

The Health of the Nation

A summary of progress, July to December 1992

Department of Health
January 1993

IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTH OF THE NATION

Introduction

1 The White Paper "The Health of the Nation" was published in July 1992. Since then, considerable progress has been made towards implementing the plans and strategies set out in the White Paper.

2 As part of the implementation and development of the strategy, Ministers require progress reports at three-monthly intervals. This constitutes the second report.

3 The report sets out the main areas of activity across the whole range of implementation work, from the organisational structure (the Cabinet Committee), through general issues such as monitoring and research, to specific activity in each key area.

4 The paper is in eight parts:

- Part I - Promulgating the strategy
- Part II - Oversight and development of the strategy in Government
- Part III - Reporting progress to Ministers and EDH(H); Working Groups
- Part IV - Work in key areas
- Part V - Implementation and development outside NHS
- Part VI - Implementation and development inside NHS
- Part VII - Monitoring; Reviewing; Research
- Part VIII - Meeting commitments in non-key areas.

5 The report is intended to give a broad overview of what is already happening and what about to happen on Health of the Nation implementation. It does not cover the detail of the action plans which are being prepared in each of the key areas. These will form the basis of more detailed reports later.

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PROMULGATING THE STRATEGY

1 A main priority is to ensure the continued and widespread promulgation of the Health of the Nation White Paper and the strategy for health. As well as informing the many interested organisations and bodies about what is heppening centrally, this helps encourage and direct their own efforts.

2 Promulgation is taking place in a number of ways:

- ▶ Conferences There are many opportunities and requests for Ministers to take part in major non-DH conferences specifically devoted to the White Paper.

A series of DH/NHS organised conferences is taking place from January to April 1993 - one in each NHS Region. These provide opportunity for Ministers to discuss particular themes and to explore what work is being planned - in the NHS and elsewhere - to take HoN forward. Each conference is drawing heavily on local activity and themes. Audiences and speakers are being drawn from NHS and many outside organisations.

- ▶ Speeches Health of the Nation will form a major part of a continuing Ministerial speech programme during 1993.
- ▶ Exhibition A Health of the Nation exhibition of good practice in health education, linked specifically to the key areas in the White Paper, is planned for 1993, possibly to mark the anniversary of the publication of the White Paper.
- ▶ Supporting material
 - Demand for the summary and popular versions of the White Paper continues to be heavy. Both have had to be reprinted. These will continue to be the 'core' documents.
 - A cassette version has been produced for blind and partially sighted people.
 - Ethnic versions, and an ethnic advertising campaign, are in preparation for February 1993.
- ▶ Newsletter A Health of the Nation newsletter (Target), being produced on a quarterly basis, was issued for the first time in December 1992. This is primarily for a non-NHS audience, although it is of interest to the NHS and is being circulated widely within the service. The first issue had to be reprinted because of heavy demand.

- ▶ Other publications There is now a series of Health of the Nation publications. These include:

Health of the Nation Resource Pack (July 1992)
Public Health Common Data Set - Health of the Nation
 Baseline Data (October 1992)
 Trend Data (December 1992)
First Steps for the NHS (November 1992)
Specification of National Indicators (December 1992)

To be published in 1993

Key Area Handbooks (five) (January 1993)
Discussion document on Local Targets (early 1993)
Guidance on Healthy Alliances (spring 1993)
Health promotion in the Workplace (autumn 1993)

- ▶ Internationally Opportunities are taken for Ministers and officials to refer to Health of the Nation in various fora, including meetings of Commonwealth Health Ministers, the Council of Europe and the World Health Organisation. An English-Dutch seminar on health strategy development was held in the Netherlands in the autumn 1992. An English-German seminar will be held in June 1993.

OVERSIGHT AND DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY IN GOVERNMENT

1 The main responsibility for taking forward the strategy for health set out in "The Health of the Nation" White Paper rests with the Secretary of State for Health. However, the initiative goes much wider than the Department of Health, and is being co-ordinated overall at Cabinet level.

