

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH & ADULTS SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.34 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 27 JULY 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Ahmodur Khan (Chair)
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury
Councillor Ahmodul Kabir
Councillor Amy Lee
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Amina Ali

Co-optees Present in Person:

Assan Ali (Resident Co-optee)
Nicola Lawrence (Healthwatch Co-optee)

Apologies:

Councillor Abdul Mannan

Officers Present in Person:

Dr Somen Banerjee (Director of Public Health)
Filuck Miah (Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation Service)
Denise Radley (Corporate Director, Health and Social Care)
Katie O'Driscoll (Director of Adult Social Care)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest. For transparency, Assan Ali informed sub-committee members that his wife works for Adult Social Care.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2023/24. Councillor

Ahmodur Khan proposed Councillor Bodrul Choudhury for the position. This was seconded by Councillor Abdul Malik.

There were no further nominations received.

The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Elect Councillor Bodrul Choudhury the Vice-Chair of the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HEALTH AND ADULTS SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

Justina Bridgeman, Democratic Services Officer requested members to note the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee's terms of reference, membership, quorum and meeting dates for the municipal year 2023/24. The terms of reference were agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 May 2023.

The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note it's terms of reference, quorum, membership and meeting dates as set out in appendices 1,2 and 3 of the report.
2. **Agreed** to hold all Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee meetings at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber for the municipal year 2023/24.

4. APPOINTMENT OF INEL JHOSC

The Chair requested nominations for representatives for the Inner North East London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The terms of reference requires the membership to remain politically proportionate and were circulated to sub-committee members prior to the meeting.

The Chair proposed Councillor Ahmodul Kabir and Councillor Ahmodur Khan for the Aspire positions and the Labour group nominated Councillor Amy Lee for the Labour post. The proposals were seconded by Councillor Bodrul Choudhury and the Labour group respectively.

The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Elect Councillor Ahmodul Kabir, Councillor Ahmodur Khan and Councillor Amy Lee, the Inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (INEL JHOSC) as LBTH representatives.

Chairs Update

The Chair;

- Introduced both Nicola Lawrence and Assan Ali, to the sub-committee members, as Healthwatch representative co-optee and resident co-optee respectively. This was officially confirmed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 May 2023.
- Nicola Lawrence updated sub-committee members on the key concerns raised by residents in regard to access to mental health dentistry, GP services, appointments and SEND provision within the borough.
- Assan Ali informed the sub-committee on concerns raised by residents regarding referral pathways for children with learning difficulties.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Sub-committee meeting held on 11 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

6. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 CABINET MEMBER & CORPORATE DIRECTOR OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care, and Denise Radley, Corporate Director of Health, Adults and Community, provided reflections and achievements from last year and priorities for municipal year 2023/24.

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury introduced the item and emphasised a commitment to prioritising health care for the borough. Preparations for the upcoming inspection of the Adult Social Care (ASC) service from the Care Quality Commission are ongoing. Despite service demands, officers and partners are committed to providing vulnerable residents with a programme of initiatives to tackle health and wellbeing and the council has prioritised areas to ensure this is achieved.

Denise Radley, Corporate Director for Health, Adults and Community, reflected on the strength-based approach used. The Directorate achieved the strategic priorities last year without red ratings. The only amber rating received related to the numbers of residents who successfully stopped smoking, which is an ongoing target.

Other notable achievements were the Public Health departments advertising policy and the implementation of health and wellbeing ambassadors supporting 3,000 residents post pandemic. 61 residential nursing home discharges took place, with Tower Hamlets placed in the top quarter for

performance. Maintaining close partnership arrangements were critical to last year's success.

Ms Radley went on to discuss the priorities for 2023/24 which include; the recommissioning of all home care services, bringing the direct payments supports service back in-house. A Housing Care Strategy with a focus on additional supported housing and nursing homes is near finalisation and an enhanced 'Technology Enabled Care' offer is currently being drafted. Additionally, a structured approach to supporting high risk residents with around 8,000 health checks and a 'Combating Drugs Partnership' strategy to support residents in a culturally appropriate manner, will be delivered by Public Health and Social Care teams.

