

COUNCIL, 29 JANUARY 2014

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

DEVELOPMENT AND AUTHORISATION OF PATIENT GROUP DIRECTIONS (PGDs) – CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Governance Committee at its meeting on 15 January was invited to consider amendments required to the Constitution to extend the authority of the Director of Public Health to have designated responsibility for signing Patient Group Directions on behalf of the authorising body (the Council).

Patient Group Directions - PGDs - are written directions enabling suitably trained and accredited health professionals to supply and/or administer a named medicine to a group of patients who may not be individually identified prior to presentation for treatment. Local Authorities now have the power to authorise PGDs relating to their health improvement responsibilities.

The legislation central to these changes is the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (the Act) which transferred responsibility for aspects of health improvement from the NHS to top tier Local Authorities. The delivery of some health improvement services is dependent on PGDs.

An identified individual must have responsibility for ensuring that PGDs are developed in line with legislation and local organisational policies and governance arrangements with full consideration of the service in which the PGD is to be used is stipulated within the enabling legislation.

The Act requires this person to be either the Chief Executive or the Director of Public Health (DPH). Given that authorisation will entail judgments as to whether use of a PGD is consistent with appropriate professional relationships and provides advantages for patient care without compromising patient safety, a detailed knowledge of health improvement services will be necessary and hence this responsibility would be best placed under the remit of the Director of Public Health.

With regard to the development of PGDs within the Council, it is envisaged that a lead author who would normally be a consultant in public health would be charged with engaging the support of a wider team of health professionals as necessary.

The resulting PGD would be scrutinised by a separate, multi-professional PGD Approval Group before final approval by the DPH.

It is proposed that the DPH, supported by the PGD Approval Group will publish an Annual Report detailing any PGDs authorised and information

regarding their subsequent usage. The Report will be shared with the chair and members of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The proposed governance arrangements will give the Director of Public Health the responsibility to authorise PGDs on behalf of the Council having been scrutinised by an appropriately constituted PGD Approval Group which will assess and provide reassurance regarding PGDs and related plans for implementation and audit developed by separate PGD Working Groups. As a consequence, these arrangements will ensure that PGDs in Havering improve outcomes and experience of care whilst preserving patient safety.

The Governance Committee queried whether the Council has the relevant insurance cover for undertaking this activity. Checks have confirmed that the Council does have the necessary indemnity insurance for decisions on treatments which would include decisions on Patient Group Directions.

The Governance Committee accordingly recommends to Council that the following paragraph is added to Section 3.9.1 in Part 3 of the Constitution relating to the Director of Public Health's role:

(m) To authorise Patient Group Directions on behalf of the Council.