

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ADULTS & HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON MONDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2020, 6:30pm-9:15pm

PRESENT:

**Councillors: Pippa Connor (Chair), Nick da Costa, Eldridge Culverwell,
Mike Hakata and Felicia Opoku**

Co-opted members: Helena Kania

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

Members noted that the meeting was being streamed live on the Council's website.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Pippa Connor declared an interest by virtue of her membership of the Royal College of Nursing.

Cllr Pippa Connor declared an interest by virtue of her sister working as a GP in Tottenham.

Cllr Nick da Costa declared an interest by virtue of his ownership of a company working with the NHS, medical providers and healthcare practitioners on a variety of projects, none of which, to his knowledge, work in Haringey Borough though they do potentially work in surrounding areas and with service providers across London.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/ PRESENTATIONS/ QUESTIONS

None.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting on 25th February 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

7. CARE HOMES IN HARINGEY

Will Maimaris, Director of Public Health, introduced a report summarising the impact of Covid-19 on care homes in Haringey Borough. He said that care homes remain a clear priority for the Council in terms of the response to Covid-19. There had been a significant impact on the care sector in Haringey, particularly in March, April and May in terms of excess deaths. The report highlighted some of the learning from that and the interventions that had been put in place since then. He pointed out that in Haringey there is quite a small number of older people's nursing and residential homes and so the Council had a close relationship and regular communication with all of the care providers. He said that some of the key priority areas in terms of preventing future outbreaks in the coming months were:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – which all Haringey care homes have access to.
- Regular testing
- Hospital discharge protocols
- Advice and guidance being received by care homes
- Clinical support for care homes

Will Maimaris said that a further report had been provided to the North Central London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included data on death rates in care homes and that Haringey had performed better than the sector average. (Report available at:

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=360&MId=10089&Ver=4>)

Will Maimaris (Director of Public Health), Charlotte Pomery (Assistant Director for Commissioning), John Everson (Assistant Director for Adults), Angela Healy (Quality Assurance Manager, NCL CCG) and Farzad Fazilat (Head of Brokerage) responded to questions from the Panel:

- Asked by Cllr da Costa about recent media reports about underpaid care workers in Haringey and when the London Living Wage would be implemented for them, Charlotte Pomery said that the reports related to an employment tribunal regarding a historic practice from 2016. She said that the implementation of the London Living Wage was being worked on with the expectation that this would be in place by October.
- Asked by Cllr da Costa for an update about the amended decent sick pay for care workers motion passed at a recent Full Council meeting, Charlotte Pomery said that this was a complex issue and that the necessary background work was currently being done by officers as requested by the motion.
- Asked by Cllr Connor whether care homes were currently able to fund care workers who are required to self-isolate, Charlotte Pomery said that a new initiative had been recently announced to support those who might hesitate to say that they have symptoms for fear of losing out financially. The Adult Social

Care Infection Control Fund had also recently been extended. Cllr Connor asked for clarification about whether care workers who are required to self-isolate still receive their full wage. Charlotte Pomery responded that there was some complexity about the different types of care workers and so it would be necessary to gather this information and provide it to the Panel in writing.

(ACTION)

- Asked by Cllr Culverwell about the most vulnerable demographic groups, Will Maimaris said that those most at risk were people with long-term conditions, those in the oldest age groups and people from BAME groups. However, people from all demographic groups presenting with Covid symptoms were able to access medical treatment when required.
- Asked by Cllr Connor about access to hospital services for care home residents, Will Maimaris said that during the height of the pandemic there had been few additional services available due to the risk of cross-infection. Services had now resumed but clearly if the number of cases increased again then the risks would become greater. Further details could be provided to the Panel in writing. **(ACTION)** Asked by Helena Kania about telephone/video triaging for care home residents, Will Maimaris said that many GPs were generally operating in this way currently anyway and Angela Sealy added that some GP visits to care homes were now taking place.
- Asked by Helena Kania about the policy on visitors to care homes, Will Maimaris said that the Council provides public health advice to care homes about whether visitors can be safely allowed and care homes can then carry out their own risk assessment before deciding to proceed. While the advice was currently that visitors can be allowed, with the ongoing rise in community transmission this would be kept under review. Farzad Fazilat added that care homes had been supported to facilitate digital means of communications between residents and family members and to ensure that there is social distancing during physical visits. He added that care homes in Haringey generally have a good relationship with families and engage with them through family forums and newsletters.
- Asked by Cllr Hakata about the how the pandemic had changed working practices with providers, Will Maimaris said that the working relationships were already strong but had recently been further strengthened through the regular meetings that providers were having with the Council and the CCG.
- Asked by Cllr Hakata about supplies of PPE, Will Maimaris confirmed that care homes had struggled to get supplies from the usual channels and so the Council had been making provisions to various providers in the Borough. However, providers had become a lot more self-sufficient in the past couple of months.
- Asked by Cllr Hakata about the heightened risk to BAME people, Will Maimaris said that in the general population it was known that younger BAME people were at higher risk but that he did not have equivalent data for care home residents in the borough. However, it was likely that the discrepancy would not be as significant because people of all ethnicities in care homes have high levels of frailty and risk factors. Registrars in Haringey had recently been asked

