

Spotlight on your services

Overview and Scrutiny in Newham

Annual Report 2004



List of staff



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Foreword from the Scrutiny Chairs

Welcome to our third annual report.

2003/4 saw improvements in the way we work with the Mayor, officers and colleagues. We saw a new maturity in our dealings with outside organisations and further improvements in health scrutiny. We have had an opportunity to take stock following the major changes around political arrangements in 2002/3 and have been able to shift our focus from the process of scrutiny toward the key task of improving services for the people and businesses of Newham.

We have put in place arrangements for monitoring how the Mayor's decisions in response to our reports are implemented and how this results in improved services for people who live and work in Newham. We urge our successors to make this a central part of their work.

We still have a way to go in fully developing the checks and balances that are needed under the new governance arrangements. We have established good mechanisms for monitoring the budget and major policy decisions but are still looking for improvements to the ways in which scrutiny

members monitor and contribute to the many more routine decisions made by the Mayor, the Executive and Council Officers.

We have set down principles and standards to evaluate the effectiveness of scrutiny. We believe that we must be able to test objectively the contribution that scrutiny has made to improving services and performance in Newham. Finally, we remain committed to training and continued learning and development.

We have received invaluable assistance from co-optees, special advisors and other stakeholders and we are very grateful to them for giving us the benefit of their knowledge and skills. They have added enormously to the impact of our work and we hope that they will continue to work closely with overview and scrutiny.

We are reaching the end of our two-year term as scrutiny chairs and we hope that we have laid firm foundations for our successors. We wish them all the very best in their new role and hope that they find as much sense of achievement and satisfaction in it as we have done.



Councillor
Paul Brickell
Chair



Councillor
John Saunders
Deputy Chair



Councillor
Akbar
Chaudhary



Councillor
Megan Harris



Councillor
Ted
Sparrowhawk



Councillor
Winston
Vaughan

Scrutiny's Profile

Scrutiny in Newham, despite operating for a few years, is still a relatively new function. Consequently, there is a lot of work to be done in raising the profile and promoting scrutiny work. The review of scrutiny in March recognised that this was a major objective for 2004/05.

During the next year, scrutiny will:

- :: Develop the website - to increase accessibility and use. The aim is to allow the public, Members and officers to access scrutiny reports and information
- :: Produce an annual questionnaire - to carry out an in-depth survey on the operation of scrutiny to help us to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of scrutiny and to make sure that scrutiny evolves and improves
- :: Produce a Communication Plan - to ensure that all forms of communication are used for maximum benefit

During the past year, the Scrutiny Unit has been successful in raising scrutiny's profile through:

- :: The Scrutiny Newsletter - This is a quarterly newsletter from all the Scrutiny Chairs. The newsletter has been published on a regular basis and is sent to all key stakeholders
- :: The Newham Recorder - Scrutiny has been successful in achieving a regular stream of articles in The Recorder. There was particularly good coverage of the Excel Arms Fair and Improving Newham Streets Scrutiny Commissions
- :: Scrutiny Commission Reports - All Scrutiny Commission reports are distributed to key stakeholders within and outside the Council.

In addition scrutiny officers have been asked to attend outside groups and organisations to inform them about the work of overview and scrutiny and how they can get involved.





Looking outwards

Overview and Scrutiny in Newham is about making a difference to improve the services and performance of the Council. In addition the residents of Newham are concerned with many issues and services that are not provided by the Council. Members too, are not just concerned with Council services. They have a community leadership role which requires them to be concerned and involved in issues that go beyond the remit of the Council.

Scrutiny of health matters is an important example of the community leadership role, but the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also this year been exercising this role by looking at the performance of:

- The London Fire Brigade
- The Metropolitan Police Service
- The Benefits Service
- Utilities
- Post Office
- London's bid for the 2012 Olympic Games

Moreover, the Commissions on Asthma, Excel Arms Fair, Stratford Cultural quarter and Vocational Education all involved scrutinising the activities of Council and non-Council services.

In the future, as the Government increasingly expects Councils to take a leading role in issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour and regeneration, it is likely that Overview and Scrutiny's involvement in 'community leadership' issues will be maintained and developed.





Making a difference – Reports on 2002-3 Commissions

Overview and Scrutiny has introduced a rigorous system for monitoring how Council services improve as a result of scrutiny recommendations.

So far they have received a report back from Council Officers on three commissions. The results are described below.

Unauthorised encampment and flytipping.

