



Internal Audit
Department of Corporate Resources

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MEMORANDUM

To: Sarah Wyatt, Smoking Cessation and Tobacco Control Manager

From: Louise Clapton, Principal Auditor

Cc: Russell Moody, Stop Smoking Service Manager; David Spencer, Performance Informatics

Date: 23 February 2009

Subject: Audit of 2007-2010 Local Area Agreement Stretch Target

Stretch Target 10: Reduce premature mortality rates

Indicator 1 – The number of pregnant women referred to NHS stop smoking services who have quit smoking at 4 weeks.

Indicator 2 – The number of people living in the most deprived areas (bottom third neighbourhoods) who have quit smoking at four weeks after attending NHS stop smoking services.

1. We have completed our audit of performance indicators 1 and 2 above. We have examined the relevant records of Plymouth NHS and obtained explanations and carried out such tests as we considered necessary.
2. In our opinion, the system in place for identifying, recording, calculating and reporting performance in respect of this stretch target indicator was found to be good, and was backed up by a sufficient audit trail and supporting documentation.
3. Issues were however found with the stretch targets that had been agreed. The target set to increase the number of pregnant women referred to NHS stop smoking services who have quit smoking at 4 weeks, is unachievable. This is due to the performance expected without reward element being overestimated and agreed as 314 (105 per year). This equates to an expected 169% increase on the 2005/06 actual of 39 quitters which is clearly not accurate. With on average 350 maternity cases in the Plymouth area each year this requires that at least 30% of these mothers to be smokers and that they should be helped to quit. This however does not appear accurate when it is estimated that of the entire Plymouth population only 30% are smokers.

It is however evident that in 2007/08 56 pregnant woman quit smoking within four weeks this is 43.6% increase on the 2005/06 actual.

4. The target set to increase the number of people living in the most deprived areas (bottom third neighbourhoods) who have quit smoking at four weeks after attending NHS stop smoking services is unachievable. This is due to the performance expected without reward element being overestimated and agreed as 3,516 (1,172 per year). This equates to an expected 43.3% increase on the 2005/06 actual of 818 quitters which would not be possible.

It is however evident that in 2007/08 953 people quit smoking within four weeks this is 16.5% increase on the 2005/06 actual.

5. When agreeing stretch targets in the future, consideration should be given to using more meaningful percentage measured indicators.

If you have any queries, or there are any matters you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact Louise Clapton on the above number.

We would like to thank all officers for the assistance and co-operation we received during this audit