

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE TOWER HAMLETS HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**HELD AT 5.01 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 6 APRIL 2021**

**ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Rachel Blake (Chair) – Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Chris Banks – Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC  
Marcus Barnett – Met Police  
Dr Ian Basnett – Public Health Director, Barts Health NHS Trust  
Dr Paul Gilluley – Chief Medical Officer - East London NHS Foundation Trust  
Peter Okali – Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service  
Randal Smith – Healthwatch Tower Hamlets  
Helen Wilson – Clarion Housing/THHF - representative to HWBB

**Apologies:**

Dr Sam Everington – Chair, Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group  
Councillor Asma Begum – (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services and Education)  
Councillor Candida Ronald – (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)  
Vicky Clark – (Divisional Director for Growth and Economic Development)  
Jackie Sullivan – Chief Executive Officer Royal London & Mile End Hospitals  
Vivian Akinremi – Deputy Young Mayor and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

**Others Present:**

Farah Bede – Clinical Lead for IRIS  
Abdul Doyas – Patient Welfare Association  
Suroth Miah – Patient Welfare Association  
Jamal Uddin – Strategy Policy & Performance Officer

Joe Hall	– Clinical Lead
Abdal Ullah	– Ward Councillor St Katharine's & Wapping
Warwick Tomsett	– Joint Director, Integrated Commissioning
David Knight	– (Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance)

## **1. STANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

### **1.1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair in her introduction informed the Board that (i) a number patients and their families of patients from Royal London were in attendance, as part of the discussions on Health and Wellbeing Story; (ii) there was a report on the primary care access and patient experience; and (iii) there will be update reports on (a) SEND Improvement; and (b) Covid 19 and vaccination programme.

### **1.2 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests received at the meeting.

### **1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

#### **RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 2nd February 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

### **1.4 Chairs Update**

The Chair:

- ❖ Informed the Board that (i) the Health and Wellbeing Strategy was due to go on the Consultation Hub tonight although there are issue's with the Councils website so the Strategy may not be live until tomorrow; (ii) she would asked all partners agencies/stakeholders to sign post resident and professional groups to the associated online survey; and (iii) there would be a number of online webinars and would welcome any ideas on how the Partnership can encourage people to participate in this stage of the consultation.
- ❖ Provided an update around the Better Care Fund (BCF), the BCF requires the NHS and the Council to create a local single pooled budget to incentivise closer working around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and **care** services, and shifting

resources into social **care** and community services for the benefit of the people, communities and health and **care** systems. It was noted that on the 25th of March, the Government had confirmed that the Better Care Fund will continue in 2021-22 and that the Clinical commissioning group (CCG) minimum contribution will grow, which is in line with the long-term plan settlement by 5.3% to £4.26 to enable the CCG to meet their 2021-22 BCF commitments. It was noted that (i) due to the national conditions and processes it has not yet been published but is expected very soon; (ii) The Partnership has also received the year end return which is being used in lieu of guidance during 2021. For the return the Partners will need to confirm that they have met the national conditions and provided planned and actual spending from the mandatory funding sources; including agreed spend on social care and NHS commissioned out of hospital services from the CCG minimum contribution. The returns are due on the 24th of May and as in previous years these will be sent on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- ❖ Observed that the Council has now launched its Race and Inequalities Commission, and it has had some clear recommendations around health. One of the things at the centre of the Boroughs Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to the reducing of health inequalities by improving access to services **e.g.** there is a recommendation that addresses digital exclusion and the Board needs ensure that the Strategy really addresses that issue. Whilst another recommendation is for the Board to lead a high-profile campaign for the Government to provide adequate funding to address health inequalities. Which the Board was well placed to effectively address given its influential membership. It was noted that another recommendation was to review hostile environment policies and to reduce the checking of immigration status of service users. In addition to developing initiatives to support more Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic residents to become health professionals and to review and strengthen clinical training in order to increase understanding in different cultural needs.

