

Update from Torbay Council's Health Scrutiny Board

1. The role of the Health Scrutiny Board (as defined by the Department of Health) is to:

“act as a lever to strengthen the voice of local people, ensuring that their needs and experiences are considered as an integral part of the delivery and development of health services and that services are effective and safe”.
2. The Health Scrutiny Board publically holds the commissioners and providers of NHS-funded health and public health services to account for their decisions. It focuses on whether:
 - a. the planning, provision and the operation of health services in Torbay takes account of the views and aspirations of local people;
 - b. all sections of the local community have equal access to health services and an equal chance of a successful outcome from services; and
 - c. proposals for substantial changes to health services are equitable, reasonable and reflect local need.
3. The Board has just completed its Work Programme for 2012/2013 and is in the process of finalising its Annual Report. It took a different approach to its work over the course of 2012/2013. When the Board considered the Quality Accounts of the provider trusts in May 2012, the theme that ran throughout these documents was the need to reduce pressure on acute services.
4. In seeking suggestions for inclusion in the Work Programme from all members of the Council, senior officers and representatives from the NHS organisations which work with the Board, many of the topics put forward for consideration fitted into the category of “care for the elderly”.
5. Therefore the Board took these two, interlinked issues as the overarching theme for its work for 2012/2013. Rather than undertaking specific, stand-alone reviews, topics were considered throughout the year either at meetings of the Board, during visits to external organisations or through attendance at other informal briefing meetings.
6. Moving forward, the Health Scrutiny Board needs to build relationships with the new commissioning and provider organisations as was as develop how its role can complement (rather than duplicate) the work of both the Health and Wellbeing Board and Healthwatch Torbay.

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Overview and Scrutiny Lead