

Cabinet 25 October 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
Action Plan Response to Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee Review and Recommendations Report on ‘Workforce Shortages Across The Health and Care Sector’	

Lead Member	Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
Originating Officer(s)	Afazul Hoque, Head of Service, Corporate Strategy and Communities Filuck Miah, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy and Communities
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	Significant impact on wards
Forward Plan Notice Published	29/09/23
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	1. Investing in public services

Executive Summary

This report presents the service action plan response from the Northeast London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) and the Council on the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HASSC) review report regarding 'Workforce Shortages Across The Health and Care Sector' in Northeast London.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the council’s action plan response on the HASSC scrutiny review report recommendation on ‘Workforce Shortages Across the Health and Care Sector.
2. Note the action plan response on the HASSC scrutiny review report recommendation on ‘Workforce Shortages Across the Health and Care

Sector provided by the executive and Northeast London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) to the report recommendations.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council's constitution requires the executive to respond to the recommendations of the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committees.
- 1.2 The attached action plan report represents the executive's and NEL ICB's joint response to the HASSC recommendations concerning workforce shortages in the health and care sector.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Taking no action is not advisable since the HASSC scrutiny review provides evidence of the impact of workforce shortages on various health-related areas. Both the council and NEL ICB should take action and recognise the crucial role the health and care sector plays in maintaining the population's health and well-being.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Healthcare is of strategic importance and is among the UK's largest employers, offering over 300 different job roles. This sector encompasses positions within both the NHS and local authorities, including clinical and non-clinical roles, constituting 11% of London's workforce. It also encompasses adult social care within local authorities.
- 3.2 The sector faces growing demand, necessitating significant recruitment efforts due to an aging workforce and various skill shortages. The NHS has one of the most ethnically diverse workforces in the public sector.
- 3.3 The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee conducted a review over three sessions (between October 18, 2022, and February 27, 2023), to understand workforce shortages in the health and care sector in the borough and Cllr Ahmodur Khan chaired this review.
- 3.4 The scrutiny review report sets out the scope and methodology, presenting key findings based on evidence gathered during the sessions.
- 3.5 The review was centred on understanding:
 - Barriers for residents applying for Health and Care roles in Tower Hamlets.
 - Challenges faced by the sector in recruitment and retention.
 - Approaches to career progression and sustainability.
- 3.6 HASSC heard testimony from various external witnesses, experts, and health and care officers, including:
 - Cabinet Member Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

- HASSC Members
- Chief People and Culture Officer, NHS Northeast London
- CEO East London Foundation Trust
- Director of Strategy and Integration, BARTS NHS
- Director of HR Research and Consulting, Institute for Employment Studies
- Head of School, London Metropolitan University
- Deputy Vice Principal (Health), Queen Mary University of London
- Principal, New City College
- President of the BARTS and London Student Association
- Head of Primary Care, Tower Hamlets
- GP and Clinical Director Tower Hamlets Together (Place Based Partnership)
- Council officers

3.7 The scrutiny report makes nine recommendations to address the workforce shortages across the health and care sector. The appended action plan seeks to provide a response to these recommendations. These recommendations are categorised under key findings, detailed in the full HASSC scrutiny review report found in Appendix 2.

3.8 Subsequent to the scrutiny review, an action plan was developed based on the recommendations, as outlined in Appendix 1. Eight recommendations received a response from NEL ICB and will involve the council's contribution via the Tower Hamlets Together operations. The action plan also seeks to provide a response to HASSC's recommendation six that focuses on making Tower Hamlets a more attractive borough for medical and care professionals on key areas including housing, council tax and parking.

3.9 The governance of NEL ICB service actions plan response will be overseen by the NEL People Board.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The action plan seeks to ensure that there is a diverse and inclusive workforce for the health and care sector and that efforts will be made to meet its public sector equality duty on protected characteristic groups. This should support the creation of a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

4.2 Tower Hamlets, like many areas, may have health inequalities based on socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Addressing workforce shortages can help reduce these inequalities by ensuring that healthcare services are accessible to all residents, particularly those in underserved communities.

4.3 The health and care sector often has a gender imbalance, with more women in certain roles and more men in others. Addressing workforce shortages should be an opportunity to challenge stereotypes and promote gender

equality within the sector. The action plan also seeks to ensure that the workforce includes individuals from different age groups can help in meeting the diverse and demand needs of the local but growing population. Recognising that individuals may belong to multiple disadvantaged groups (e.g., a disabled person from an ethnic minority background) is crucial. The Action Plan delivery will need to factor and address these intersectional challenges.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 No other statutory implications have been identified.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Resources required to deliver the action plan will need to be met from existing budgets. Should additional funding be required in future, this will have to go through the appropriate governance processes for consideration.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 This is a report seeking agreement to the proposed action plan. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report however, legal implications (in particular equality considerations) will need to be considered in particular with respect to recruitment proposals and/or proposals for any changes to the existing workforce
- 7.2 When carrying out its functions the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't (the public sector duty).
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Service Action Plan
- Appendix 2: HASSC Scrutiny Review Report on Workforce Shortages across the Health and Care Sector”.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A