



ITEM REF NUMBER:	6/ 2009	MEETING DATE:	11 March 2009
ITEM TITLE:	Health Inequalities in Southwark		
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1. Summary

This item presents information about health inequalities in Southwark. The presentation to the partnership will cover the background to Southwark's target and why it is important. It will show some key facts and figures about health inequality in Southwark and outlines the approach to the development of a local strategy. Members of the partnership will be asked to consider how the partnership and the organisations represented around the table can contribute to improvement on this agenda.

2. Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

2.1 Note the content of the presentation and information below

2.2 Provide advice about the development of the strategy and how partners can contribute to reducing health inequalities

3. Introduction

- 3.1 As a nation overall we are now healthier than we have ever been, with average life expectancy significantly higher than that when our parents were born, which, in turn, was greater than that for their parents. While life expectancy is improving, this is not uniformly achieved across the all parts of the country, with those living in the most disadvantaged areas most likely to suffer poorer outcomes.
- 3.2 Southwark needs to have a strategic approach to ensure that it is addressing health inequalities for the following reasons
- Nationally set targets
 - Poorer health outcomes than the national average
 - Significant differences in health outcome for different parts of the borough
 - An Audit Commission review of health inequalities recommended the development of a joint overarching health inequalities strategy that coordinates and provides a focus for initiatives to tackle health inequalities
 - CAA includes a focus on inequalities.
- 3.3 Southwark needs to narrow the gap on life expectancy for men between Southwark and the national average. It also needs to focus on reducing the gap between wards with the worst outcomes and the borough average

4. How do Health Inequalities Arise

- 4.1 The occurrence of diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes are often the end result of a complex array of factors, many of them amenable to intervention, that together bring about the onset of disease in people who have such exposures. These include wider issues like employment, income, housing as well as daily habits relating to smoking, diet, physical and alcohol.
- 4.2 Often people have a number of coinciding risk factors, such as low income, low educational attainment, little physical activity, smoking and poor diet. There is a gradient in health outcomes, with the poorest outcomes amongst those with lowest income, rising to best for those in the highest socio-economic groups
- 4.3 Those who have the greatest risk factors can often also be those who have greatest difficulty in making best use of services, including health services. Even where all patients receive equal health care there can be a difference in outcome, possibly related to preceding vulnerabilities.

5. Developing Southwark's Strategic Approach

- 5.1 An early draft of a strategy has been produced to inform a series of workshops with officers of council and PCT as well as representatives from voluntary sector and other stakeholders. The outcome of these events will lead to a re-draft of the final strategy.
- 5.2 The strategy will identify activities that will impact in the short, medium and long term. While the strategy will focus on those activities that can make more immediate impact on people's health (e.g reducing blood pressure or reducing risk factors for diseases

such as alcohol and smoking), there will also be a focus on making more explicit how other borough strategies might assist with reducing inequalities and improving well being (e.g. Housing Strategy, Core Strategy, etc).

- 5.3 Members of Southwark Alliance will be asked to consider how the partnership can contribute to the reduction of Health Inequalities in Southwark.

6. **National Support Team visit**

Members of the Alliance are asked to note that, as part of a programme of visits, the Department of Health National Support Team (NST) on Health Inequalities will be visiting Southwark in the first week of June. The visit will include interviews with stakeholders, with those involved in community engagement and a series of themed workshops. Their review and feedback will inform the final drafting of the local Health Inequalities Strategy.