Councillor Richard Crawford chaired a commission on unauthorised encampment and flytipping. The Commission was exceptionally successful in putting across Newham's standpoint - that the issues of enforcement of unauthorised encampment and flytipping and traveller housing needs must be pursued in parallel - to a national audience and lobbied strongly for change to allow local authorities to manage unauthorised encampment and flytipping

more effectively. In February 2004 officers reported back that the Council continues to hold discussions with the police on the effective use of powers to tackle unauthorised encampment. As a result of cumulative pressure brought to bear, the Metropolitan Police Authority agreed that anti social behaviour - including behaviours associated with some unauthorised encampment – should be treated as a priority in Local Policing Plans for 2004/5. The Council has lobbied the Courts to increase fines for flytipping, unfortunately, with no positive result thus far. Covert CCTV has been deployed at identified sites to catch flytippers and the success of this initiative is being evaluated. The Council has issued extensive publicity around action on fly-tipping and further initiatives are planned for this year. Finally, officers are exploring whether Traveller sites can be funded by local authorities at a sub regional level through the Housing Corporation East Sub Region Group.



Affordable Housing

Councillor John Saunders led this investigation into affordable housing. The report has been acknowledged in some ways as being ahead of its time. Since it was written, we have moved to a sub-regional housing agenda as proposed, and specific recommendations have pushed forward a number of initiatives. Some examples are:

- :: Making the best use of new forms of construction: Newham led on the production of the cross-borough East London Affordable Housing Investment Framework statement, which recognises the need to modernise construction, in order to meet the region's affordable housing needs. From this year 25% of housing funded by the Housing Corporation will use modern construction methods
- :: Meeting the needs of disabled people: Newham is moving towards building all new affordable homes as 'lifetime homes' with high standards of accessibility
- :: Ensuring 35% of all new-build homes in Newham are affordable: this figure is being achieved in some new developments, e.g. Stratford Rail Lands
- :: Housing Needs Survey : now complete - housing officers found the scrutiny report a useful tool in carrying this forward.

Parking for disabled people

Councillor Brickell chaired a Commission looking at the management and operation of parking for disabled people in Newham. This included the Blue Badge Scheme and the provision of disabled persons' parking bays. The final report set out a number of practical recommendations including improvements to co-ordination and communication, introducing a programme of formalisation of parking bays and launching an awareness campaign.

Following consideration of the findings, the Council introduced new criteria for the issuing of bays. These are currently being reviewed following an assessment of their impact. Information has been produced to help make Newham's disabled people aware of the various schemes and to reduce abuse of the schemes. The application form and guidance notes for bays and blue badges have been carefully updated and redundant bays have been decommissioned. Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has now been secured which will be used for the formalisation of bays and the installation of community bays. As a direct result of this review, the Mayor took the recommendations further by introducing a Motor Cycle Response Team of parking attendants on mopeds, which is currently receiving around 25 calls a week.



Councillor Paul Brickell

Since May, 2002 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has made good progress. If the new political arrangements in Newham are to be a success that means not only that the Mayor is successful, but also that the Council's non-executive scrutiny arm is a success. The Council must not be complacent - we must build on the progress made.

It is important to note that scrutiny is still at a developing stage. The key challenge over the next two years is to be able to demonstrate real improvements to services and the performance of the Council.

Some of the achievements so far include the following:

:: Scrutiny investigations have been undertaken in areas where a real need for improvement has been identified e.g. Unauthorised Encampments, Front of House, Equalities and Educational Achievement

- :: The recently introduced scrutiny commission monitoring process is beginning to show that scrutiny commissions have made a real impact on improving services and performance
- :: We have developed the health scrutiny function further. We have carried out two health commissions and developed an excellent working relationship with health bodies in Newham, an issue that is important to the quality of life in Newham
- :: We have looked outside the Council to improve quality of life, for example in scrutinising the effects of the recent Arms Fair
- :: A new system of scrutiny commissions has been established and is functioning effectively. The new system has resulted in Members focussing on a smaller more manageable number of scrutiny investigations. Our learning from previous years suggests that a very large number of investigations results in the work of the commissions being 'wide and shallow' and less





likely to result in real change. We also learnt that planning, co-ordination and involvement of officers are important to successful commissions

- :: The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been strengthened and the Committee has given more effective direction to scrutiny work
- :: Far more use has been made of opportunities to take evidence outside traditional committee formats, examples include:
 - fact finding visits
 - visits to other local authorities
 - disabled parking questionnaire.
 - guided tour of Arc of Opportunity.
 - visits to chest clinics

- evidence taking sessions at a number of Community Forum meetings
- Focus groups
- Visits to schools and health centres
- Breakfast meetings with business representatives

- :: There have been many well attended Scrutiny Member development briefings and hence a commitment to learning and development
- :: A regular Members' Scrutiny Newsletter was launched and is now regularly produced
- :: There has been significant contribution and involvement of key stakeholders in a number of scrutiny investigations.





