

Scrutiny Committee – 14 August 2012

8. Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme

Lead Officer: Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager
Contact Details: Emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462566

Purpose of Report

To present details of the South Somerset District Council's participation in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme.

Action Required

For members of the Scrutiny Committee to note the details of the programme.

Background

The Health Inequalities Programme is now in its fourth year. The initial aim of the programme was to understand the potential and value of scrutiny in looking at local health concerns and working with partners to find local, practical solutions.

With funding from the Department of Health, the Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme was created to develop innovative solutions to longstanding inequalities.

Over the four years the programme has moved on considerably and has contributed to Scrutiny developing into an effective public health tool.

Health Inclusion is basically concerned with ensuring that everyone gets the care they need, regardless of their needs or circumstances. It also strives to ensure policies and programmes across the public sector consider the needs of those with multiple problems and that there is equitable access to quality care for all.

The fourth phase, which SSSDC will be participating in, will allow local scrutiny to inform national policy.

Those authorities participating in the programme will receive 5 'contact days' with an expert consultant (there will be on-going e-mail and telephone support). The support will be in the following areas:

- carrying out a scrutiny review using a new model of focusing on the **impact** of scrutiny involvement in a topic;
- ensuring the review sticks to the timetable of producing a final report by the end of December 2012;
- supporting both members and officers in a new area of scrutiny for this authority.

The Scrutiny Chairman and the Leader of the Council supported an expression of interest from this authority to participate in this programme. The two main reasons for this were:

- SSSDC has a better understanding of our Gypsy and Traveller communities than most authorities based on previous work in this area. Involvement in this programme will allow us to use this local knowledge to help address health inequalities on a national level; and

- Involvement in such a programme, supported by the Centre for Public Scrutiny will provide both members and officers with an invaluable opportunity to gain new Scrutiny skills that can be used to develop our Scrutiny function.

We have received notification from the Programme Board that we have been chosen to be included in the third phase along with London Borough of Southwark.

The CfPS Consultant will be visiting us on 15 August (at a time to be confirmed) to meet with those members undertaking the review and to agree a plan for the rest of the review. All non-executive members have been asked if they wish to take part in this programme and a list of those members involved will be available at the meeting.

At this stage, the exact topic of the review has not been finalised – this is something that the review group will agree for themselves with guidance from the CfPS Consultant.

Further details about the Health Inequalities Programme can be found at www.cfps.org.uk