## **2. HEALTH AND WELLBEING STORY - ROYAL LONDON HOSPITAL PATIENTS AND FAMILIES GROUPS**

The Board welcomed representatives from Royal London Hospital Patient Welfare Association that had been established to investigate allegations of “poor level of care” at the Royal London Hospital. The main points arising from the discussions on this item may be summarised as follows:

The Board

- ❖ Noted that concerns had been raised after relatives had apparently not been able to visit wards during strict lockdown periods and that claims had been made that some elderly family members had not received attentive care on the wards.

- ❖ Noted the Patient Welfare Association is calling for changes and suggesting how standards "should be improved" by involving families with patient care.
- ❖ Noted that Barts Health NHS Trust has stated that patient safety is its top priority and wants to listen to any feedback and concerns.
- ❖ Noted that the objective of the Patient Welfare Association is to give the people within the community, a voice for the voiceless where it is felt that care lacking.
- ❖ Noted that Patient Welfare Association were incredibly grateful to Jackie Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer Royal London & Mile End Hospitals) for having arranged a meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021 and that there is now a constant dialogue with the Trust on how the care of residents can be improved. The Patient Welfare Association was also looking forward to working with other groups to get the best possible care for all residents.
- ❖ Noted that Patient Welfare Association wants to look at (i) visitation rights to facilitate the elderly and vulnerable patients; (ii) treating patients with dignity and respect; (iii) improve on the work being done through the family contact centre that has been established and for there to be meaningful BAME representation in the running of this centre; and (iv) for meaningful overview and scrutiny of this issue.
- ❖ Noted that the Patient Welfare Association recognises the amazing work that front line staff have done by the Barts Health NHS Trust and community coming together during these challenging times. However, the Patient Welfare Association stated that there had been a serious lack in the care that the families of patients had received. The Patient Welfare Association wished to see patients treated with dignity and respect **e.g.** staff not considering people's cultural and religious needs. Patient Welfare Association indicated that this situation had been not helped by the complaints system which had been a barrier itself as it is not easy to navigate.
- ❖ Noted that the aim of the Patient Welfare Association is not to name and shame, it is simply to improve the level of care of every single patient receives from the Barts Health NHS Trust.
- ❖ Noted that the Patient Welfare Association wanted better access to patients who are vulnerable and have learning difficulties who cannot feed themselves as it is therapeutic, as it helps with their recovery process and support the nursing staff as at the end of day the wellbeing of the patient is in everyone's interest.
- ❖ Observed that the Family Contact Centre whilst the idea behind it was a good one, unfortunately, in a way, it has created a barrier as in the past family members could contact the wards directly and to get a live update. Whereas now through the Family Contact Centre they have got to go through staff there who are not necessarily part of the care team, who have to read the notes. Although the Patient Welfare Association have had reports where families have had to wait more than 48 hours, when generally the target time is within 48 hours.
- ❖ Noted that Barts Health NHS Trust are making changes to the Family Contact Centre as they acknowledge how difficult it can be for families to have a loved one in hospital at this time, particularly while there are

visiting restrictions in place to help keep everyone safe from Covid-19. According the Family Contact Centre is working to ensure they help families keep in touch with their loved ones. The Trust consider that the Centre will provide a key point of contact, to help ensure families are supported and updated about their relatives' condition and wellbeing. Through the Centres families can help raise concerns and questions with clinical teams, as well as help with practical issues including arranging end of life visits, providing language support, offering spiritual and religious support, booking virtual visits, and sending photos and messages to family members in the Royal London.

- ❖ Observed that the Patient Welfare Association wanted to see meaningful scrutiny of the provision of older patients at the Royal London and to have proper representation in the process of management and scrutiny of patient welfare that transcended all communities and more importantly all commercial and financial backgrounds., they just want you recognise the needs of the BAME communities.
- ❖ Noted that Healthwatch Tower Hamlets indicated that they would wish to have a conversation with the Patient Welfare Association outside this meeting and see how we can further the understanding of the work that they do and how they can use the insights and experience of families to feed into how Healthwatch bring data and information, to influence the decision-making other partners on the Board.
- ❖ Noted that Barts Health NHS Trust are working to the guidance that has been issued by NHS England which meant that the older people's wards did have open visiting ahead of the COVID-19. However, when Barts Health NHS Trust had to start working to protect both staff and patients there was a need to start restricting access. However, as part of the reduction of lockdown, the Trust are now working on reopening of their doors to visitors, according to the guidance. One of those key milestones being Monday 12th, April 2021 where the Trust will be able to have visitors and with track and trace they will need to be an identified person for a particular patient.
- ❖ Noted that the Trust still needs to be careful as Covid still circulating within community and by nature of being in hospital patients are much more vulnerable. Therefore, the Trust will need to work quite carefully with what is known about what is going on in the community and the hospital. However, the Trust considers that it is in a good position with the vaccine rates in the Borough and is working to improve the level of cultural input at the bedside, on the wards, that enables nurses and carers to understand those inputs.
- ❖ Noted that going forward the Trust is considering how it might work to increase volunteer involvement at the Royal London to support care and the Trusts Board has approved funding to increase the size of the Family Contact Centre team.
- ❖ Observed that the Trust is very keen to develop a positive dialogue with the Patient Welfare Association; Healthwatch; Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

- ❖ Commented that it was important to use feedback from patients and their families so as to make meaningful changes and lasting changes that would result in the development of culturally competent services.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked everybody for their contributions to the discussions on this important issue.

The Chair then Moved, and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. that it was a positive step to develop the dialogue between the Royal London; the Patient Welfare Association; Healthwatch; Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in regard to meaningful representation.
2. to reflect on these discussions in the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy; and
3. to consider how to improve the level of care for every single patient receives from the Barts Health NHS Trust

### **3. PRIMARY CARE ACCESS AND PATIENT EXPERIENCE EXPLAINED**

The Board noted that the Covid-19 pandemic is re-shaping the provision of healthcare within Tower Hamlets. New national and local initiatives have also impacted on primary care delivery models and the patient experience. The Borough's communities are facing unprecedented challenges and therefore it is important to develop systems that address expanding health inequalities.

All organisations and systems within the Borough therefore need to reflect on these new challenges and effectively re-align their activities and operations. It was noted that working in partnership and integrating services where possible has the potential to transform the healthcare provision within the Borough against the most challenging social economic backdrop that our community faces. The main points arising from the discussions on this item may be summarised as follows:

The Board:

- ❖ Noted that whilst there has been considerable collaborative working between GP practices and community pharmacies there is still much that could be done.
- ❖ Observed that part of the role in GP surgeries is to transfer information to local communities on how to live healthier and how to access healthcare. The most accessible healthcare in some respect is within pharmacies, and a new plan for things is being undertaken in the north-west of the Borough is for patients to access the surgery, maybe online, with those who need something immediately they could get their medicine much quicker through consultation with the pharmacist. With the GP surgeries helping those patients with more complex medical problems. However, there is still more work to be done to open the communication channels so that patient can be referred quickly and have easy access between pharmacy the GP and vice versa.

- ❖ Commented that it is especially important to recognise that online access to services is not for everybody and going forward clarity is needed for people to know all the different pathways that they can use. The
- ❖ Noted that the Partners agencies have an ongoing programme of work to continually evaluate these kinds of issues, to try to make sure that they are breaking down barriers e.g. streamlining the online consultation process is not a static piece of work.
- ❖ Commented that whilst the Borough has come through a hectic scenario very quickly there is now a moment to reflect and think. The next phase is to really drill down and see what can be done around those patients that may be left behind by the new systems. The challenge is therefore about addressing the needs of the most vulnerable patients and the equalities agenda.
- ❖ Indicated that this is something that we should revisit and look to see what has been achieved. Also what measures are useful measures to be judged upon against the recommendations of the Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission.
- ❖ Agreed that the partners need to understand the impact that they are having and the consultation on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy would be an opportunity to consider this issue in more detail.