2 The new Ministerial Sub-committee on Health Strategy (EDH(H)), of which the Secretary of State for Health is a member, has overall responsibility for developing the strategy. It is also responsible for co-ordinating UK-wide health issues. Its terms of reference are:

"To oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of the Health Strategy for England set out in the White Paper "Health of the Nation", to co-ordinate the Government's policies on United Kingdom-wide issues affecting health, and report as necessary to the Ministerial Committee on Home and Social Affairs".

3 EDH(H) receives a report on progress in implementing Health of the Nation every six months.

PART III

REPORTING PROGRESS TO MINISTERS AND EDH(H); WORKING GROUPS

1 The Health Strategy Unit in the Department of Health, together with professional colleagues in the Department, is responsible for the overall development and co-ordination of work on the health strategy, drawing together work taken forward within the Department, NHSME and elsewhere.

Reporting progress

2 Reporting will be as follows:

- ▶ three-monthly reports to DH Ministers
- ▶ six-monthly progress reports to EDH(H).

Working Groups

3 The three working groups set up to help develop the strategy for health are to continue to assist in implementation. These are:

- ▶ M(H)'s Wider Health Working Group This Group has a number of specific remits/tasks arising from the White Paper. Amongst other things, it is currently working on the development of guidance on establishing healthy alliances, and health education in the workplace. Reports are expected to be published on these topics during 1993.
- ▶ CMO's Health of the Nation Working Group This Group advises on monitoring and reviewing progress towards achievement of the White Paper targets, and consider more general epidemiological and public health issues concerned with the strategy. It also provides advice on possible identification and development of new key areas and targets.
- ▶ Chief Executive's Working Group on NHS Implementation This continues to oversee implementation within the NHS.

PART IV

WORK IN KEY AREAS

1 There are a great number of commitments in each of the five key areas in the White Paper. In a number of instances action involves more than one key area.

2 In each key area a detailed programme of work is being put in place. In many cases, work will be developed in and across key areas by the task forces announced in the White Paper. No task force is proposed for HIV/AIDS and sexual health, or the majority of the work on mental health. Here, existing mechanisms will be used to take work forward.

3 Task forces include:

- nutrition (now operating)
- smoking (now operating)
- accidents (first meeting February 1993)
- workplace (now operating)
- physical activity (announcement possible early 1993)
- mental illness (now operating).

PART V

IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE NHS

1 A main forum for taking work forward outside the NHS at national is the Wider Health Working Group, chaired by the Minister for Health. The next meeting will take place on 10 March, when reports on work concerned with development of healthy alliances, and health education in the workplace, will be considered.

2 The White Paper contained a large number of specific commitments. Chief are:

Guidance on policy appraisal and health Possible content and production of this guidance under active consideration in DH. It is hoped to produce guidance towards the end of 1993.

Healthy alliances DH, with the Wider Health Working Group, is preparing and will consult on guidance about promotion of healthy alliances. Work started during October 1992 and involves local authorities, voluntary organisations, and a wide range of others. It is planned to produce the guidance by the summer 1993.

Voluntary organisations Eight awards of grants from the £250,000 S64 allocation announced in the White Paper (to fund preliminary work in the voluntary sector) have been made for 1992/93. One further award is pending. A number of applications for funding for 1993/94 are being considered.

Healthy Cities Enhanced support given through a three-year S64 grant to UK Health For All Network to establish a database for the dissemination of information about good practice, developments and projects which has the potential for aiding intersectoral healthy alliances.

Healthy workplaces Task force on health education in the workplace now set up under aegis of Wider Health Working Group. It is planned to produce guidance later in 1993.

Health professionals Discussions have begun between Department of Health and professions, and with Royal Colleges etc, on development of standards of good practice and clinical protocols, and on further emphasis in training on disease prevention and health promotion.

Healthy schools The Department of Education (with Health Education Authority) is taking part in EC/WHO/Council of Europe initiative. Aim is to enter the healthy schools network in spring 1993. Work is in hand to determine the criteria for selecting schools in England to take part.

PART VI

IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT INSIDE NHS

1 The NHS has a central role in implementing the health strategy as the main provider of health advice, treatment, care and support. It has also a major responsibility to bring together at local level the very wide range of interests which can have an influence on health.

2 One of the NHS's main roles will be to work with the health professions, managers and clinicians at national and local level, to explore ways of developing existing health promotion arrangements in primary care further in response to the strategy. It will also be responsible for setting and monitoring health targets at local level.

3 Principal activity under way, or planned, within NHS includes:

Planning guidance The annual planning and priorities guidance for the NHS gives special emphasis to health improvement. The health priorities are taken directly from the White Paper. Regions are currently reporting to the NHSME on their plans for implementing Health of the Nation.

Focus Groups Five short term groups (one per key area) of senior managers and professionals from NHS, local government, the voluntary sector and Government Departments, were established to produce appropriate guidance on objectives in each key area which could be included in regional corporate contracts, district and FHSA corporate contracts) purchasing contracts, NHS Trust and DMU business plans and GP practice plans for 1993-94. The groups' report was published as "First Steps for the NHS" in November 1992.

Handbooks The production of a guidance handbook in each key area (aimed primarily at management and focused on prevention). They are designed to enable local managers work towards Health of the Nation targets, and will contain practical advice and examples of local initiatives. They are due to be published by end January 1993.

Task force There are plans for a task force to be set up early in 1993 to stimulate and promote action at a local level. This is likely to be led by a senior NHS figure (RGM), with a senior person from a local authority and from the voluntary sector.

Regional co-ordinators These are now in place in each NHS Region to provide strong local leadership for HoN.

Healthy alliances NHS has a lead role in forming 'healthy alliances' below national level. Healthgain '92 workshop on 'healthy alliances' was held in November 1992; a report will be published in the spring 1993. The guidance being produced by the Wider Health Working Group (mid-1993) will also contain guidance to the NHS on this.

4 The NHS is committed to becoming a 'healthy employer'; a series of regional workshops, attended by more than 2000 managers and staff was completed in December 1992. The conclusions will be published during 1993. This includes an initiative on 'healthy hospitals', aimed at patients, the public and the workforce.

MONITORING; RESEARCH; REVIEWING AND REPORTING

1 A range of action is needed to roll forward, develop and review the strategy. Action is currently under way, or being put in hand, as indicated.

Monitoring

- ▶ Appraisal of information The information and indicators needed to monitor progress are being identified. A document giving full background on White Paper targets was published in December 1992 (Specification of National Indicators). Common Data Set extended to cover key areas and work is in hand on identification of 'supplementary indicators' in each key area.
- ▶ Epidemiological overviews Series of overviews has begun with the elderly; asthma, CHD and stroke to follow.
- ▶ Health Survey development Expansion of health survey already announced. Work in progress on establishment of NHS survey advice centre.
- ▶ Central Health Outcomes Unit Unit now being set up. New professional advisory machinery, and DH Management Steering Group (both also to cover work of Central Health Monitoring Unit) being established.

Research

- ▶ Implications and commitments for research, and reflecting strategy in R&D priorities identified. Work in hand to begin to take R&D forward in key areas; also in developing other possible future key areas.

Reporting and reviewing

- ▶ Three-monthly reports on progress being made to Ministers, starting in October 1992.
- ▶ Six-monthly reports on progress will be prepared for EDH(H).
- ▶ Reviewing the strategy The White Paper promises periodic reviews of the strategy. This will be done regularly by Ministers.

PART VIII

MEETING COMMITMENTS IN NON-KEY AREAS

1 The White Paper states that the chosen key areas represent the beginning of a rolling programme. Amongst other potential key areas mentioned in White Paper

- ▶ oral health (a separate oral health strategy is currently being developed)
- ▶ rehabilitation
- ▶ elderly people
- ▶ asthma
- ▶ back pain
- ▶ drug misuse

2 Work, including R&D, is in hand by the Chief Medical Officer's Working Group to develop proposals for how these, and other subjects which may be identified, can be considered for key area status when the strategy is reviewed.

