

DEMOCRATIC HEALTH NETWORK
NEWS RELEASE
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Health Scrutiny works!

Local authorities all over the country are using their new health scrutiny powers to achieve real improvements in local health services, according to a new study by the Democratic Health Network (DHN).

Health Scrutiny Works! is based on a DHN survey on whether the health scrutiny function given to local authorities has been making a difference in its first two years. The publication carries case studies from around the country highlighting best practice in councils and demonstrating where improvements in the quality and delivery of local health services has resulted from local authority health scrutiny work. These include:

- Free school holiday swimming for children in Birmingham
- Improved provision of dentistry services in Cornwall
- Better access to crisis resolution and out of hours services for mental health service users in Hull

Dr Fiona Campbell, DHN Co-ordinator, said: "Although the new health scrutiny function of local authorities was welcomed two years ago as a means of increasing the accountability of local health services, many councillors and officers remained sceptical about whether it would make a difference.

"This DHN publication shows that it has indeed had an impact on the ground, where time, effort and a spirit of innovation have been invested in the enterprise. We hope that it encourages more councillors around the country to run with health scrutiny."