

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH & ADULTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Ahmodur Khan
Councillor Kamrul Hussain
Councillor Amy Lee

Other Councillors Present in Person:

(Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care)

Officers Present in Person:

Dr Somen Banerjee
Filuck Miah

(Director of Public Health)
(Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation Service)

Angela Burns
Justina Bridgeman

(Public Health Programme Manager)
(Democratic Services Officer (Committee))

Apologies:

Matthew Adrien
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury
Councillor Abdul Malik
Councillor Maisha Begum

(Healthwatch Tower Hamlets Representative)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The minutes of the Sub-committee meeting held on 18th October 2022 and 6th December 2022 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 BAME Inequalities

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care, Richard Fradgley, East London NHS Foundation Trust, and Angela Burns, Public Health Programme Manager Young Adults, opened a discussion to understand why the BAME community face challenges in accessing mental health services and suggested ways to address it.

Further to questions from the Sub-Committee, Richard Fradgley and Angela Burns;

- **Noted** the details of the NHS 'Ethnic Inequalities in Healthcare Review' and the disparities received by BAME residents in relation to mental health, which creates a lack of trust within the community.
- **Explained** that following 'Let's Talk' focus group discussions, four recommendations were made to generate change, ensure staff are trained to be more culturally aware and accountable to the service user. Adopting a holistic approach will achieve accessibility within health services.
- **Noted** that further work is being undertaken to transform the community mental health services. Newly created posts for around seven 'community connectors', working in multidisciplinary teams and employed by voluntary sector organisations to support residents. The Women's Inclusive Team provide recovery programmes and Dialogue Plus have produced promising results supporting residents.
- **Explained** the Tower Hamlets Together programme aims to improve equality outcomes with talking therapies, focused primarily on the Bangladeshi community.
- **Noted** that engagement is ongoing with religious community leaders and faith groups to address cultural issues and develop culturally competent communication. This includes partnership with the Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum to assist in managing mental health issues.
- **Clarified** that there are a range of services in the borough to assist with serious mental health issues, including Crisis Line, in-patient wards in Acute Adult Care, community mental health teams and transformation projects.
- **Noted** that a Residents Forum, similar to one available prior to the pandemic is in consideration, so services can be rated by the service user.

The Chair thanked Richard Fradgley and Angela Burns for their feedback on the presentation and noted that more investment is required to promote consistent mental and physical health services for residents.

RESOLVED that

1. The presentation be noted.

3.2 Oral Health in Tower Hamlets

Jeremy Wallman, NHS London, Head of Primary Care Commissioning, Dentistry and Pharmacy, and Kelly Nizzar, Regional Lead Dental, Optometry and Pharmacy at NHS England, gave overviews on the dental provision in Tower Hamlets, the challenges and pressures facing the sector during and after the pandemic and how best practice can be used to increase residents uptake within the borough.

Further to questions from the Sub-Committee, Jeremy Wallman;

- **Noted** that patients can call 111 to receive 24/7 urgent care via a triage delivery service and depending on symptoms, can be referred to a practice for treatment.
- **Clarified** the termination of NHS Dentist contracts across the sector took place due to Brexit and staff retention issues related to the pandemic. In these cases resources are either reinvested to neighbouring practices or re-procured to the same area if viable. Tower Hamlets have not experienced any contract terminations or reductions in contracts.
- **Explained** that patient numbers rose during the pandemic and subsequent quarantine measures, opening times and accessing care adversely impacted East London residents. Where practices have capacity to assist with extra patients these are used to decrease the numbers awaiting care.
- **Explained** that there are challenges in maintaining practise delivery at 100% due to aforementioned staffing issues. The majority of borough contractors are delivering and can be incentivised to overdeliver by 110% to enable the practice to continue serving residents.
- **Noted** that the pilot schemes key aim is to improve access to dental health on a general level, although children's access is a priority. The 'Fluoride Varnish Programme' was re-implemented after the pandemic as one example of commitment to children's oral health.
- **Clarified** that any resources from terminated contracts are recycled and details will be fed through to the sub committee. Integrated Care Board (ICB) work in partnership with Public Health England (PHE) and

needs assessments are routinely undertaken to ensure priority areas and wards receive dental practices to improve oral health.

- **Explained** that as the procurement timeline is structured and the preferred approach is to increase existing practices where possible to alleviate the need.
- **Noted** that details on adult health will be brought to the sub committee at the next meeting.
- **Clarified** that partnerships with the ICB, the London patient boards and subsequent patient groups will work together to ensure residents feedback assists in moulding commissioning requirements of dental care.

The Chair thanked Jeremy Wallman and Kelly Nizzer for their feedback on the presentation and noted the importance of monitoring dental needs and wider health issues to ensure arrangements work in the best interests of the residents.

RESOLVED that

1. The presentation be noted.

3.3 Update on NHS Strikes

Kathriona Davison, Barts Health NHS Trust, Chief Operating Officer, gave a verbal update on the current situation and plans regarding the NHS strikes, the likely impact on residents and their mitigation plans.

- **Clarified** that London Ambulance Service (LAS) and physiotherapy strikes took place over the last few months; although these did not impact the service or patients care due to effective responses already in place. Further strikes are planned by LAS for March 2023 and pre-emptive measures have been taken. Further updates will be brought to the sub committee.

The Chair thanked Kathriona for the update and appreciated the current pressures on the service. It was noted that the Sub-committee will be monitoring the situation.

RESOLVED that

1. The verbal update be noted.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

The Chair requested Officers ensure presentations are submitted in a timelier manner to ensure Committee members can review prior to the meeting. The

Chair called the meeting to a close and thanked the Sub-Committee members and stakeholders, for their attendance and participation.

The meeting ended at 8.19 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Ahmodur Khan

Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee