

## **NOTES OF INFORMAL MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE COMMITTEE ON 31 JANUARY 2022 AT 7.30 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Jeapes (Chair), Kay, Hyde, Chowdhury, Gantly, Clarke, Graham, Klute

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors: Lukes and Turan

### **Councillor Clare Jeapes in the Chair**

1. **Introductions – the Chair introduced Members and officers to the meeting**
2. **Apologies** – Councillors Hyde and Kay for lateness
3. **Declaration of substitute members** – none
4. **Declaration of interests** - none

### **5. Minutes of previous meeting**

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2022 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them

### **6. Chair's Report**

The Chair stated that an item on St.Pancras redevelopment had been added to the agenda for the next meeting on 21 February in response to Members questions on the redevelopment proposals

The Chair also stated that Siobhan Harrington, Chief Executive at the Whittington NHS Trust, and Michelle Johnson, Director of Nursing would be shortly leaving. Members expressed their appreciation of their work to the Committee and residents of the borough and that this should be discussed at the next meeting to decide on a more formal method to show their appreciation

The Chair also stated that due to COVID the scrutiny review on Health Inequalities witness evidence had been delayed, and in order to complete the review an additional informal meeting would need to be held in order to discuss the recommendations. It was stated that consideration should be given to an informal meeting of the Committee to discuss the recommendations on 28 February at 6.00 p.m.

The Chair also referred to the fact that there was a High Court hearing to review the privatisation of GP's in the borough by an American company the following day

The Chair also stated that there was also a day of action organised by Keep our NHS Public on 26 February which Members were welcome to attend

## **7. Health and Wellbeing Board Update - Verbal**

Councillor Nurullah Turan, Executive Member Health and Social Care gave a verbal update to the Committee. During consideration of this the following main points were made –

- Noted that discussions were taking place on funding and that it was important that Islington did not lose funding to other boroughs, given its deprivation needs
- Noted that Islington wanted to work with partners to engage across NCL on the new structure and work for more central government funding

The Chair thanked Councillor Turan for attending

## **8. Health Inequalities Scrutiny Review - Witness evidence**

Jonathan O'Sullivan, Director of Public Health was present and made a verbal update to the Committee, following circulation of a draft paper proposing a way forward in relation to witness evidence and draft recommendations for the scrutiny review, copy interleaved

- Noted that the witness evidence had been delayed due to COVID pressures
- Noted that it was proposed that the Whittington Hospital and evidence on diabetes would be presented to the Committee at the 21 February meeting, with a view to making recommendations at the March meeting
- Members expressed the view that a meeting should be arranged to consider draft recommendations, prior to the meeting of the Committee in March
- The view was expressed that lessons had been learnt from the pandemic about how things could be organised differently and how staff and Local Government could be very effective for its residents, during a pandemic. The Council had offered leadership to residents in very difficult circumstances, had engaged with the community, and offered advice and support and organised a very efficient vaccination programme. This had been made more difficult due to the inequalities in the borough, and the Government's behaviour during COVID

The Chair thanked Jonathan O'Sullivan for attending

## 9. Islington Safeguarding Report

Fiona Bateman, Chair Islington Safeguarding Board was present and outlined the report. During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- Key achievements –criminal abuse role across the country during the pandemic but Central North London saw one of the lowest increases. Police detention rates for domestic abuse, rape and serious sexual assaults improved
- 107 local rough sleepers were accommodated as part of the national initiative. A further 93 hidden homeless cases were accommodated, and staff and volunteers and local residents were informed about emerging scams, such as charging people for COVID tests and vaccinations
- Partner organisations worked together to ensure care homes were fully prepared, particularly around infection control. Comprehensive system of welfare checks for shielding residents or those with care and support needs set up, with follow up welfare visits, organising food boxes and making referrals, including safeguarding referrals, when needed
- As staff could not visit people in care homes, measures put in place to ensure any new authorisation of a deprivation of liberty would take account of the fact that the person had not been seen face to face
- Service user and carer sub-group continued to run successfully during the pandemic
- Noted the progress on delivering the Islington Safeguarding Adults 3 year strategy
- Noted that there has been a slight increase in safeguarding adults concerns, however safeguarding enquiries have decreased
- The most common type of abuse in Islington during the last year were neglect, financial, physical and psychological abuse. The number of safeguarding concerns about modern slavery or sexual exploitation can be hard to spot but remains low
- Noted due to the pandemic the implementation of the Liberty Protections Safeguards had been postponed until April 2022 by the Government. Domestic abuse act passed into law
- In response to a question as to street homelessness it was stated that those transferred into accommodation during the pandemic had been closely assessed and that whilst this was welcomed by a number of homeless persons, there were some who did not and the Council could not compel people to remain in accommodation
- In response to a question as to do not resuscitate instruction on some patients there had been close co-operation between the Council/GP's/care homes etc. to needs on a case by case basis with regard to this during the pandemic, and the Whittington safeguarding board had looked into 11 cases on a case by case basis and that it had been established that these had been applied appropriately
- Noted the arrangements for attendance at the Islington Safeguarding Board and it was felt that partnerships were strong, however some improvements needed to be made at operational level, and to engage a wider section of the community such as voluntary and faith groups
- Reference was made to the fact that a number of vulnerable residents lived alone and their situation had worsened during the pandemic. Noted

that sheltered accommodation was monitored and if there is evidence of self-neglect appropriate action taken, although this had been more problematic during the pandemic

