

Health and Wellbeing Board		
Title	Comments of the Healthier Communities Select Committee on the HealthWatch report, <i>The Polish Community and Access to Health and Wellbeing Services in Lewisham</i> .	
Contributor	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Item 3
Class	Part 1 (open)	19 July 2016

1. Context

- 1.1 Under the terms of reference of the Healthier Communities Select Committee, the Committee is able to receive referrals from Healthwatch and consider whether to make any report/recommendation in relation to such referral. And the Constitution provides for the Healthier Communities Select Committee to make reports and recommendations to the Executive/Council (including the Health and Wellbeing Board).

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report informs the Health and Wellbeing Board of the comments and views of the Healthier Communities Select Committee, arising from discussions held on the HealthWatch report on *The Polish Community and Access to Health and Wellbeing Services in Lewisham*, considered at its meeting on 18 May 2016.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note the views of the Select Committee as set out in this report and agree to provide a response.

3. Healthier Communities Select Committee views

- 3.1 At its meeting on 18th May 2016 the Healthier Communities Select Committee received a report from Bromley and Lewisham Healthwatch titled “The Polish Community and Access to Health and Wellbeing Services in Lewisham” (attached as Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The Committee took oral evidence from the CEO of Bromley and Lewisham Healthwatch. After questioning the witness and subsequent discussion, the Committee resolved to refer the report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in the following terms:
- The Committee noted that Healthwatch had first-hand conversations with a number of members of Polish Communities and accepts that the qualitative evidence in the report accurately reflected the content of these conversations. However, the Committee had reservations that concerns elicited from these might be presented as representative of all members of Polish Communities.
 - The Committee noted that a proportion of the comments were similar to those which might be expected from other communities, including other minority communities. However, the Committee was disturbed to read reported comments

from those interviewed such as “Polish doctors have better qualifications” and “the NHS is a disaster”. The Committee considers that there is an opportunity for the Health and Wellbeing Board to commission more robust research into the beliefs behind these comments.

- The Committee was concerned to read of a reported lack of trust of the NHS of some members of Polish communities, with reports that some chose to return to Poland or attend private clinics for diagnosis, treatment and medication. The Committee was concerned that some members of Polish communities may fail to appreciate how UK health services are organised and operated compared to those in Poland. The Committee considers there are opportunities for greater engagement.
- The Committee was also concerned that there was no evidence about the status of the private clinics operating in the UK reported to be used by members of Polish communities: that is, whether they were providing services which might require registration with, for example, the CQC. The Committee recommends that the Health and Wellbeing Board commissions research into the reasons why members of Polish communities attend private clinics and the nature of and services provided at these clinics.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report per se; but there are financial implications arising from carrying out the action proposed by the Committee.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Constitution states that ‘the Council has appointed the Healthier Communities Select Committee to carry out, among other things, the scrutiny of health bodies under the Local Authority (Public Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 and other relevant legislation in place from time to time’. The Constitution provides for the Healthier Communities Select Committee to review and scrutinise the decisions and actions of the Health and Wellbeing Board and to make reports and recommendations to the Executive/Council. It is the duty of the Executive body to respond within 2 months of receipt of the report/recommendations.

6. Further implications

- 6.1 At this stage there are no specific environmental, equalities or crime and disorder implications to consider.

Background papers

[Healthier Communities Select Committee Agenda \(18 May 2016\)](#)

If you have any queries about this report, please contact John Bardens, Scrutiny Manager (ext. 49976) or Kevin Flaherty, Business and Committee Manager (ext. 49327)