

## **HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**30 SEPTEMBER 2014**

### **HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE TRAINERS SERVICE**

Report from: Dr Alison Barnett, Director of Public Health

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#### **Summary**

This report advises Members of the forthcoming expiry of the Health and Lifestyle Trainers (HALT) contract with Sunlight Development Trust and a proposal to suspend procurement of this service whilst budget deliberations for 2015/16 are underway.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1. The health trainer service is currently being commissioned in line with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority to reduce health inequalities.
- 1.2. The national Health Trainers programme was introduced in Choosing Health a public health White Paper published in 2004 and was commissioned by PCTs. Health Trainers, recruited from among local communities, are a trained and accredited resource for individuals wanting to make lifestyle changes, providing 'support from next door' rather than 'advice from on high' and targeted particularly at disadvantaged groups who have not traditionally accessed NHS health promotion and other services.

#### **2. Background to the decision to de-commission**

- 2.1. At the last meeting of the Committee Members were advised of the potential de-commissioning of the current Medway Health Trainer services (Health and Lifestyle Trainers or HALT), which are being provided at present by Sunlight Development Trust. Members requested a report to the Committee explaining the background. The reason for the decision being taken ahead of the 2015/2016 budget round is that the current contract expires at the end of November 2014 hence notice needs to be given to the provider.

- 2.2. The Council is currently facing considerable financial challenges and it is more important than ever that resources are invested appropriately and where there is strong evidence of effectiveness. This applies equally to the ring fenced public health grant as to the general fund resources.
- 2.3. Compared to other public health interventions, there is less evidence that health trainer services are cost-effective or that they have any influence at a population level. This particular service is not one of the public health services, which is mandated.
- 2.4. In the context of the need to set a balanced budget for 2015/16 difficult decisions must be made about where resources can be allocated for maximum impact. It is therefore proposed to suspend recommissioning of the health trainers service pending the outcome of the star chamber process and setting of the budget for 2015/16.

### **3. Detail of the HALT service**

- 3.1. The Health and Lifestyle service is a programme tackling health inequalities within hard to reach communities. It works to improve the health and wellbeing of residents from some of the most deprived and marginalised areas of Medway.
- 3.2. Health and Lifestyle Team members have been drawn from the local community and work with clients on a one-to-one basis to assess their health and lifestyle risks. They facilitate behaviour change, providing motivation and practical support to individuals who are ready to make behaviour changes to improve their health. Health and Lifestyle Team members also signpost and refer people on to other services and agencies in the public, private, community and voluntary sector. They can also accompany people to other services in order to reduce barriers to access.
- 3.3. In 2013/2014 379 people received support from the health and lifestyle trainer service. The proportion of those contacting the service who go on to receive support is approximately 70% so this figure represents approximately 540 initial assessments. The service is accessed by self-referral and by referral from a healthcare professionals

### **4. Options**

- 4.1. If the decision to suspend commissioning of this service does not proceed it may be necessary to make commensurate savings from elsewhere in the Public Health budget in order to achieve the savings target and a balanced Council budget for 2015/16.

## 5. Risk management

| <b>Risk</b>                   | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Action to avoid or mitigate risk</b>  | <b>Risk rating</b>        |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| Increased health inequalities | Reduced access to health improvement services by disadvantaged communities will increase health inequalities | Monitor and take action to ensure equitable access to other health improvement services. | C3 (significant/marginal) |

## 6. Consultation

6.1 No consultation has taken place with regard to this proposal.

## 7. Financial implications

7.1. The value of this contract is £204,220.

## 8. Legal implications

8.1. The health trainer service is not one of the mandatory services commissioned by Public Health.

8.2. Scrutiny of public health is within the remit of this Committee.

## 9. Recommendations

9.1 Members are asked to consider and note the report.

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