to record ethnicity when a death occurs, though the place of death of care home residents may often have occurred at a hospital and be recorded as such which makes this more difficult to track.

- Asked by Cllr Hakata about a recent Joint Partnerships Board report which stated that up to 40% of care homes in the borough may now have financial viability issues, Charlotte Pomery said that Haringey was not unique in facing this problem currently as a consequence of the pandemic. Reasons for this include the requirement for care homes to carry voids and a significant downturn in applications for care home places. Work was ongoing with other boroughs across the North Central London area on this issue and there had been direct representations to central government about social care funding.
- Asked by Cllr Connor about deaths of Haringey residents who had been placed in care homes outside of the borough, Farzad Fazilat said that information about deaths of Haringey residents in care homes outside of the borough could be provided to the Panel, but that it may be more difficult to establish how many of these had died due to Covid. **(ACTION)**
- Asked by Cllr Connor whether discharges from hospitals to care homes without testing had impacted on the death rate in Haringey, Will Maimaris said that, while that was a possibility, he believed that the main factor impacting on care homes had been widespread community transmission. The lack of testing for care home staff had also been a significant problem.
- Cllr da Costa queried when the discharge protocols referred to in the NCL After Action Review would be completed but officers did not have information about a specific date at this stage.
- Asked by Cllr da Costa about digital inclusion for care home residents, Charlotte Pomery said that in some cases, smartphones and tablets had been provided along with support for access. This work had continued as it is recognised that this would be a long-term issue.
- Asked by Cllr Connor about testing, Will Maimaris said that there had recently been weekly testing for care home staff and four-weekly testing for care home residents, though the process is different in the event of a care home outbreak. If there were to be issues with the national testing system it would be possible to access testing through the NHS in North Central London which can be mobilised quickly – this had already previously been done during the first Covid wave to provide regular testing to the Priscilla Wakefield care home. Farzad Fazilat added that there had recently been delays in the national system with test results taking three to four days. Cllr Connor suggested that the local system could be mobilised if case numbers continue to rise but the national system is still slow.
- Asked by Cllr Connor about the data on learning disability residential care provision, Farzad Fazilat said that information was regularly received from providers and collated including any positive cases. Cllr Connor requested that this information be provided to the Panel. **(ACTION)**
- Asked by Cllr Connor about the pathways for hospital discharge to care homes, John Everson said that intermediate care beds were generally used for this at places such as Magnolia Court. Where possible the reablement service was

equipped to provide care and support to people at home. A lot of work had happened across North Central London to ensure that sufficient capacity was available in the right places. Charlotte Pomery noted that this issue was part of the NCL After Action Review process so there would be an opportunity to report back on this in more detail when this had been completed. Cllr Connor asked for further detail on the specific pathways for hospital discharge and which facilities would be used for this in the event of a second wave of Covid. **(ACTION)**

- Asked by Cllr Connor about the implementation of Enhanced Health in Care Homes (EHCH), Angela Sealy said that the original EHCH framework was published in 2016, including interventions to enhance the quality of care for residents. The Council had been working on the framework since 2016, particularly on end of life care and on advanced care planning. Covid-19 had accelerated this, such as through the requirement to have primary care networks with a clinical lead for each care home. All Haringey care homes now had an identified clinical lead and there were also now multi-disciplinary team teleconferences.

8. LEARNING DISABILITY & AUTISM UPDATE

Charlotte Pomery, Assistant Director for Commissioning, introducing this item noting that the report provided an update on the work being done with users of learning disabilities and autism services and the impact of Covid-19 on those plans.

