



## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 7.00 pm at 160, Tooley Street, SE1 2QH

**PRESENT:** Councillor Suzanne Abachor (Chair)

Councillor Esme Dobson  
Councillor Sandra Rhule  
Councillor Jason Ochere  
Councillor Charlie Smith

**OTHER MEMBERS** Cllr Evelyn Akoto , Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing  
**PRESENT:**

**OFFICER** & Rhiana Ebanks-Babb, Healthwatch Southwark Manager  
**PARTNER** Ruman Kallar, Healthwatch Southwark  
**SUPPORT:** Kate Kavanagh, Associate Director of Community Based Care  
Rebecca Jarvis, Director of Partnership Delivery and Sustainability (Southwark), NHS South East London  
Samantha Lewis, Early diagnosis programme lead Cancer Alliance  
Sangeeta Leahy, Director of Public Health  
Pauline O'Hare, Director of Adult Social Care  
Dr Nancy Kuchemann , GP and Co-chair of Partnership Southwark  
Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, scrutiny

### 1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Nick Johnson and Cllr Maria Linforth-Hall gave apologies.

### 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 commission approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2024 as an accurate record.

### **5. TOPIC: CANCER PREVENTION AND EARLY DIAGNOSIS**

The chair welcomed Samantha Lewis, Early diagnosis programme lead, Cancer Alliance and Dr Nancy Kuchemann, GP and Co-chair of Partnership Southwark, and invited them to present.

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

- A member asked about prostate cancer and if celebrities sharing stories had a positive impact; clinicians confirmed it did.
- Clinicians spoke about projects providing more information about diagnostic blood tests for prostate cancer (PSA test) and targeted outreach for men at higher risk.
- A member asked if time constraints during an appointment with a GP made it more difficult to obtain a diagnosis for cancer. Dr Nancy Kuchemann said that the duration of an appointment with a GP has remained fairly consistent but there are now longer wait times for tests, scans and x rays, which means that GPs are referring with less certainty on timescales. Samatha Lewis spoke about the Pharmacy First pilot operating in Southwark that gives pharmacists the ability to make referrals to hospitals for suspected cancer.

### **6. PRIMARY CARE ACCESS**

The chair welcomed Kate Kavanagh, Associate Director of Community Based Care, and Rebecca Jarvis, Director of Partnership Delivery and Sustainability (Southwark), NHS South East London, and invited them to present.

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

- Members spoke about the difficulty in getting an appointment, either via a GP surgery or pharmacy, and noting the phone system is a block, whereas previously patients could go into a surgery and wait for appointment. The NHS colleagues explained that there is a move to cloud-based telephony where patients ought to receive a ring back. In addition, it is now possible to access prescriptions via a pharmacy; this was noted and welcomed by members. Capacity problems were acknowledged; to both testing due to the cyber-attacks but also workforce issues.
- Members asked how difficult it is to attract people to Primary Care and how might a younger person become a GP and remain in the borough. NHS colleagues explained that there is an aging population of GPs and nurses. Often younger GPs have a portfolio career now so work as a GP and do other specialist roles, which makes the work more interesting and varied. There is ongoing work to encourage people to work in Primary Care to make it exciting.

## 7. CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING - ANNUAL INTERVIEW

The chair welcomed Cllr Evelyn Akoto for her annual interview.

Officer support was provided by:

- Pauline O'Hare, Director of Adult Social Care,
- Sangeeta Leahy Director of Public Health.

The following themes were covered in the cabinet member presentation and the discussion with members:

- Homecare and an update on learning from the equal care cooperative pilot,
- Residential care charter , uptake and implementation,
- Care home ownership , assurance and re-provision,
- Obesity,
- Sexual health,
- People who are completely inactive.

## **8. HEALTHWATCH SOUTHWARK - ANNUAL REPORT**

The chair welcomed Rhyana Ebanks-Babb, Healthwatch Southwark Manager, and invited her to present the Healthwatch Southwark's Annual report 2023 -24, which was circulated with the agenda.

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

- Members asked how Healthwatch do outreach to engage local people. Healthwatch colleagues said they do outreach in community spaces . There are also community ambassadors who are volunteers and engage with the community regarding vaccination.
- Healthwatch were asked how they will increase engagement with young people. Healthwatch said that they are working with the NEST, increasing board engagement, and a conducting a listening tour.

## **9. HEALTHWATCH SOUTHWARK : EMPOWERING VOICES**

The chair welcomed Ruman Kallar and invited her to present Healthwatch Southwark's report on Empowering Voices: Examining Healthcare Access for Adults with Learning Disabilities and Autistic Adults.

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

- A member asked if Healthwatch encouraged people to make complaints. Healthwatch colleagues explained that they did, however people were often exhausted and so prefer telling their story to Healthwatch.
- Healthwatch said that a recommendation to encourage autism and learning disability champions has been rolled out.
- Members thanked Healthwatch for the report and recognised the barriers they were seeking to overcome.

## **10. WORK PROGRAMME**

The commission discussed the work plan and resolved:

- to invite the lead cabinet member to discuss plans to deliver a new care home and the models under consideration.
- the previous briefing paper provided to members on the outcome of the public consultation on Orient Street Community Adult Short Breaks (respite) is sufficient to bring the matter to a close as this confirms the facility will continue to provide respite for adults.