

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Data working group - scoping report
Meeting date	15 January 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Health & Adult Social Care (HASC) O&S Committee agreed to establish a data working group which would investigate the data needs of the committee and how these may be met.</p> <p>The working group met on 11 December to agree the detailed scope. The scope is now being reported to the HASC O&S Committee for approval.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The lead member and officer for the group as Cllr Patrick Canavan and the Corporate Director for Wellbeing b. Key lines of enquiry as detailed at Paragraph 11 a-h of this report c. Timescale of meetings as set out at Paragraph 20 d. Measures of effectiveness as set out at Paragraph 24
Reason for recommendations	To ensure that the purpose for the working group is clearly established in line with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr David Brown, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing
Corporate Director	Jillian Kay, Corporate Director of Wellbeing
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee (HASC) at its meeting on 27 November 2023 agreed to establish a working group to look at the data required by the committee to effectively fulfil its scrutiny role. The working group met on 11 December 2023 to agree the scope which is covered in this report for confirmation by the Committee.

Strategic context and good practice

2. The following areas of good practice and strategic context were highlighted to the working group:
3. O&S should take an evidence-based approach to its work and it is good practice to incorporate the use of performance data, service user data and insights into both its work planning and detailed scrutiny work. Not all data will be required on a regular basis. O&S should remain strategic in its focus and select data that enables it to 'horizon scan' to understand where more targeted scrutiny work is needed. It is in the targeted work that a more 'deep dive' into detailed data will provide an evidence base against which to draw conclusions and make recommendations.
4. Consideration of good practices and common challenges around data may assist the working group. Common challenges for O&S in its access to and use of data are set out in ['The Good Scrutiny Guide'](#) published by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as:
 - Challenges in getting hold of information
 - The risk of being buried in a morass of information
 - Duplication of work already being undertaken by others who are also overseeing services and intervening to bring about improvements where necessary.
5. The guide makes suggestions for how O&S may access data which include:
 - the provision of a regular digest of information for councillors to review informally on a regular basis;
 - accessing information in online management systems for real- time data review;

- establishing rapporteurs amongst the committee to oversee and report back on particular areas of data.

Further information on this topic can be found in Section 4 'Using Evidence and Gaining Expertise' of the CfGS Good Scrutiny Guide.

6. The group was asked to note that the council's [Assurance Review Action Plan](#), which responds to the Best Value Notice and Assurance Review inspection by DLUHC, includes an action relating to '*more focus of O&S committees into corporate performance reporting and challenging the executive.*' The aim of this action is that improvement plans have an impact and improve the services that are missing their targets (see action 4 of the Assurance Review Action Plan).
7. The group was made aware that councillor training on the use of data may be required to support the interpretation and application of data provision identified through this working group. This is an action identified within the O&S Action Plan adopted by Council and due for action by September 2024.
8. The group considered a document detailing levels of data available and what was appropriate to be considered at scrutiny.

Membership

9. The Constitution states that O&S working groups may be formed by non-executive councillors (not limited to committee members). Volunteers for the group were sought and membership is as follows:

Councillors:

- Patrick Canavan
- Joe Salmon
- Stephen Bartlett

10. The group agreed Cllr Patrick Canavan would be the lead member, who will be responsible for chairing working group meetings, liaising with officers and reporting on progress to the committee. It was also agreed that Jillian Kay, Corporate Director for Wellbeing will be the Lead Officer.
11. Working group meetings will be held on a non-public basis, without the requirement to meet statutory deadlines for agenda and minute publication. Transparency will be ensured through update reporting of activity to the HASC O&S Committee, along with a final report detailing findings of the group.

Key Lines of Enquiry

12. The scope of work was agreed by the working group at its first meeting, for subsequent approval by the parent committee. The group was advised that scope should be limited to a number of key lines of enquiry to ensure that the work is targeted enough to have impact. Whilst these enquires may identify possibilities for wider work on the topic, retaining a clear and focussed scope is more likely to lead to value-added outcomes. Any further potential scrutiny work beyond scope should be identified as an outcome of the group.
13. Based on discussions arising at committee and subsequent working group, the following key lines of enquiry were agreed by the working group:

