RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Committee note the attached report and summary declaration.

2. That the Committee make comment as far as it sees fit on Bromley PCT’s compliance with the core standards of the Annual Health Check.

1 Introduction

1.1 Standards for Better Health and the Annual Health Check

‘Standards for Better Health’ was published by the Health Care Commission (HCC) in July 2004 as the major part of the overall planning framework (National Standards, Local Action) for the NHS the next three years. The Standards cover 7 Domains (see ‘self assessment’ below) comprising of 24 core and 13 developmental standards.

The process that is followed by the HCC in assessing healthcare organisations’ compliance with Standards for Better Health is part of the ‘Annual Health Check’ and is described in the document Guidance on the Assessment of Core Standards published by the HCC. This and other guidance is available on the HCC website www.healthcarecommission.org.uk.

The Annual Health Check replaces the ‘Star Ratings’ system for all NHS trusts and is based on a self assessment conducted by the trust which evaluates its performance against the core standards and produces a declaration.

2 Views of Local Authority.

2.1

Trusts have a duty to seek the views of their Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum. These organisations have a right to comment on the trusts compliance with the standards and comments made must be presented verbatim with the trust’s declaration.

Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny Committees and PPI Forums is available on the Healthcare Commission website identified above. In summary the Healthcare
Commission guidance is that committees may comment on the trust’s compliance with any element of Standards for Better Health but are most likely to wish to comment on areas which appear to be relevant to their area of work. Below is a relevant extract from the guidance:

You may comment on any aspect of the performance of the trust against the core standards and in doing so you might find it useful to consider the following questions:

1) Is there any aspect of the trust’s performance against core standards that your organisation wishes to make known to the Healthcare Commission?

2) There are a number of standards that may be directly relevant to the work of your organisation. These include:
   • Standard C17, which relates to the involvement of patients and public in designing, planning, delivering and improving services
   • Standards C13 to C16 which include the treatment of patients with dignity and respect, providing access for patients to suitable information about the services they receive and the trust’s complaints process, and the choice, availability and suitability of food
   • Standards C22 to C24 which outline issues of public health

Does your organisation wish to comment specifically on the trust’s performance against these standards?

The remainder of this paper describes the process and the outcome of the process followed by Bromley PCT in self assessing against the standards.

3  Self assessment

3.1 Summary
In order to carry out the required self assessment, Bromley PCT set up in 2005, seven self assessment groups based on the Standards for Better Health Business Planning groups. Each group had a responsible lead director:

Domain 1 – Safety – Angela Bhan
Domain 2 – Clinical and Cost Effectiveness – Nada Lemic
Domain 3 – Governance – Marie Farrell
Domain 4 – Patient Focus – Ann Coppinger
Domain 5 – Accessible and Responsive Care – Graham MacKenzie
Domain 6 – Care Environment – Sue Southon
Domain 7 – Public Health – Angela Bhan / Nada Lemic.

Each director was assisted by an Integrated Governance Associate Director
At the time of that draft declaration, Bromley PCT declared itself compliant with all but 3 standards namely C4c (medical devices); C5a (NICE guidelines); C11 (mandatory training) for which it declared ‘insufficient assurance. A further self assessment has been carried out for the current declaration. In doing so the groups paid particular attention to those areas for which there had previously been insufficient assurance and concluded that there had been no ‘significant lapse’ against these standards and that compliance could therefore now be declared.

3.2 Quality Assurance

The members of the groups carried out the self assessment both themselves and via expert staff members e.g the Health and Safety Officer and have identified evidence and assurances for the Board in support of the assessment.

Following the initial self assessment in October 2005, the integrated governance associate directors reviewed against the HCC draft assurance prompts the level of evidence and assurance proposed. The evidence was again reviewed for the current declaration.

In determining if there had been any ‘significant lapse’ against the core standards Bromley PCT used a checklist provided in April 2005 with the Statement on Internal Control as follows:

Could the Lapse :-

- Seriously affect service provision?
- Seriously prejudice or threaten the achievement of a principal objective
- Seriously threaten the safety of users
- Seriously threaten the reputation of the organisation or the NHS
- Lead to significant financial imbalance and /or lead the need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved?

The initial self assessment process and the outcome of the assessment in October 2005 was reviewed by Internal Audit and the resulting audit report was of the opinion that it provided ‘reasonable assurance’ to the PCT board that both the process and outcome of the assessment was robust and valid.

3.3 Outcome of Self Assessment

As a result of the reassessment and collection of further evidence, Bromley PCT now believes it has sufficient assurance to warrant declaring all areas now to be compliant.

A list of the Core standards and compliance is attached for the Committee’s information.

To further assist the Committee, details and samples of the evidence gathered to support the declaration of compliance with Domain 7 (Public Health) core standard C24 is attached as an example of the outcome of the self assessment process.

Harry Goldingay
6th April 2006