- Noted that NCL were looking at measures that could be taken to limit financial abuse
- Noted that some residents were uncomfortable with going out because of the pandemic, and it was stated that whilst residents could not be forced the Board would look at measures that could be employed to encourage this

The Chair thanked Fiona Bateman for attending

## 10. **Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

Emma Stubbs, Lisa Luhman, and Charlotte Ashton Public Health were present, and outlined the report and presentation copy interleaved

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- Better Lives, Islington's drug and alcohol service has been operational since April 2018 following a major redesign of services. Noted priorities for the treatment system and that during the initial lockdown periods, the initial focus of support was on ensuring residents could access, or continue to access the critical elements of their care. The service is now working towards as much face to face support as possible, whilst following guidelines
- The ongoing learning from the response to COVID has identified both challenges and opportunities and there have been challenges or limitations in service delivery. However the pandemic has also created opportunities and service users have benefitted from having responsibility and control of when they can collect medication and also better partnership working. This has led to substance misuse services and their partners exploring ways in which support can be offered in a more multi-disciplinary way. In addition the service nationally has been subject to review following the Dame Carol Black report which sets out a number of recommendations to improve drug and alcohol services
- Priorities for next 12 months – targeting priority groups such as opiate users who also use alcohol, Implement COVID recovery programme, develop systems and partnerships to address co-morbid trauma and mental ill health in those who use substances, deep dive into review of deaths in treatment, address recruitment and retention of workforce, review and respond to recommendations in Dame Carol Black's report
- Noted impact of COVID and service recovery proposals, together with service user perspectives
- Noted details of complexity of service users, and inequalities and deprivation affecting this
- In response to a question it was stated that the service had faced a number of challenges during the pandemic, and that the numbers of service users had increased. It was stated that details of drug related deaths, and additional data should be included in future reports
- Reference was made to the additional funding that had been made available, however there were ever more complex needs to be dealt

with, often related to housing, mental health and social services issues, and that there is a need to work more effectively across agencies to deal with these

- Discussion took place as to deaths in treatment and that this was not usually connected with overdosing, and that there was a need to identify and take a long term view about where more appropriate interventions could more effectively have been made, and a whole system approach taken
- Noted that the pandemic had made engagement with service users more difficult. Noted that the changes proposed to health community services may assist in this
- In response to a question as to the high number of under 18's admissions to hospitals it was stated that education was needed as to the effect of drugs on young people, and there were regular commissioner meetings across London to discuss concerns, however the purchase of drugs on the internet by young people was problematic
- A Member referred to the Islington website and the directory to services, and it was stated that this would be looked at to ensure it is more user friendly

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Director of Public Health be requested to

- (a) Provide more detailed information related to of drug deaths in future reports
- (b) Ensuring the LBI website is updated to be more user friendly and provide a better description of services available
- (c) Provide details of how many estimated drug and alcohol users that the borough engages with, based on Public Health England figures
- (d) Provide the service contract KPI's in future reports, together with national comparators compared to LBI figures
- (e) That where available details of (a) – (d) above be circulated to Members following the meeting

The Chair thanked Emma Stubbs, Lisa Luhman and Charlotte Ashton for attending

## 11. Covid 19 Update - Verbal

Councillor Sue Lukes, Executive Member Community Safety and Pandemic response, and Jonathan O'Sullivan, Director of Public Health and John Everson, Director of Adult Social Care were present

During consideration of the update the following main points were made –

- Noted that the decision for mandatory vaccinations for NHS staff had been amended and consultation was now going to take place and the 1 April scheduled date has been delayed
- Noted that discussions had taken place with providers and 80% of staff had now been vaccinated, and this was scheduled to rise to 95% by 1 April, however this may now be affected by the change by the Government to consult on the proposals
- Noted that there had been a number of small COVID outbreaks in care homes, however these had been small and mainly confined to staff
- Noted that rules around isolation and visiting care homes were changing
- Noted that OMICRON had increased COVID cases substantially in the borough, and that this was due to its high transmissibility, however it appeared the virus was milder than previous variants, and less likely to lead to hospitalisation and death
- Noted that infections had now dropped from the peak and that there had been a decline in hospitalisations, and death levels were lower than the previous year in January and there were less people on mechanical ventilators
- Noted the good vaccination programme which had assisted in reducing hospitalisations and deaths, especially in the 60+ age group
- Noted the excellent work carried out by Public Health staff during the pandemic
- Vaccination rates – 1200 residents had first and second vaccinations in the previous week and booster rates were very good
- Noted that Islington had received an additional grant from Government to assist with the vaccination process, and that this would be targeted to areas where there were low vaccination levels, such as Bunhill, Caledonian wards
- Noted COVID funding was due to end in March, however testing was likely to continue but guidance was awaited as to what form this would take

The Chair thanked Councillor Lukes, Jonathan O’Sullivan and John Everson for attending

## 12. **Work Programme 2021/22**

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted and amended due to the changes in the programme due to the revised schedule for the Scrutiny review discussed earlier

The meeting ended at 10.10 p.m.