- a. Consideration of the definition of what data is and what type and level of data and/ or insight is useful for scrutiny
- b. What data currently exists that may assist the committee in fulfilling its scrutiny role? Consideration to be given at separate working groups for the data available from Adult Social Care and Health partners
- c. Of the existing data established at a. above, what are the specific data requests of the committee and how will these be used to inform the committee's work? (eg. horizon scanning/ deep dive scrutiny)
- d. Do these data requests exist in a format that is digestible for scrutiny purposes? If not, can this be achieved?
- e. With what frequency will the data be received and by what mechanism? (eg. within committee meetings/ supplied outside of meetings/ links to other bodies' data/ rapporteurs).
- f. Are there any gaps between the availability at a. and the request at b? Are there any recommendations for how these gaps may be bridged?
- g. What processes will the committee establish for arising requests for data to ensure officers can support requests? (eg. consider additional data requests at the point of scoping a scrutiny item/ timescales to enable officers to respond to requests).
- h. Does this work lead to any wider, out of scope issues that have arisen as a result of discussions? These may form a suggestion for further scrutiny work for this or another O&S committee, depending on the nature of the issue.

The working group agreed the above key lines of enquiry, pending confirmation by the HASC O&S Committee.

Resources and Timetable

14. The working group was advised that the number of meetings required by the group should be scoped, and the proposed activity for each meeting, including any additional invitees to inform discussions.
15. The constitution requires that all commissioned O&S work be accompanied by a consideration of resources available to support the work. This should include councillor availability, Democratic Services availability and subject specific officer availability to support the group.
16. **Councillor resource** – working group members considered their ability to commit to attending working group meetings and undertaking any research or review work between meetings. This may affect the breadth of the scope that councillors agree to.
17. **Democratic Services resource** – Democratic Services will provide support to the working group on the basis of establishing a timetable of meeting dates, attending one meeting per month, circulating agendas and assisting the lead member to provide an update report to each meeting of the HASC O&S Committee along with a final report on the working group outcomes.
18. **Subject specific officer support** - support will be provided to the working group through the Corporate Director for Wellbeing and the Director of Public Health Dorset. Resource availability of these officers to support the group, including any follow up work between meetings should be discussed at the outset of the

group's work. It is recommended that a lead support officer be established to support the lead member of the group.

19. An average number of O&S working group meetings is between 1 and 5, depending on the subject matter. A need for further meetings would indicate that the scope of the group is too wide, enquiries have moved beyond scope, or that the issues is more suited to another ongoing format of scrutiny work (eg. sub-committee).
20. The group was asked to set out a timetable for its work, taking account of paragraphs 12-18 above. Members agreed that the first meeting should take place in the new year, and officers advised that with a focussed scope the group could aim to conclude its work swiftly in order to free up for capacity for any other working group the committee may wish to pursue. The committee may wish to comment on this matter.

Objectives and Methodology

21. The role of the working group is to assist in establishing the committee's data needs by taking a 'deep dive' into the available data, reasons for requests and establishing how these will enhance the work of the committee. Although the group will establish findings, it may not determine matters on behalf of the parent committee. Findings must be presented to and agreed by the HASC O&S committee at the conclusion of the group's work.
22. Officers identified to support the working group will discuss and provide information to the group to assist it in establishing data needs. Where information requested is not known or within the gift of the support officers, follow ups may be provided between meetings. The group may also establish whether any other invitees are appropriate for one or more meetings to assist it with its enquiries.
23. As the group's purpose is to meet the needs of the committee, it may be appropriate to seek views of the wider committee informally by email throughout the process, to inform the group. This will be supported by Democratic Services in liaison with the lead member of the group.

Measure of Effectiveness

24. The group agreed the measures of effectiveness as follows :
 - A clear list of data requests is established that informs the work of the O&S committee;
 - If there are data requests that cannot be met, there is clarity in the group on the reasons for this, and any actions that can be taken to change this in future.
 - There is a clear process agreed for responding to future arising data requests.
 - The work of the O&S committee is enhanced by the data provision established. The Committee may wish to review this regularly, when considering the value added through its overall work to understand the contribution that has been made by data provided.

Background papers

[CfPS-Good-Scrutiny-Guide-v4-WEB-SINGLE-PAGES.pdf \(cfgs.org.uk\)](#)

[Assurance Review Action Plan,](#)

https://bcpcouncil-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/louise_smith_bcpcouncil_gov_uk/EY72BfPdmO1Jobb-oyvfNALQBxDuDCqgRCw1qQ7VQWKLOSg?e=ChjQwH