Impact of The Excel Arms Fair

I carried out a Commission into the impact of the Excel arms fair. In September, 2003 Spearhead Limited ran the Defence Systems and Equipment International Exhibition (locally known as 'the Arms Fair') at the Excel Exhibition Centre, Custom House. There were reports of severe disruption to the daily lives of our residents, and our Commission was established to investigate, as the fair is due to be held here biennially until at least 2011.

Because this was not a Council event, we were dependent upon the co-operation of a number of external organisations to conduct a proper investigation. I am pleased to say that Spearhead, Excel, the Ministry of Defence, the Metropolitan Police and two protest groups all took our scrutiny seriously and collaborated fully by appearing to give evidence and commenting on the final report.

We also consulted local schools and businesses and spent two days in Custom House talking to local people.

We heard that there had been serious disruption to the local community including road closures, long journey times, 'over-zealous' policing, problems with access to local schools and demonstrations.

We concluded that although the event had taken almost two years of detailed planning, no one had put the interests of Newham residents at the top of their agenda. Much effort had gone into getting delegates to and from the event safely, keeping Excel secure, preventing crime and facilitating lawful protest.

Our recommendations to the Mayor, all of which he adopted, were aimed mainly at putting a planning focus on minimising disruption to Newham residents and keeping them informed of developments.

Councillor Paul Brickell
Chair, Scrutiny Commission



What will change as a result of scrutiny?

Our recommendations to the Mayor included the following:

That he will use his influence to:

- :: open discussions about the advisability of holding the event in Newham in the future
- :: ensure the rights of local people to go about their daily business will be given prominence in any future planning.

- :: ensure a communications strategy is drawn up between all parties for consulting and informing local Councillors and local people about what to expect if the Arms Fair takes place in future
- :: facilitate Excel in doing more to build bridges with the local community.



Councillor Akbar Chaudhary



Improving Newham Streets.

We want Newham to become a major business location where people choose to live, work and stay. An important element of this is the attractiveness of Newham streets. During this commission we looked at the extent to which principles of good design could be used to improve Newham's streets. We

considered how the Council could work more effectively with partners who have an impact on the streetscene such as the telecommunications industry and energy suppliers. Finally we considered the role of education and enforcement in changing people's behaviours in the streetscene.

Our busy work schedule included visits to several London Boroughs to see examples of good design. We visited most of the town centres in Newham to assess whether 'street furniture' -such as lighting, litter bins, seating, fences and barriers - was suitable for its purpose, and the extent to which it added to the attractiveness and accessibility of our streets.

Councillor Akbar Chaudhary
Chair, Scrutiny Commission



In response to our report the Mayor has agreed to:

- :: Produce a comprehensive design guide for Council works in the streetscene promoting, minimising the impact of graffiti and flyposting, improving the layout of the streetscene and the consistent use of high quality materials
- :: Extend Council initiatives to repaint, repair and clean street furniture and link it to an initiative for 'deep cleaning' in the streetscene
- :: Extend Council work on minimising anti social behaviour and littering through good design
- :: Get rid of unsightly lengths of guard railing.



Councillor Richard Crawford led this Commission. He stepped down in Autumn 2003 having been appointed to an executive post within the Council. Councillor Manley completed the project as Deputy Chair.

Councillors Richard Crawford and Ron Manley

Front of House.

We looked at the experience of walk-in customers at the Council's main service outlets, the local service centres. We considered the work the Council is doing to improve the way people use services and the way the Council communicates with customers through written materials. Finally we considered how to maximise awareness of and participation in local democracy through the local service centres.

Our research schedule included a fact finding visit to Brighton and Hove Council, meeting the Campaign for Plain English and representatives of leading private sector organisations. We also carried out 'mystery shopping' of services at local service centres.

We were impressed by the progress that is being made and formulated a number of recommendations to support this work. Our recommendations were considered by Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham in March 2004.



