

## **Health Needs Assessment Workshop**

### **A development event for PCT staff, organised by Gateshead Centre for Enabling Health Improvement on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

“The PCT should review the structures that support the commissioning role and should include organisational development for staff responsible for commissioning”

“Action is required to ensure that the use and management of information to support local development and commissioning is improved”

*Gateshead PCT CHI review February 2004*

### **Introduction**

This Health Needs Assessment (HNA) workshop followed on from a training session held in October 2004. The 2004 event looked at the theory underpinning HNA, the relationship between HNA and commissioning and identified how needs-based commissioning could be developed.

In early 2006 guidance for the development of business cases within Gateshead PCT was amended. The guidance now states that a business case must include reference to specific evidence that identifies health need in the population. Health needs assessment is a planning tool which can provide this evidence. The workshop was planned to support this new requirement. This report outlines the training content and summarises feedback from evaluation.

### **Aim of the session**

To provide a framework for undertaking HNA and to examine how HNA can inform a business case.

### **Objectives of the session**

Participants to leave with

- an understanding of the key elements within an HNA
- a framework within which to undertake HNA
- an awareness of how business cases will be assessed within the PCT
- an appreciation of how to use HNA in a business case

### **Session 1 - Types of need**

Participants were asked to split into pairs and consider the questions that they would ask and the criteria that they would apply when purchasing a personal computer. Responses from feedback session were recorded on the following grid, showing different types of need.

*Flipchart sheet*

<b><u>C</u>ommunity <u>P</u>rofile</b>	
<b><u>W</u>ants</b>  (expressed or felt need)	<b><u>C</u>omparative need</b>
<b><u>V</u>alue for money approach</b>  (epidemiological or evidence-based need)	<b><u>E</u>xpert need</b>  (normative need)
<b><u>A</u>ctions</b>	

## **Session 2 - Health need due to hypertension among the retired population of Ryton**

A local study of health need due to hypertension was summarised. Participants were asked to split into groups and consider the following questions:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this HNA?
- What dominates the study?
- What is missing from the study?

Groups were asked to think in terms of the types of health need identified in the first exercise. Participants were split into three groups; commissioners, service leads and community nurses. Each group outlined their evaluation in a plenary session.

## **Session 3 - Developing an outline HNA**

The same groups were then asked to develop an outline HNA in their own area of practice. An example outline of an HNA for Children & Young People with Learning Disabilities in Gateshead was distributed as a guide. Breakout groups had been formed reflecting the broad professional groupings of participants, so that each group would have some common ground from which to develop a single HNA framework. Groups fed back in a plenary session

## **Session 4 - How can HNA inform a business case?**

The criteria by which business cases are judged within Gateshead PCT were set out. A grid was introduced which could be used to incorporate evidence from an HNA into a business case. Using the framework HNA developed in Session 3 groups were asked to set out a hypothetical business case for a service development.

### **Conclusions**

Health needs assessment is a practical tool which can be used to assess the need for health care services. It can be used by community nursing staff to assess need in local populations and by service leads and commissioners to assess need across Gateshead. The evidence obtained from HNA can be used to support business cases for service enhancements or new services. In assessing business cases Gateshead PCT now requires that evidence of health need in the target population is provided.

Exercises undertaken during the workshop were intended to give participants a solid framework which they could use to develop their own health needs assessments and an appreciation of how evidence from HNA could be used to inform a business case.

### **Session evaluation**

Participants were asked to respond to the following questions on a scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree):

<b>Question</b>	<b>Average score</b>
<i>I now have a clear understanding of the key elements of an HNA</i>	4.7
<i>Using the framework described, I would be happy to develop an HNA in my work area</i>	4.5
<i>I understand how business cases will be assessed within Gateshead PCT</i>	4.5
<i>I appreciate how a health needs assessment can be used within a business case</i>	4.4

Participants were asked to rate the following aspects of the workshop on a scale of one (poor) to five (excellent):

<b>Question</b>	<b>Average score</b>
<i>Presentation style</i>	4.7
<i>Materials</i>	4.7
<i>Venue</i>	4.2

### ***Additional comments***

#### *In what way will the workshop change your practice?*

I have a better understanding of the information needs of health professionals who prepare health needs assessments

I have a fuller awareness of HNA

I have a framework which I can now use for an essay and future practice

I am now clearer on how to present a business case

I now have a better understanding of HNA and how it can provide better care for clients

The workshop has given me much more insight into how to progress HNA and business cases

The workshop has given me a clear framework from which to start – I am quite new to this area so it has clarified a lot of issues for me

I am now more likely to include the differing aspects of HNA within a business case

I feel I can now carry out HNA

We will have written guidance for submitting [business cases] in future

The workshop has provided me with the questions I need to ask when assessing business cases in the future

I am now more confident in pulling [HNAs and business cases] together

#### *How do you think that skills in health needs assessment can improve the service delivered or the patient experience?*

[Services] will be much more focussed towards business objectives

By asking patients' opinions

Identifies what is lacking in current service provision and how services can be improved

[Delivering] high standards. Finding what the client wants and needs

[Skills in HNA] help to remain focused and be specific

[The result is] a better service for patients, using all evidence available and local knowledge/views

[Skills in HNA] help to deliver local services that are tailored to that population

By filling in documentation appropriately and assessing correctly the need for another service or expanding a service

[Skills in HNA] enable evidence-based service delivery

[Changes to services] will be linked to health needs, and not just service expansion

***Centre for Enabling Health Improvement, Public Health, Gateshead PCT,  
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