

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission held on Tuesday 19 September 2023 at 7.00 pm at 160, Tooley Street, SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Suzanne Abachor (Chair)
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Sam Dalton
Councillor Esme Dobson
Councillor Sandra Rhule

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Dr Nancy Kuchemann, co-chair for Partnership Southwark
Martin Wilkinson, NHS full time chief operating officer for Partnership Southwark
Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning
Pauline O'Hare, Director of Adult Social Care, ,
Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, scrutiny
Dr Nancy Kuchemann, co-chair for Partnership Southwark
Martin Wilkinson, NHS full time chief operating officer for Partnership Southwark

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Nick Johnson.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. REVIEW - ACCESS TO TOILETS : AGE UK LONDON LOOS

The chair drew the commission's attention to the Age UK London documentation in the main agenda, which sets out the views of older Londoners on loos, as well as three briefing papers devised by Age UK London for local authorities.

She advised that John Miles, Kilburn Older Voices Exchange, has sent his apologies for the following item, a Toilet Manifesto for London, however John McGeachy has kindly agreed to cover this briefly. The Manifesto for London is in the main agenda.

The chair then invited John McGeachy, Campaigns Manager, Age UK London to present.

The Campaigns Manager gave a summary of the reports circulated.

In addition he referred to good practice by London Local Authorities on providing Community Toilet schemes whereby councils work with local businesses to enable community access:

- Lewisham Council have teamed up with Lewisham Local to conduct community engagement with businesses and provide a map. They also award an annual 'loo of the year'.
- A number of boroughs including Tower Hamlets, Islington, Merton and Richmond are undertaking a review of their toilet provision, including revisiting their Community Toilet schemes.

The Campaigns Manager also gave feedback from the Loos for Southwark, a campaign group of Southwark residents brought together and supported by Age UK London as part of the London Loos campaign. He made the following points:

- Access to toilets should not be based on ability to pay. Toilets should be free.
- Community Toilets work in day but not so much night, and cannot meet the needs of delivery drivers or the nighttime economy.
- There is particularly poor provision around Peckham.
- Following a long campaign planning permission was granted in 2016 for toilets as part of the redevelopment of land around Peckham Rye station. However as yet there is still no toilet.
- The toilets at Sainsbury's East Dulwich were commended.
- Southwark Park (Pavilion Café by the lake) has good toilets.
- Other parks could benefit from toilets. There are toilets at Belair Park but they may be closing and concern that Belair House venue does not have accessible toilets.
- People do not know where toilets are even if they are available. There is a lack of information available to the public about the location of toilets.
- Provision is patchy at best.
- More toilets are needed in shopping areas.
- It can be really stressful finding a loo.
- Some toilets are in a state of disrepair and very uninviting as a result of anti-social behaviour.
- The provision of public toilets should be a statutory duty.

The chair then invited comments and questions from the commission and the following points were made:

- A member agreed with the importance of toilets being free. It was noted that there are costs associated with maintaining toilets such as cleaning.
- Some people will use available pubs and other places - however some people are not confident to use these.
- There are cohort of people with medical conditions who really need hygienic conditions. The Campaigns Manager agreed that cleanliness is a key issue.

- Businesses can be closed at weekends.
- Bins are needed for men with prostate cancer - sanitary bins are needed in toilets for both sexes. There is campaign on this: [Boys need Bins.](#)
- Members said that Community Toilets can be part of the solution but not the only solution.
- The Peckham Rye community campaigned to include toilets in the station but officers were less keen and it is possible this was due to concerns are around anti-social behaviour. The Campaigns Manager advised that that Tower Hamlets has worked with police to toilets make safer.

RESOLVED

John McGeachy, Campaigns Manager, Age UK London will provide more information on combating anti-social behaviour.

6. REVIEW- ACCESS TO TOILETS: THE TOILET MANIFESTO FOR LONDON

John Miles, Kilburn Older Voices Exchange, sent his apologies as he was unable to attend due to illness.

7. HEALTHWATCH SOUTHWARK: LATIN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Rumanjeet Kallar, Research and Projects Officer, and Healthwatch Southwark Community Health Ambassador, Patricia Cuenca presented.