Councillor Ron Manley
Deputy Chair, Scrutiny Commission



In response to our report the Mayor has agreed to:

- :: Use a corporate 'branding' for Council leaflets and publications. They will be published in a Newham 'house' style and will receive rigorous quality checking before being issued
- :: 'Theme' Council publications so that services can be publicised in a targeted way toward those that need them. They will be grouped around major life events such as having a baby, moving to Newham and so on
- :: Define and display a core set of the most popular and important publications. We will adopt a more consistent approach to Council publications
- :: Give Newham councillors access to telephone interpretation services during their constituency surgeries to improve councillors ability to assist constituents.



Councillor Megan Harris

I chaired two reviews in 2003/04. The Equalities Commission was finalised in July, 2003 and the Choice Based Lettings Scrutiny Review occupied the remainder of the year.

Equalities.

The Mayor set the authority a Key Task to implement the National Standard for the Achievement of Equalities in Local Government and achieve the highest level of the Standard (level five) by the end of the current administration.

The Standard will impact directly upon all target groups: women, black and ethnic minority communities, people with disabilities, and lesbians and gay men. Whilst Members primarily focused on the Council as an equal opportunities employer, I believe the Commission, with the assistance of the Mayoral Adviser for Social Inclusion, Councillor Neil Wilson, acted as a catalyst in the support of policy development and drove forward significant operational change.

The Commission were very pleased that there were examples of good practice around the Council in terms of equality work. However, we concluded that a corporate approach was needed to ensure standardisation of procedures and the quality of data collection.

Choice based lettings (CBL).

Following a successful bid to the Government, CBL replaced the old system of allocating property through awarding points based on the Council's assessment of need. Properties available for letting are advertised in 'Choice Homes' and applicants 'bid' for properties using accumulated waiting time. The aim is to allow cross borough bidding through an East London Consortium, which consists of various Local Authorities and Housing Associations. The objective of the Commission, consisting of Councillors Shama Ahmad (Deputy Chair), Marie Collier, Omana Gangadharan, Rustam Talati, Alan Taylor and myself was look at where improvements could be made to the scheme. It was clear that the



What has happened as a result of scrutiny of Equalities?

Actions and progress so far includes:

- :: An interim centralised recruitment team established
- :: Commitment to conduct staff appraisals across the authority
- :: Corporate Induction well established
- :: An Exit Questionnaire placed on the Intranet
- :: The data collection software being developed to ensure consistency and accuracy of data
- :: The recent Staff Attitude Survey reflected the Commission's suggested approach.



scheme was more fair and transparent than the previous points based system as was shown by talking to tenants. The Commission were particularly interested in the opportunities presented by the proposed cross borough lettings and were keen to assist in moving this forward.

Overall, the Commission found that the scheme was working well, in particular:

- :: Customer satisfaction with the scheme was encouraging
- :: Most customers find it easy to obtain information about properties and easy to bid
- :: Void times have reduced
- :: Two neighbouring boroughs have already adopted the Newham led scheme and there is interest from several neighbouring boroughs.

However, there were some measures that could improve the scheme further. These included improving communication to customers of all aspects of the scheme, such as how and where to

bid, as well as publicising alternative ways in which people are able to move.

The Commission were particularly pleased by the collaborative approach taken by the Housing and Customer Services Department and the Cabinet Member, Councillor Andrew Baikie. This scrutiny exercise was an excellent example of how we can all work together to achieve common aims and objectives.

Councillor Megan Harris
Chair, Scrutiny Commission



What will happen as a result of scrutiny of Choice based lettings?

- :: Performance indicators developed to monitor the time it takes to process new applicants onto the Housing Waiting List
- :: Robust measures put in place to ensure that the Housing Waiting List is maintained as an up to date, accurate and effective database of customers
- :: A more substantial and informative "Welcome Pack" to be produced which will lead to more informed customers
- :: Improved and more accessible web site
- :: Current appeals process reviewed
- :: Greater use made of other housing services to build up information and intelligence on properties, including information on adaptation for disabled people.



Councillor John Saunders

This year I have chaired two very different scrutiny commissions, one looking into the working of organisations outside of the Council, i.e. Stratford Cultural quarter, and the other considering internal Council practices in terms of Green Procurement.

Stratford Cultural quarter.

My colleagues on this commission were Councillors Judith Garfield, David Griffin, Mike Law, Abdul Karim Sheik, Winston Vaughan and John Whitworth.

Stratford Cultural quarter consists of the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, Stratford Picture House and Stratford Circus, a performing arts venue. Our commission had intended to look at the operation of the Cultural quarter, and the contribution the area was making to the regeneration of Stratford. However, before we began, the company running Stratford Circus sought voluntary liquidation. Our focus therefore shifted to the Circus – why it was in this position, and how to avoid the same thing happening in the future. We were grateful for the contributions we received

from former Members of the Board, organisations resident in the Circus, the Theatre Royal's Artistic Director and Council officers. They provided valuable insights into what we could learn from the past. We also visited two successful arts venues in London to learn from their success, and took part in consultation with Arts Council England on the future of Stratford Circus and the Cultural quarter.

