

Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill

Supplementary Submission – Scottish Health Council

The Scottish Health Council is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland. We are providing this further evidence to clarify and expand on points raised during the oral evidence sessions on 24th September 2013 and 2nd October 2013.

Role of Scottish Health Council in supporting Public Partnership Forums

The Scottish Health Council was established in 2005 to 'support, ensure and monitor' patient focus and public involvement activities of NHS Boards. As such the Scottish Health Council has a role to support the development of Public Partnership Forums, with the prime responsibility for establishing them and maintaining their effectiveness resting with Community Health Partnerships. The Scottish Health Council support is provided primarily through our network of Local Offices, but we have also at times in the past engaged at national level with Public Partnership Forum representatives to get feedback and share good practice.

The Scottish Health Council has a functional approach, with dedicated teams providing:

- Community engagement and improvement support (local advice and support)
- Service change (quality assurance and advice)
- Participation Network (evidence and promoting good practice, national support)
- Performance and Planning (quality assurance/evidence/standards)
- Public Involvement Unit (providing support to Healthcare Improvement Scotland in relation to its Duty of User Focus and Equalities duties).

The Participation Standard

The Participation Standard was developed by the Scottish Health Council to enable NHS Boards to assess how well they were doing and how to improve in relation to patient focus and public involvement. We recently produced a [National Overview Report](#) that demonstrates that the majority of Boards have improved over recent years, as verified by local patients/community groups.

Standards for Public Involvement in Health and Social Care

The Scottish Health Council commissioned [research](#) to explore the future possibilities for public involvement in Scotland, in the context of integration between adult health and social care services gathering views from members of the public, and health and social care practitioners through discussion groups, telephone interviews, an online survey and a workshop. Subsequently a think piece was developed which outlines ideas about how people – as individuals and communities – could be involved in discussions and decisions about health and social care in Scotland in the future.

To explore the debate on both the expectations and options for the development of Public Partnership Forums the Scottish Health Council held

four regional events under the title of “Developing a shared vision for public involvement in integrated adult health and social care services”. This work reported that:

‘Most felt that a common standard could help with building a joint ethos, culture and language around public involvement across health and social care’.

The Scottish Health Council considers that there is an opportunity for the Bill to be clearer on the involvement of the public and that there should be a single standard for the integrated structures that build on existing good practice standards and principles. The Participation Standard is now demonstrating that it is driving improvement and should be used as the basis for a revised single standard, that brings together the National Standards for Community Engagement and other good practice guidance, and that includes indicators linked to the delivery of a national outcome.

A single standard for participation in health and social care should be developed. There should be a quality assurance system to ensure improvement can be demonstrated.

An Outcome for Public Involvement in Health and Social Care

On the question of a national outcome for public involvement, participant views were mixed although there was a sense that a national outcome would give public involvement a higher profile and status and give a clear signal to all about its importance. People also suggested that an outcome should be realistic, something that everyone could understand and couched in generic language rather than in jargon that is specific to either health or social care. The outcome should be about both the process and outcome of involvement.

The Scottish Health Council suggests that a national outcome should be developed to read along these lines:

People are encouraged and supported to work with health and social care providers to achieve services that meet local needs and improve health and wellbeing.

Structures for Public Involvement in Health and Social Care

The Scottish Health Council considers that through the Bill process guidance should be provided to health and social care partnerships with recommended mechanisms for public involvement in each health and social care partnership area, with local areas asked to comply with the guidance or explain their local variation.

Practice should build on existing networks and relationships with condition specific and equalities groups taking account of geography and culture.

Scottish Health Council