

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission held on Monday 22 June 2020 at 7.00 pm at Online/Virtual. Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. Please contact [FitzroyAntonio.williams@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:FitzroyAntonio.williams@southwark.gov.uk) or [Julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk) for a link.

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Victoria Olisa (Chair)  
Councillor David Noakes (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall  
Councillor Darren Merrill  
Councillor Charlie Smith  
Councillor Helen Dennis

**OTHER MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER  
SUPPORT:** David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director, Children's & Adults  
Services  
Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning , Southwark Council  
Sam Hepplewhite , Director of Integrated Commissioning  
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager

**1. APOLOGIES**

Councillor Helen Dennis gave apologies for lateness.

**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 27 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

#### 5. IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON RESIDENTS AND STAFF IN CARE HOMES AND THE HOME CARE SERVICE

The chair invited officers and NHS colleagues to update the commission on PPE, testing, how residents are staying in touch with family, friends and with the wider world, and lessons learnt in protecting vulnerable people.

An overview was provided by:

- David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director, Children's & Adults Services
- Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning , Southwark Council
- Sam Hepplewhite, Director of Integrated Commissioning, NHS CCG

#### PPE

Officers explained that in the early days of the pandemic assistance to care homes had concentrated on provision of PPE, including supporting homes with the financial costs. Communication had been vital and this was provided via a newsletter– first daily, then weekly. This contained information on changes to guidelines, provision of free parking to care workers in order to avoid public transport, how to get PPE when suppliers fail, and how to use PPE.

Officers emphasised the scale of PPE requirement with 800,000 items needed locally across the sector, which included masks, googles, gloves, aprons, depending on infection. PPE provisions ordered by homes were on occasions diverted to the NHS. London Boroughs came together to procure PPE with Ealing taking the lead procuring 2.5 million items. Southwark led distribution for South East London. Officers explained that the council is not the routine supplier of PPE, only emergencies. Initially facemasks were in short supply; now the gloves are scarcer.

Media images of PPE showed about full coverings in hospital settings, whereas the guidelines for PPE provision in care homes was different, and that is what the council was focused on delivering to enable people to receive the care that they needed, which they did receive.

#### Communication between care home residents and family and friends

Communication between care home residents and friends and family had been facilitated with the use of iPads, and also on occasion by standing outside the home to see people, as well as provision of PPE to relatives and friends so they could visit, in the case of accidents or end of life care.

### Testing

Government testing stopped and then restarted. The local CCG/ NHS has been helpful in facilitating access and working closely with Public Health, who have led on testing in care homes, which has now been done for 12 of the 15. There has been a portal to register, targeting older people's homes first and now moving on to working age care homes.

### Lesson learnt

There are strong relationships with providers of care and shared values. The Ethical Home Care Charter has proved its value; our staff absence was lower than other boroughs. Officers will be prioritizing rolling out the Ethical Care Homes Charter.

There was a lack of understanding in the Department and Health and Social Care about the range of home care provision and remit, for example Care Homes are not for getting people out of hospital, but rather residents homes and there is a right for people in those homes to choose who comes in. There are 17 CQC registered providers in the borough, not only older people's residential homes. Care Homes have for too long been a Cinderella service, and there needs to be a focus on that changing.

The close working with neighbours has been good and supportive, with boroughs providing mutual aid and effective joint commissioning.

### April Ashley, Unison Branch Secretary.

Unison and other trade unions have campaigned on testing and PPE and liaising directly with care home and home care employees. Issues have included:

- The PPE guidance constantly changed and Unison considered this changed based on what was available rather than what was needed.
- Some Unison members working in Care Homes did not know what PPE was required as managers did not always convey this to frontline workers clearly.
- Unison challenged care home providers and on occasions said care home workers cannot provide care without adequate PPE; people have a right under the HSE legislation to refuse to work in unsafe conditions.
- Many care home staff are BAME so face a higher risk from Covid 19 infection.
- The clap for care was good, but the emphasis must be on providing PPE.
- Full sick pay is vital otherwise people will come into work when sick as employees need to pay rent and mortgages.

- Unison supports the Ethical Care Home Charter.
- Unison wants to see homes brought back in house; the NHS got prioritised for PPE as a public service.
- Unison are continuing to campaign for testing and contact tracing.

The chair invited questions and the following points were made in response:

- Commission members and officers all commended and thanked the home care, care home workers and social workers for all their work during the Covid 19.
- The Unison Branch Secretary assured members that care homes do now have adequate PPE. At the beginning they did not have enough masks, nor was there enough information from local managers, but this has changed. Testing can be obtained at either drive through centres or at home and Southwark Unison members have not raised any complaints at the moment.
- Officers said that previous figures indicated 55 deaths from Covid 19 in care homes; however this has increased with more out of borough. The most recent figures will be supplied.
- The council encouraged all homes to lockdown as the government advice came in; some homes locked down earlier.
- Homes with a higher proportion of end of life care have been hit harder, whereas other homes with working age residents have had far fewer fatalities, as would be expected.
- Mutual Aid and construction companies have donated voluntary PPE contributions, which has been welcomed and helpful.
- The council provided additional finance to care homes. The council is expecting passporting grants from central government with conditions attached.
- A legal briefing on the Coronavirus Act 2020 Care Act easements will go to the next meeting.