We concluded that Stratford Circus had the potential to become a successful enterprise. We considered that key elements to success would include:

- :: Board members chosen for skills and expertise in arts management, business and finance
- :: Board members trained in their roles and responsibilities
- :: Staff with appropriate skills and expertise
- :: Firm business, risk and contingency planning
- :: A clear vision and identity for the Circus, communicated internally and externally
- :: More collaborative working, especially the Theatre Royal, Stratford East.





We have asked the Mayor to use his influence to ensure these principles are adopted for any future management of Stratford Circus.

Green procurement.

Green procurement is the purchasing of services and materials that are environmentally friendly or sustainable.

Recycling is clearly linked to providing a sustainable environment. However, this Commission, consisting of myself, Councillors Abdul Karim Sheikh (Deputy Chair), Sardar Ali, Alan Craig, Judith Garfield, Vic Turner and Harvinder Singh Virdee, decided to concentrate on the procurement of goods and services and look at what work Newham was already doing in this area.

The Commission established that there are viable 'green' alternatives on the market. They also recognised that there were already a number of activities and initiatives in place, or were being planned by the

Council, which would encourage green procurement and match some of the recommendations contained within the Government's National Procurement Strategy for Local Government. However, in the past there has not been a co-ordinated approach and Council initiatives have been dependent on the enthusiasm of individuals within Departments. The establishment of the Strategic Procurement Unit now provided an opportunity to develop and co-ordinate green activities. However, the Commission were clear that quality should not be compromised and that costs should not normally be more than the non-green alternative. The Mayor agreed with this.

Councillor John Saunders
Chair, Scrutiny Commission



What will happen as a result of the Green Procurement scrutiny?

Performance monitoring.

Keeping an eye on how the Council is doing in delivering services to our customers is an important role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. To open up the 'overview' part of our function to all scrutiny Members, the Committee set up a pilot system for monitoring performance across all the Council's services. For the past year, I have accordingly been

chairing the informal group which now investigates significant divergence from target in key performance areas. We have gained a valuable insight into service delivery, and called upon senior officers to account for performance within their areas. On one key issue, we referred the matter back to the main Committee who set about ensuring action was taken to address the situation. The new Committee for 2004-5 will decide whether to continue with this system.



Councillor Ted Sparrowhawk

Making a difference.

Members of the Education Commission and I carried out three pieces of work in 2003/4 and I will say a few words about each of them.

Raising educational standards.

We produced the popular Raising Educational Standards Conference in June 2003. We brought together practitioners and teachers from Newham and further afield to develop recommendations for raising the achievement of black African, black Caribbean and white UK boys. The result was to raise the profile of boys' underachievement in Newham schools and to give a boost to the work being done in them. An important aspect of this Commission was the large extent to which stakeholders felt ownership of the recommendations. Schools have

taken our recommendations on board and have changed the way that they educate boys. The Local Education Authority will shortly report back to me on how the recommendations were implemented and the difference this has made.

Education otherwise.

In September 2003 we carried out a short-term commission called Education Otherwise which looked at education provision for pre-16s outside mainstream schooling. The young people we looked at were not doing well in school and were at risk of disaffection. Members were particularly interested in this topic and our work reflected this. We visited teaching centres and spoke to the young people, their advisors and tutors, and to officers from the local education authority. This allowed us to obtain a full picture of the service and to consider proposals



In response to our report on Raising educational standards, the Mayor has decided to:

- :: assist schools to improve the schools curriculum.
- :: introduce measures to improve student behaviour, raise the schools performance, establish high expectations
- :: improve the Local Education Authorities' identification and sharing of best practice and school leadership support
- :: improve parent and community involvement in education.



for future delivery. Services for these young people have recently been extensively remodelled around the 'Newham Young Peoples College' and the Local Education Authority recently reported good progress to me on how this provision is developing.

Vocational education and regeneration.

The main piece of work carried out in 2003/4 was the Vocational Education and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission. We looked at the vocational curriculum in schools and colleges and found that schools wish to expand their provision and are keen to work together to do this. We also looked at the employment opportunities arising from the regeneration of Newham and the extent to which young people are accessing these opportunities. Thirdly we looked at the LEA's 14-19 Strategy.

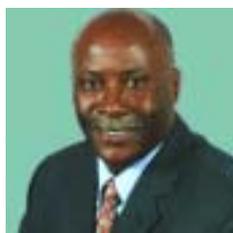
In an intensive work-programme we visited schools and colleges in Newham, spoke to teachers, lecturers and pupils. We spoke to Mike Tomlinson, the Government's former Chief Inspector of Schools and the Chair of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform about our concerns and plans and heard from him about his proposals for reform. We heard from Newham businesses about their recruitment needs and the skills they are looking for and agreed on ways that businesses and education providers can work together more effectively.

Councillor Ted Sparrowhawk
Chair, Scrutiny Commission



In response to our report on Vocational education and regeneration, the Mayor has decided to:

- :: Encourage all 14-19 education and training providers to work together in a joined up way to increase the size of the vocational curriculum
- :: Start a debate on the extent to which work experience is meeting the needs of young people and business: is there enough of it and do young people have enough choice?
- :: Work with employers to increase the extent to which employers, particularly new ones, market themselves and their range of employment opportunities to young people
- :: Increase teachers awareness of business aims and objectives
- :: Work with providers to make Newham colleges and training centres the first choice for all young people living in Newham.



Councillor Winston Vaughan

During 2003/04, I chaired two commissions. The first completed the review of recruitment and retention of social workers in children's services and the second looked at Asthma Services in Newham.

Recruitment and retention of social workers in children's services.

Following the joint review by the Social Services Inspectorate and the Audit Commission, the Scrutiny Commission looked at the issue of Social Workers, particularly in the area of Children's Services. Against a backdrop of a national crisis in the recruitment of Social Workers, we looked at what initiatives were in place in Newham, London-wide and nationally to identify what measures may be put in place to make Newham an attractive place for both new recruits and current staff.

By consulting with Social Workers, particularly within the Children Services' area, as well as Senior Officers and National Bodies, the Commission were able to evaluate and develop the comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Strategy already in place.

Addressing asthma in Newham.

The Health and Social Care Act 2001, which came into force in January, 2003, gave local authorities the power to review and scrutinise the operation of the health service in its area and make reports and recommendations to National Health Service bodies.

This Commission co-opted the National Asthma Campaign and local people with asthma. The Commission drew on their knowledge and experience and gained a unique insight. Once again the co-operation and enthusiasm of the local Health

What has happened as a result of the scrutiny of Recruitment and Retention?

Following the review, the Social Services Department has continued to implement the Strategy and various related initiatives. However, in some areas progress has been difficult due to budget pressures within the Department.

There has been progress on some of the recommendations of the scrutiny commission as follows:

:: Information has been sent to all schools and post-16 establishments within the borough

setting out information about social work in Newham, linking with the Department of Health's national campaign to raise the profile of Social work

- :: A new category has been added to the Annual Staff Awards of Social Worker of the Year
- :: Options and possibilities to improve access to key worker accommodation have been discussed
- :: Work has begun on developing a flexible working strategy

Trusts ensured that the conclusions of the review were reached in a spirit of partnership and support.

As part of the review, the Commission surveyed schools and General Practitioners, and followed these up with a number of visits, including to Newham General Hospital and Shrewsbury Road Chest Clinic. The response from schools was particularly pleasing with over 60% returns.

The Commission concluded that asthma is generally well managed in Newham. Nevertheless there is room for increased collaboration and improved communication between different professional groups.

We made a number of recommendations to the Council and health partners in Newham. Initial indications are that the recommendations are well

supported. As asthma is one of the health priorities for Newham, the Strategic Health Authority welcomed the lead which Scrutiny provided in prioritising work to be done within the NHS and partner organisations. The Health and Social Wellbeing Partnership Board considered the review beneficial as asthma is to be considered as a health inequality priority.



Councillor Winston Vaughan
Scrutiny Commission



What will happen as a result of the scrutiny of Asthma?

- :: Better communication between Newham General Accident and Emergency and relevant professionals when asthma patients are admitted
- :: Improved environmental monitoring systems to enable greater self management of asthma
- :: Redistribution of the National Asthma Campaign's School Pack to encourage schools to adopt asthma policies that are appropriate for their children
- :: Improved management of children with asthma at school
- :: Encouragement to General Practitioners to provide specialist high quality asthma services
- :: Increased awareness of occupational asthma amongst the public, health professionals and local employers
- :: Expanded role for pharmacists in management of people with asthma

Monday - Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm



CESL/04/2

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