Ms Radley lastly touched on the ongoing challenges; the increased pressures on complex care packages and the financial constraints which are negatively impacting the service, as well as the cost of living crisis and pensioner poverty. This is compounded by changes within the NHS and the static nature of ASC reform.

The new Care Quality Commission inspection of ASC services is estimated to commence later this year.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, Denise Radley, Katie O'Driscoll, Director of Adult Social Care and Somen Banerjee, Director of Public Health;

- **Clarified** that the strength-based approach focuses on an individual's strengths and goals and explores the support networks that already exist within people's families and networks. Eligible needs and how to meet them can then be identified. This ensures a person-centred, dignified approach including where appropriate reablement, adaptations or assistive technology support. The aim is to support the resident to maintain skills, independence and access to the community.
- **Explained** that the current provider for drug treatment Reset, has a specific range of outreach sessions and additional funding has now been made available from the Department of Health, to support culturally appropriate services. A review will take place to simplify avenues to connect both mental and physical health services, enabling borough residents to access support. The sub-committee will be updated on progress.
- **Noted** that ASC assessment timescales vary based on the level of urgency, with priority given if safeguarding is a consideration. Straightforward referrals are dealt with by community services, with more complex ones requiring specialist care.
- **Clarified** that the Technology Enabled Care offer will be strengthened with more choice for residents. The proposal is being discussed with The Mayor and Lead Member and includes technologies such as

paggers, bed sensors, crash mats and monitors for elderly residents to keep them safe and assist family members.

- **Confirmed** that social care staff retention is higher in Tower Hamlets than most local authorities nationally, with a 5% attrition rate. The career progression framework includes a learning and development programme to support social workers, occupational therapists and qualified staff. Training and workshops, practice sessions, forums and apprentice schemes have also been made available to fully invest in the workforce, and a new supervision policy has been established, ensuring reflective practice and robust risk management is undertaken.
- **Clarified** that local authorities have now received more funding for health inequalities from the ICB and new initiatives will be established within the borough. Consideration will be given to increasing screening and mental health services and the sub-committee will be informed once details are finalised.
- **Noted** that the ICB are funding a Health Equality Academy to link best practice from across the Place partnerships, to expand the Integrated Care Partnership approach to tackling inequalities.
- **Explained** that Tower Hamlets Connect assists residents with advice, information and guidance by focusing on effective and good quality responses from dedicated staff and maintaining close partnerships and robust monitoring. The service also acts as the “Front Door” of Adult Social Care.

The Sub-Committee thanked Councillor Gulam Choudhury and Officers for their presentation.

RESOLVED that

1. The presentation be noted.
2. The sub-committee to be updated on the Combating Drug Partnership.

6.2 ICB AND HEALTH PARTNERS OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24

The Chair introduced the sub-committee to members of THT Partnership and the Integrated Care Board, who provided reflections and achievements from last year and outlined the priorities for 2023/24.

Primary Care

Dr Roberto Tamsanguan, GP and Tower Hamlets Place Clinical Director, emphasised the Primary Care Network (PSN) achievements, primarily the Covid-19 Booster initiative for 2023 and the approval to deliver Spirometry (lung function) testing within the community, which detects asthma or chronic

obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Other notable achievements included the implementation of digital infrastructure with all 30 GP practices, to work more collaboratively throughout the borough. Digital exclusion policies have now been established.

Healthspot services for young residents with GP consultation rooms are located in two youth centres within the borough to assist younger people transitioning into adulthood.

Dr Tamsanguan noted the challenges within the service as the high turnover in patients, a rapid population growth, workforce and housing pressures, high waiting lists and the cost of living crisis. The sub-committee were also reminded of ongoing issues following the pandemic and budgetary constraints.

PCN's priorities involve improving resident access to primary care services and ensuring improvement plans are effective with the delivery of a PSN same day urgent care pilot programme. A promotional campaign of services to residents on ways to access primary care and the wider workforce, has been particularly effective and plans to upgrade the telephony with a cloud based service and queue functionality, to cut down call waiting times are ongoing.

