

News release

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Back to basics on health scrutiny

The Democratic Health Network (DHN) today published Health Scrutiny: the Basics, a new publication aimed at councillors and officers in local authorities, their health partners and those who are involved in the newly established NHS patient and public involvement structures.

Health Scrutiny: the Basics explains concisely powers, which came into force in January 2003, for councils to scrutinise health issues, resulting from provisions in the Health and Social Care Act 2001. The publication covers what powers local authorities now have, who can be involved in the new function, and the requirements on NHS bodies in relation to health scrutiny.

Dr Fiona Campbell, Co-ordinator of DHN, said: "This DHN guide provides councillors, and others who will be involved in the health scrutiny process, with a short and user-friendly grounding in the basics of this new local government power.

"We hope that it helps more councillors to get started on health scrutiny and to use the powers that they now have to the full. It will also assist our partners in the NHS to understand how they too can contribute to health scrutiny."

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

1. The Democratic Health Network (DHN) was set up by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) to provide policy advice, information, research and the exchange of good practice on the developing relationship between local government and health; and to support the democratic role of local government in health improvement. The DHN has over 100 members, the majority being local authorities, but also including health bodies and trade unions. Details of DHN's work can be found at <http://www.dhn.org.uk/>. The LGIU is Britain's foremost independent local democracy think tank, campaigning to extend local authority best practice, freedoms and responsibilities. The LGIU is working to influence the debate on local government modernisation. Previous LGIU news releases and statements can be viewed at <http://www.lgiu.gov.uk/>.

2. Copies of Health Scrutiny: the Basics are on sale at £10 for ten copies from Central Books on 0845 458 9910, 0845 458 9912 (fax) or e-mail mo@centralbooks.com.

3. For a free journalist's copy of Health Scrutiny: the Basics, contact Kevin Morton, LGIU Press Officer, on 020 7554 2858, 07958 314846 or e-mail kevin.morton@lgiu.org.uk.