunity to stocktake where we are now, where we could be and what we can do to improve on the health and wellbeing theme - it cuts across many of our services.

It's NOT an inspection – Department of Health is funding the IDeA to do this peer review work to pull together learning and experience and we are one of about 15 councils involved. There's only 2 other districts – IDeA were keen to have a proactive district.

Finally we are doing it because it's been ages since we've done a peer review, it keeps us one step ahead, we know we need to work with partners especially health more to make a difference to people's lives – and in the context of future inspection and area based assessment it's very relevant.

A very quick stocktake...

Where we are now...

- Good staff health work – MOTs, healthy eating, staff briefing focus, subsidised leisure centres for staff, proactive approach to sickness with return to work discussions
- Very practical health facilities – hospital, NHS dentists
- Health Scrutiny team want to shift from challenging PCT to challenging ourselves

- Lots of great service initiatives from youth sport and coaching to five a day, housing grants, core business of food safety etc
- Healthy communities' aspirations as part of community strategy - and LAA context – with healthy walks, healthy living and many examples of activities that partners through the LSPs are involved in.
- A developing Council strategy that is strengthening the 'health' theme
- But there's more we need to know about local differences in health measures, life expectancy and reasons for dying.

Where we want to be

- Pull our good practice together so that it joins up to be a more explicit, targeted and focused strategy for health and wellbeing – make sure our and partners' resources are used well
- Identifying and addressing our gaps and missed opportunities through our services– and seek to plug them
- Using our facilities well e.g. leisure centres in proactive way – promote referrals working with doctors, action role for Wychavon leisure to get more people that need it through the doors
- Shifting from specific actions to **impact on outcomes** – can we reduce health inequalities e.g. life expectancy on Westlands, do we focus efforts where needs are greatest and compliment work of PCT?
- Keeping ahead on healthy council/staff wellbeing initiatives

What we want the review to do

- Help us do the audit across services (we'll have to write that in the self assessment)
- Share ideas and good examples elsewhere so we can adopt and improve our delivery
- Help develop the partnerships and priorities with PCT and different levels
- Develop a better strategy so we make a bigger impact on people's health in Wychavon, as a council and with others...

What it means for you?

You might get an interview...! Peers will certainly want to see representatives from Local Strategic Partnerships and the action plans developing – especially the detail on health.

We'll all get a clearer view of a healthy future...

And remember – DON'T PANIC – this is helpful advice from a team of experts – it is NOT AN INSPECTION!!!

Fiona Narburgh, Head of Strategy and Communications, Wychavon District Council
Tel 01386 585101 fiona.narburgh@wychavon.gov.uk