The chair invited questions and comments.

- The vice chair commended the report .
- It was noted that one of the main issues is poor translation particularly as there are a range of dialects. Misdiagnosis is a problem for older people in particular.
- There was a discussion on the best places to provide information, such as church services , shops , restaurants , bars , pharmacies.

8. REVIEW - ADULT SAFEGUARDING: OFFICER REPORT

Pauline O'Hare, Director of Adult Social Care, and Gennette Law's, Director of Commissioning presented.

The chair then invited questions and comments and the following points were made:

- A member commented that while the paperwork is robust there are still national and local problems and referred to the recent closure of Queens Oak Care Home.
- A member commented that the definition of abuse can be very variable with different views in issues such as pressure sores and appropriate intervention, and asked officers' view on this. Officers said that a person centred approach is encouraged.
- Officers were asked about the perception of inconsistent actions regarding investigations, and officers said this could be in part because of the nature of the allegations. For example moving staff to another floor might be appropriate for some matters whereas or something more serious could be appropriate to suspend.
- An increase in avenues to whistle blow and more publicity was discussed as an intervention and if it would be right to have someone such as the Director of Commissioning being the named officer to contact.
- Members commented that a cultural of difficult office politics and staff dynamics can lead to false allegations .
- Officers were asked if it could it be beneficial to introduce the same system as in children's' safeguarding - PIPOT (Persons in a position of trust). It was noted that children's safeguarding seems for more developed and protective.
- There was a discussion on a recent allegation of abuse of by a son against a father and that it was necessary to escalated concerns to more police senior officers to get action.
- Officers were asked how they monitor complaints and how they are extending awareness with families.
- Officers said that investigation of allegations is sometime a tricky balance between different human rights , including the right to family life and the right to make unwise decisions. An intervention can be about widening networks and there are frameworks to support Adult Safeguarding.

9. REVIEW - ACCESS TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS: NHS AND CABINET RESPONSE

The chair drew members' attention to the cabinet response to recommendation 9, which was enclosed with the papers to note.

Martin Wilkinson, NHS full time chief operating officer for Partnership Southwark, with assistance from Dr Nancy Kuchemann, co-chair for Partnership Southwark, presented the Partnership Southwark Primary Care response to the review.

The chair then invited comments and questions and the following points were made:

- The NHS app is useful, however members fed back it was difficult to resolve an error on an address and it was not possible to access an urgent appointment, despite being advised to use the app. The NHS leads said this is new technology and tools and therefore will take a while to bed in. They advised giving feedback to the GP surgeries on any problems. They went on to comment that some practices are encouraging use of 'Ask My GP' which is not the same as the NHS App. Nationally and locally the NHS is trying to encourage use of the NHS app as the has access to records.
- A member commented that she is not flagged up as a carer in the system. Dr Kuchemann said this is possible so suggested prompting the practice. A member commented that she had attempted to give constructive feedback to her GP surgery but the receptionist was unable to process this. The NHS lead advised being persistent and using the feedback/ complaints mechanisms.
- Members commented it is still very difficult to get mental health support, and also to access timely GP appointments.
- The NHS leads were asked about food bank voucher inconsistencies and were told that there is a network of social prescribing help but the offer can change over time and in different localities.

- The NHS leads commented that that the issues discussed this evening are very much aligned with report findings and recommendations, and assured the commission that work has been convened to get this underway. The chair thanked the NHS leads for their positive response to the scrutiny review. She went on to note that the problems identified in the review and the discussion tonight signify that the GP service is not always satisfactory , and she would therefore welcome a follow up discussion on progress in addressing the recommendations and to understand how much improvement was possible. The NHS full time chief operating officer for Partnership Southwark said he would be happy to do this and also offered to provide more detail on the response to the report, if helpful.

10. REVIEW - CARE CONTRIBUTIONS : CABINET RESPONSE

The cabinet response to the scrutiny review on Care Contributions was noted.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The chair drew members' attention to the work programme, along with a cover report and scopes for the following reviews:

- Definitions of Adult Safeguarding,
- Access to Toilets.

The chair said that joint review is being considered with the Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission focusing on Environmental Health.