Charlotte Pomery and Georgie Jones-Conaghan, Lead Commissioner for Adult Learning Disability and Autism, responded to questions from the Panel:

- Asked by Cllr da Costa about the virtual digital offer and people who are digitally excluded, Georgie Jones-Conaghan said that services at Ermine Road were developing ten hours per week of a digital programme as part of their day services offer. Part of this had been tried out during the first wave of Covid and had received a positive response. Several day service providers had shared similar experiences as part of a provider forum that had taken place the previous week. It would be important to consider the needs of people with learning disabilities as part of the wider work on digital exclusion.
- Asked by Cllr da Costa about the Learning Disability Strategy, Georgie Jones-Conaghan said that this would start development next year and would be co-designed.
- Asked by Helena Kania about support for carers, Georgie Jones-Conaghan said that a Carers Strategy had been in development prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and there had then been a significant amount of telephone outreach with carers during the lockdown period to understand what support they needed and to offer support through Connected Communities, the Adult Social Care First Response Team or through the NHS. The Carers Strategy was expected to be launched next month and had been co-designed with carers. Helena Kania noted that the phone exercise demonstrated how out of date

much of the Council's data was, as many of the people contacted were no longer carers. Georgie Jones-Conaghan said that part of the recent learning as one of the themes of the Carers Strategy was on the identification of and communication with carers. Cllr James added that she had recently attended a couple of carers forum meetings and welcomed the good level of engagement from carers. Cllr Connor noted that some further information about the Carers Strategy had been made available through the Adult Social Care Redesign Group and asked that this be forwarded to Helena Kania. **(ACTION)**

- Asked by Cllr Culverwell about the use of the term “enhanced communication”, Charlotte Pomery said that communication issues included people who are non-verbal or who do not speak English as a first language so taking these factors into account was important when identifying support needs and the wider strategic approach of the Council.
- Asked by Cllr Opoku whether the Covid-19 pandemic had worsened contact with families or the existing health conditions of service users, Charlotte Pomery said that the lockdown period had actually been a time of enhanced communications with carers and acknowledged that certain health conditions present in people with learning disabilities and autism could make them more vulnerable to Covid complications. Georgie Jones-Conaghan added that a particular challenge in supporting people with complex needs during the pandemic was to maintain their routine and keep life as normal as possible.
- Cllr da Costa welcomed the case study in the report from the Preparing for Adulthood pilot and asked whether information on a broader range of service users could be provided in future. **(ACTION)** Georgie Jones-Conaghan said that she aimed to embed this approach of measuring before and after outcomes in order to better understand the benefits being delivered through services.
- In response to a question from Cllr Hakata, Charlotte Pomery confirmed that the Autism Strategy Group had been continuing to meet virtually.
- Cllr Hakata asked about the impact of the closure of The Grove School during the lockdown but it was noted that a response on this would need to be sought from Children's Services officers.
- Asked by Cllr Hakata how Covid-19 had impacted on the design of buildings, Charlotte Pomery said that there had been some changes due to social distancing and that thinking was ongoing about the future for day opportunities and what opportunities would be possible in the wider community if the use of buildings was constrained. Asked by Cllr Connor for an update on Ermine Road, Georgie Jones-Conaghan said that all service users had continued to receive a service. Though they may not have been able to access the building, service users had access to outreach, park visits, digital packs, art supplies and phone calls. John Everson added that the one-to-one conversations with service users and with carers to establish what support individuals needed to manage during an unprecedented period had been crucial.
- Asked by Cllr Connor about services at Waltheof Gardens, Charlotte Pomery acknowledged that the timeframe had been delayed and, while the staff were in

place and involved in the outreach work, the latest estimate for the opening of buildings was January 2021.

- Asked by Cllr Hakata about the expansion of co-production, Charlotte Pomery said that it was developing further, for example on Ermine Road starting with a person-centred approach and was now fundamental to the way that Adult Services operated. Despite some initial worries at the beginning of the pandemic, it had proved possible for this work to continue.

9. 'STOCK TAKE' ON CURRENT SITUATION WITH ADULT SERVICES

John Everson introduced this item, noting that the report covered issues including the approach to service delivery since the lockdown, some of which had been discussed earlier in the meeting. In particular, he highlighted the commitment and drive of staff and in partner organisations to respond to a huge change in the way that services had to be delivered in terms of the restrictions that were in place and the additional demands on the system.

John Everson then responded to questions from the Panel:

- Cllr Hakata noted that the Connected Communities programme had worked well and asked how it could work together with mutual aid groups. John Everson said that Connected Communities had been a very powerful and effective stream of work that had increased the capacity of the Council to respond to the pandemic and the ability to rebuild afterwards. Beverley Tarka said that the impact of the pandemic had disproportionately affected some sections of the community and that the mutual aid groups had been an important part of the response, adding that these connections would be sustained going forward. Cllr James added that the local mutual aid groups were invited and sometimes attended the meetings of the Community Enablement Group which brings together organisations from the community and voluntary sector. Cllr Connor said that it would be useful to receive a future update on the Community Enablement Group and how it is working with community organisations. **(ACTION)**
- In response to a point from Cllr da Costa about supporting mutual aid groups with safeguarding concerns, John Everson said that a sub-group of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) had been set up to look at the nuances that Covid presented and to flag risks. The SAB aims to ensure that all partners, including mutual aid groups, have sufficient access and support to understand safeguarding principles and procedures. There had also recently been an increase in people highlighting safeguarding concerns which was, in a way, reassuring as it demonstrated that people were actively using referral processes and thereby enabling appropriate investigations to take place. Asked by Cllr Connor whether there were sufficient staff to investigate these referrals, John Everson said that his team monitors safeguarding activity, had increased

staffing capacity to manage that and had put in place triaging approaches to improve ways of working.

- Asked by Helena Kania how often people in the shielded group were contacted, given that their situations may change, John Everson said that after the initial contacts, shielded people were triaged to appropriate Council services or connected to voluntary and community support services. Additional information was provided to people so that they could call back at a later time if required. Beverley Tarka added that the approach is not simply one-off crisis management because the data on shielded people had helped the Council to better understand which people have short-term needs, medium-term needs and more complex support needs with people then directed to the appropriate pathways. Asked by Cllr da Costa for data on shielding people who had said that they didn't feel that their care needs were being met, John Everson said that he could look into this and report back to the Panel. **(ACTION)**
- Asked by Helena Kania about the impact on adult social care assessments, John Everson said that statutory assessments continued where they could be conducted safely and appropriately, including over the phone or other remote means. Where this couldn't be done, assessments were carried out with appropriate PPE in place. The overall number of assessments being carried out within 28 days had improved, possibly because staff working from home were better able to manage their workload.
- Asked by Cllr Opoku about digital inclusion, John Everson said that the Council is clear with the people that they provide services to and their families how they wish to be communicated with. If they don't have the ability to access online options then telephone communication is used. If this is not possible then a team provides one-to-one support which was currently being done with risk assessments and PPE equipment.
- Asked by Cllr Opoku about staff wellbeing, John Everson said that a comprehensive range of support options was in place for staff including access to support to manage wellbeing, opportunities to come together virtually and arrangements for people to work in the office in cases where home working was difficult.

Cllr Connor raised the "Living Through Lockdown" report by the Joint Partnership Board and said that the Scrutiny Panel would support the recommendations of the report being followed up and acted upon, including by responding directly to the Joint Partnership Board. Helena Kania welcomed this comment, noted that she co-chairs the Joint Partnership Board and that it includes a lot of the vulnerable groups in Haringey including autism, learning difficulties, older people and carers. Beverley Tarka put on record her thanks to the Joint Partnership Board for their excellent and useful report which would help to improve understanding of the perspective of people that the Council supports. **(NOTE:** The "Living Through Lockdown" report is available

to view at: <https://www.healthwatchharingey.org.uk/report/2020-08-19/living-through-lockdown>)

Cllr Connor noted that finances were a particularly important item at present, with concerns about the overspend in the current circumstances with uncertainty about how much money would be coming back from the Government and whether savings proposed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) could still be met.

10. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Cllr Connor updated the Panel on the Adult Social Care Commissioning scrutiny review which had previously been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent lack of officer availability. The Panel agreed to gather the remaining evidence required through a final session with officers as soon as possible and to conclude the review.

Panel members made suggestions for topics for future scrutiny reviews:

- New ways of working in the NHS, including the way that people access A&E, how patients see their GP and developments relating to the 111 service.
- How the mutual aid groups see their relationship with the Council, how this had worked during the lockdown and how this expanded capacity could be utilised in future.
- Reductions in funding for social prescribing and the potential health impact of this.
- The shared and lived experiences of residents of the Covid-19 pandemic and Council services (such a review would most likely need to be held after the pandemic was over)
- The Council's preparedness for future waves of Covid-19.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Tues 17th Nov 2020
- Thurs 10th Dec 2020
- Tues 23rd Feb 2021

CHAIR: Councillor Pippa Connor

Signed by Chair

Date

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