## **6. SCRUTINY REVIEW: CARE HOME AND EXTRA CARE QUALITY ASSURANCE - DRAFT HEADLINE REPORT**

The chair invited comments on the draft headline report and the following points were made:

- Officers clarified that the Older Peoples Hub is now due to go fully

live on the 1 July, however services which are part of the hub have been continuing, including providing advice, which is particularly important with Covid 19 and cocooning. The Hospital Discharge services are also continuing. Members considered the report ought to contain a specific recommendation on the Older Peoples Hub.

- A member commented that the Commission had not spoken with the Independent Lay Advocacy service and therefore could not be sure that they would have the capacity to deliver the recommendation which said: 'Ensure systems are put in place to ensure that people in homes (in and out of Southwark) who are unbefriended, have support by the Independent Lay Advocacy service, or similar'.
- Members highlighted the importance of the complaints and benchmarking information request, which officers are due to provide more information on.
- A member thought the recommendation on complaints could be tightened up. Officers confirmed there is a requirement for a complaints process in the commissioning contract.
- Officers indicated support for recommendation for an Annual Care Home report, and for this to mirror the present Annual Home Care report that goes to cabinet annually, and which could also come to scrutiny annually.
- Officers highlighted that the CCQ regulate and inspect care homes, and said that it might be advisable to invite them to a meeting when reviewing the recommended Annual Care Homes report. Officers reminded the Commission that while the council commissions a number of placements at care homes, a significant amount of people are self funded, where the CQC would have a role in their complaints. Previously the council received funding to oversee care homes, but that has moved to the CQC. The CQC are therefore in a very good position to provide an overview of complaints and benchmark with other care homes, and to give their insight and intelligence.
- Nancy Kuchemann, GP contributed to the discussion and said that there is a borough based piece of work on looking at the quality of GP provision to Care Homes and offered to contribute to the scrutiny review.
- Officer and the Commission members supported the developments with the Lay Inspectors and ensuring their visits dovetail with the commissioning visits and CQC.

## **7. COVID 19 IMPACT ON THE NHS**

Sam Hepplewhite, Director of Integrated Commissioning, CCG NHS provided an overview of the impact of Covid 19 and the following issues were covered :

- Testing and mortality
- Extensive advice provided to people shielding
- On going review of cancer services
- Continuity of community work
- GP delivery – all practices have received a delivery of laptops to change the way people access services. Virtually all practices have remained open.

The following issues were discussed:

- Care homes deaths, including location.
- The impact of the following on mortality: age, ethnicity, housing tenure, households (e.g. multi generational, over crowding), occupation
- The impact on Covid 19 on the use of other urgent NHS service such as strokes and cancer, and the recent campaign to encourage people to come back safely: 'Helping us to help you' which encourages people to ring first for triage and an appointment time.

A number of action points were agreed, which are collated and captured under item 9.

## **8. SCRUTINY REVIEW: MENTAL HEALTH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - SUICIDE BRIEFING**

The briefing was noted.

## **9. COVID 19 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

Commission members raised the following issues to investigate further:

- How can our hubs reach out to people particularly impacted by Covid 19
- Children are showing increased mental health problems, including self harm, and there is evidence of increasing Domestic Abuse.
- The adverse impact of Covid 19 on people with underlying conditions, frontline workers, BAME, and less investigated

potential vulnerabilities including sickle cell disease and Jewish heritage.

- Equalities impact of lockdown on people e.g. poor housing, working practices (having to go out to work), childcare responsibilities.

## **RESOLVED**

Officers will provide briefings and presentations on the below for the following meeting:

Current numbers of confirmed Covid 19 cases and death rate for:

- a) Southwark resident population
- b) Southwark care home residents, placed in and out of borough

Below equalities data for mortality and severe morbidity (e.g. very ill)

- a) Ethnicity (including Jewish)
- b) Age
- c) Occupation
- d) Tenure
- e) Size of household
- f) Sickle cell anaemia and other underlying health conditions

Impact of lockdown on people, particularly considering equalities: e.g. people in poor housing, with childcare responsibilities, different occupations etc.

Impact on health service of Covid 19 and particularly:

- a) To what extent are people returning to use services e.g. stroke and cancer
- b) How will GP services accommodate different delivery now and in future provision

Impact of lock down on children's mental health and wellbeing, including Domestic Abuse.

## **10. WORK PROGRAMME**

Commission members requested briefing papers on:

- the merger of the South East London CCGs and the impact on people and service delivery;
- the impact of Covid 19 on GP practices and future provision.