Further to questions from the sub-committee; Dr Roberto Tamsanguan, Jo-Ann Sheldon, Head of Primary Care Commissioning, NEL ICB and Zainab Arian, CEO GP Care Group;

- **Confirmed** that Asthma, COPD and respiratory issues are increasing in the borough and it is vital patients can access spirometry testing hubs closer to home rather than visit hospitals. This will be delivered across PCN's although location details are pending. Further details will be circulated to sub-committee members once confirmed.
- **Explained** that vulnerable and elderly residents who do not or are unable to engage in digital technology still require access to health care. The Digital Exclusion policy ensures they still receive GP assistance when needed, either face to face or by phone.
- **Confirmed** that existing health centres have moved sites to accommodate patient growth in the last ten years. Details on the numbers of new GP surgeries in the borough will be brought back to the sub-committee for review.
- **Clarified** that Spotlight Youth centre in Poplar and the Overland Children and Family Centre in Bow are the two sites with GP services. Spotlight contacted the NHS following intensive youth work engagement and the idea of GP service provision was established. It is anticipated that consulting rooms will be made available in all youth centres within the borough. Case studies are available to the sub-committee for review.

- **Explained** that the promotional campaigns are informing residents of the various ways to access primary care, including the aforementioned telephone and face to face consultations, as well as utilising clinical professionals other than GP's.
- **Conceded** that budgetary constraints are affecting building new health centres. Discussions are ongoing with the ICB to address property interests and service charges, policy and the Integrated care system, as this is a national issue.
- **Clarified** that GP training is an ongoing concern although recruitment and retention in Tower Hamlets is good for younger general practitioners. There are a number of workforce strategy and support services for practices and reminded sub-committee members that the service includes more than just GP's. Pharmacists, nurses and physiotherapists also play a vital role in patient care.

Community Health Services

Dr Richard Fradgley, Director of Integrated Care and Deputy CEO of East London NHS Foundation Trust, updated the sub-committee on the positive work undertaken within community health services, who care for residents in their own home. This included the focus on improved person centred care, achieving the two hour response times to residents injured at home, who require nursing and physiotherapy and the advance care planning work, who support residents in hospice care and fulfil the wishes of patients to stay at home with family towards the end of life.

Other notable achievements relate to the ongoing partnership work with the Council and The Royal London regarding discharge arrangements, reducing the waiting list which grew during the pandemic and the good work supporting older residents with mental and physical health issues. The Community Health team were also finalists at the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Awards back in March

The challenges with district nurse recruitment and retention and a lack of occupational therapists still exist. Although there have been improvements with the former, there is a national shortage of therapists. Service demands and financial constraints are added pressures. Priorities for this year remain establishing more district nurses, creating more apprenticeship roles and continuing to support the wellbeing of the workforce, who are still recovering from the pandemic and the cost of living crisis.

Mental Health Services

Dr Fradgley then gave a brief update on the mental health services achievements which include creating learning and development programmes, investing in improving the quality of the services in the borough, establishing perinatal services for pregnant women and preventative mental health

services for school children. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has been expanded and a 24hr crisis service is scheduled to open within three months.

There are still significant impacts from the pandemic in a borough with the highest numbers of mental health issues in the country; and is causing severe pressure on staff, inpatient services and longer waiting lists. This is being addressed with more investment in psychiatric liaison facilities, more beds within the A&E departments and also developing service user and care priorities relating to peer support and culturally skilled services.

Further to questions from the sub-committee; Dr Richard Fradgley;

- **Clarified** that the community mental health services success relates in part to GP's and clinical leads within ELFT, working collaboratively to establish solutions to problems. Strong relationships fostered with voluntary organisations and inclusion to daily care plan meetings with mental health teams, also contribute to service accomplishments.
- **Explained** that talking therapies are being offered to minority groups. Outreach workers are supporting members of the community, with staff fluent in various languages and accessible both online and in person. Further work to expand the service is ongoing.
- **Noted** that Tower Hamlets was the first borough to invest in mental health services in schools, to promote wellbeing and give emotional support, as the pandemic has increased need. This collaborative effort is supported by children's social care, GP's, the community, inpatient paediatric services and other partners.
- **Confirmed** that following the recommendations on the Rapid Review of inpatient safety, Dr Deborah Dover, Director of Patient Safety, is now in post at ELFT to overview the strategy and approach to ward certification. Further details can be brought back to the sub-committee for review at a later meeting.