### **Recommendations:**

The Health and Wellbeing Board **agreed:**

That the Board would receive a further report to evaluate how the needs of the most vulnerable patients and the equalities agenda are being addressed.

## **4. SEND IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Board received and noted a briefing that provided an update on SEND improvement work, looking at the priority areas and the key issues, main activities, and current challenges for each. The main points arising from the discussions on this item may be summarised as follows:

The Board:

- ❖ Noted in response to concerns raised that the Borough was looking to increase the resources available within Tower Hamlets so as to reduce the need for SEND students to be in placements in schools outside of Tower Hamlets.
- ❖ Noted that there is considerable thought going into the concept of transitional safeguarding and looking at other safeguarding needs in context and not just looking at it from children's point of view at 17 and an adult at 18. Which it was felt showed that Tower Hamlets has considerable ambition in terms of looking forward in regard to this issue.
- ❖ Noted with regard to EHC plans, and the timescales the current annual figure is around 15.8% of plans are completed within the 20 weeks

which is way below where it should be. However, when looking at the monthly figures it is getting better, so a large part of those delays are historic cases which are part of the backlog and they will always be late. Whereas the more recent referrals into the system are being sorted in a much timelier way. Therefore whilst that is good, there is still a way to go to clear that backlog; to keep that timeliness on trend; and to strengthen our approach to SEND..

## 5. COVID 19 AND VACCINATION UPDATE

The Board received and noted update on Covid-19 and the vaccination update. The main points arising from the discussions on this item may be summarised as follows:

The Board noted

- ❖ If you do have the vaccine your chances of getting Covid are reduced by at least 80 percent and you are also less likely to pass Covid to your family and friends.
- ❖ 81 percent of the 65 plus age group have been vaccinated which is a little below the London average and London itself is below the national average.
- ❖ Noted that initially the Borough saw some significant disparities between the different ethnic groups. However, that disparity has now been reduced between the White population and the Asian population. However, it was noted that with the Black Population vaccinations have been increasing quite slowly and what is now evidenced from the emerging data from the second dose is that there are disparities again between the White population and the Asian and Black populations.
- ❖ Noted the importance of personal stories increasing confidence in the vaccine from those people who have had the vaccination, trusted figures within the community on social media and through other routes.
- ❖ Observed that ease of access is an important issue and there are only two vaccination sites within the Borough and then there the mass vaccination sites at Westfield and the Excel. Therefore there has been considerable discussion around the importance of ease of access. Therefore, work is being done around what the GP care group and AT medics are doing regarding community clinics and increasing access in the local general practices.
- ❖ Agreed that people need to understand why the vaccine it is so important, and a lot of advice and support is being provided in a range of community languages and formats.
- ❖ Noted that there has been a considerable amount of co-production working with organisations commissioned through the voluntary sector, particularly Bangladeshi; Somali; People with Disabilities and a number of faith settings.
- ❖ Was informed that there is a small grants programme aimed at supporting community clinics such as the London Muslim Centre and, Somali Centre which have all been successful.
- ❖ Noted that the vaccine roadshow has been working particularly in areas of low uptake.

- ❖ Agreed that Ramadan is a really important issue and noted that there is the consensus position from the British Islamic Medical Association, which says that having the vaccination does not invalidate the fast.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In conclusion the Chair expressed her thanks to everybody who contributed at this evening and welcomed the Boards willingness to take on health inequalities which was the biggest challenge in Tower Hamlets at present in terms of improving health and wellbeing.

**The meeting ended at 7.03 p.m.**

**Chair, Councillor Rachel Blake  
Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board**