Acute Care

Dr Neil Ashman, CEO Royal London and Mile End Hospitals, praised the work taking place within and outside the borough in collaboration with primary care, mental health staff and the voluntary sector to maintain health. Royal London provides specialist care for North East London and South Essex.

The priorities are to deliver the highest quality service and continual improvement for patients, particularly with maternity care, to reduce waiting lists and the backlog of patients who have waited over 15 months for treatment following the pandemic. Other main concerns include ensuring that urgent care is swift and discharge and rehabilitation is effective, so patients can return home with continual assistance from health partners when required.

Dr Ashman noted challenges relate to workforce capacity pressures due to Covid and the high turnover in patients that has exacerbated the GP Care Group, who work in the urgent treatment centre. There remains a good relationship with partners and the wellbeing of all clinicians and staff are paramount, as is ensuring that culturally competent training and care is delivered.

Further to questions from the sub-committee; Dr Neil Ashman;

- **Explained** that the Royal London joined the National Maternity Safety Programme to ensure the recommendations of the Ockenden report are met. Engagement with the Maternity Voices programme is taking place and continual work with the Somali community to hear experiences of care to improve safety is ongoing.

[Clerk's Note - The Ockenden Review is available here: [Final report of the Ockenden review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117142/final-report-of-the-ockenden-review.pdf)

Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Charlotte Pomery, Chief Participation and Place Officer discussed the first year of the ICB and reiterated the close working relationship between partnerships, residents and the good work across community and mental health teams during these challenging times.

ICB priorities include working and supporting residents living with long term conditions and employment aspirations for residents within services. Ensuring the financial and workforce strategies are implemented and embedding a co-production structure across the partnership.

Further to questions from the sub-committee; Charlotte Pomery:

- **Clarified** that the 30% reduction of the NHS NEL ICB budget, noted at the INEL JHOSC meeting, relates to the running cost allowance and not the total budget. An organisational restructure is in progress and efficiency savings for this year are £82.6 Million against an overall budget of £4 Billion. This is approximately a 2% saving to meet the policies within the long term plan.
- **Noted** that a draft on the health care policies was shared at ONEL JHOSC (Outer East London Joint Health Scrutiny Committee) on 27 July 2023. A working group has been established and a written brief on guidance and the next steps towards implementation will be brought back to the sub-committee for review.

The Chair thanked all ICB and Health Care partner representatives for the presentations and for ensuring residents continue to receive the best health care available. The sub-committee will be monitoring progress throughout the municipal year.

RESOLVED that

1. The presentation be noted.
2. The sub-committee be briefed on the number of new GP surgeries within the borough.
3. The sub-committee to be updated on the Spirometry hubs and location details once confirmed.
4. The sub-committee be briefed on the ELFT Inpatient Safety Strategy.
5. A written brief to the 30% reduction of NEL ICB budget and the implications for Tower Hamlets to be brought back to the sub-committee.

7. HASSC DRAFT FORWARD PLAN 2023/24

Filuck Miah, Senior Strategy & Policy Officer, proposed topics to discuss at the remaining meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year. The Chair informed sub-committee members that the draft was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 24 July for discussion and will be submitted to Cabinet for finalisation. The final draft will then return to the OSC in September.

Sub-committee members were informed that the Adult Social Care Inspection feedback discussion, scheduled for 12 December, has been amended from the draft work programme until the date of the CQC Inspection is announced.

8. HEALTHWATCH ANNUAL REPORT - FOR NOTING ONLY

The annual report was noted.

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

None.

The meeting ended at 8.39 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Ahmodur Khan

Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee