

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Wednesday 14 July 2021 at 7.00 pm**

**Committee Room (1.16) - Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, London, SW2 1RW**

**Members Present:** Councillor Tim Briggs, Councillor Liz Atkins (Chair), Councillor Mary Atkins (Vice-Chair), Councillor Stephen Donnelly, Councillor Marianna Masters (Vice-Chair), Councillor Irfan Mohammed, Councillor Martin Tiedemann and Councillor Scott Ainslie (Substitute)

**Apologies:** Councillor Jonathan Bartley and Councillor Joshua Lindsey

**Also present online:** Councillor Lucy Caldicott

### **1 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

### **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2021 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

### **3 Care Home Provision and Delivery in Lambeth**

Councillor Lucy Caldicott, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care (Job Share), introduced the report and provided an oversight of care home provision in Lambeth. Councillor Caldicott also paid tribute to officers, who had supported care homes, and to care home staff, who had supported service users, during the coronavirus pandemic.

Jane Bowie, Director of Integrated Commissioning (Adults), Jennifer Burgess, Integrated Commissioning Manager, Michelle Homer, Senior Commissioning Officer, and Ese Iyasere, Public Health Specialist, provided information on:

- Care home provision across the borough, including how it functioned as part of the Lambeth Together system.
- The demand for, and commissioning of, care home placements, including how commissioners worked with care home providers and other partners.
- The importance of understanding future need. It was highlighted that this would be central to future commissioning and that a review of future demand would be undertaken to ensure the right type of support, at the right time, with sufficient capacity was available to support the most vulnerable.
- Monitoring and inspection arrangements, including the work of the Care Quality

Commission, which allowed the quality and safety of provider services to be measured and reviewed.

- The work that had been carried out to support care home staff to better understand infection, prevention and control, with training provided on matters such as handwashing and wearing equipment correctly.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, officers explained that consolidated support had been brought together under one commissioning team. The committee was informed that the team had established daily and regular contact with all care homes. It was highlighted that the creation of a regular forum, together with regular contact by phone, had supported care homes during very challenging times in a number of ways, including the processing and interpretation of guidance, reporting and testing, managing deaths, training and support for managers and staff, financial support and assistance with equipment.

As set out in the report, officers highlighted that a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) had initially been a real concern for staff. This had been addressed with a swift local response, with the council investing and providing free PPE supplies for all care homes, in advance of a national ordering process being established.

The Committee also heard from a number of witnesses from across the home care system, including service users, families and carers of residents, Healthwatch Lambeth, Lambeth Keep Our NHS Public and those who worked in care homes across the borough.

Service users, families and carers of residents highlighted:

- Difficulties in finding clear information about care home provision and how options available fitted together with other services provided by the council, NHS and third sector.
- Complexities in relation to care costs and funding available.
- The need for learning from the pandemic to be implemented and to ensure the right type of support was available, especially for those with complex support needs.
- The importance of involving families and carers in decision making and in developing individual care plans.
- Concerns about the lack of information on the Covid-19 status of other residents and staff who worked in care homes
- Frustrations in relation to visiting arrangements and how life had been restricted in care homes during the pandemic.

Representatives from Lambeth Keep Our NHS Public informed the committee that they had been approached by local residents who had raised concerns about the transfer of residents from Minnie Kidd House to new care placements. This was due to fire safety issues and the buildings suitability for purpose. The following points were highlighted:

- Minnie Kidd House provided specialist accommodation for people with complex needs. The accommodation was run by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.
- There had been failures in relation to relatives' involvement in both care planning and

general communication during the enforced moves.

- Concerns about limited follow up and clinical involvement from the NHS in regular care homes, especially for older residents with complex needs.
- Concerns in relation to privatising / contracting out care through commissioning.
- The need for scrutiny to look more closely at decision making and next steps in relation to the future use of the building.

Representatives from Lambeth Keep Our NHS Public concluded by stating there was a need to keep services available at Minnie Kidd House.

Catherine Pearson, Chief Executive, and Sara Lyon, Engagement Lead for Older People, informed the committee of the work Healthwatch Lambeth had been involved with in relation to care homes over a number of years. This highlighted the importance of working with families and residents to ensure care planning was person centred and the need to demystify care home arrangements by providing clear guidance and advice. The committee was also informed that Healthwatch had legal powers to visit health and social care services and to see them in action. It was explained that enter and view visits had been carried out in October 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic. Following these visits, the care homes had committed to engagement with relatives in a number of ways, including through family meetings, an open-door policy and newsletters.

Staff representatives from St Mary's Care Home, 25 Garrads Road Care Home and Excelcare provided information on a range of matters, including:

- The logistics of running both a large and small care home. This included information in relation to recruitment, looking after staff, taking referrals and managing deaths.
- The Covid-19 vaccination programme. It was explained that this had involved considerable work to facilitate a roll out to both residents and care home staff.
- The ways in which care home staff could report issues of concern.
- The impact of the coronavirus pandemic. It was highlighted that staff had responded with great professionalism and commitment. However, it was recognised that, after 15 months of intense and relentless pressure, that care home staff and managers were exhausted.

During the discussion that followed, it was noted that local authorities had a duty to assess the needs of anyone who might have a need for support. It was highlighted that a social needs assessment was the first step to arranging care and for establishing whether service users were eligible for financial support from the council. In response to questions, information was provided on various legislation, including the Care and Standards Act 2000 and the Care Act 2014.

The committee was informed that Lambeth utilised a "home first" approach, wherever possible, and had developed a model of care that allowed people to retain their independence. This, in turn, had driven an improved and more responsive care market. During the discussion, the importance of community interaction was highlighted as a way to improve health and wellbeing for residents living in care homes.

In response to questions about the complexities of the care system, officers provided information on the needs assessment process, needs assessment eligibility, the different

agencies involved, and the options available for paying for care. It was noted that care homes were paid for in the following ways: local authority funding: where the council would fund some, or all of the care; self-funding: where the person being cared for (or their family or a friend) would pay all care costs; and, in some circumstances, with strict eligibility criteria, the NHS would pay all care home fees for people with complex health needs.

In response to questions about care planning, it was explained that following an assessment a support plan was developed. It was noted that engaging with family and friends was an important component of person-centred care while details were provided on how plans were reviewed over time. Issues in relation to transferring a resident from one care home to another were also considered.

The committee was informed that Lambeth Together had worked closely with care homes since December 2020 to deliver the Covid-19 vaccination programme. Information was provided on the work of the Care Home Vaccine Uptake Taskforce and on vaccination uptake, for both residents and staff. In addition, it was explained that the care home workforce would be impacted by legislation, effective from October 2021, that would make the Covid-19 vaccination mandatory for staff working in care homes. It was noted that initial feedback on this had been mixed and that the council would work closely with providers to prepare for this.

*During discussion of this item the guillotine fell at 9.00 pm. **RESOLVED:** That the meeting continue for a further period of up to 30 minutes.*

It was noted that a critical step towards delivering more integrated working between care homes and the wider NHS community was to foster parity of esteem, with care homes being recognised as critical in supporting Lambeth's most vulnerable residents.

A wide range of other matters were also considered, including: lessons learnt from the coronavirus pandemic, the role of the voluntary sector; challenges in relation to dealing with winter pressures; the importance of providing support to residents when moving into a care home; the importance of having suitable services available for younger adults, concerns about the coordination of palliative care; and the process for challenging decisions relating to care and/or an assessment.

**RESOLVED:**

It was recommended that:

1. To improve person centred care planning and ensure care pathways were joined up and understood by the public, Adult Social Care should:
  - Develop guidance, including a plain English route map, to help service users and carers navigate the system;
  - Provide a single point of contact for questions about care home provision and delivery in Lambeth; and
  - Ensure each care home resident had a dedicated point of contact so both service users and carers know who to contact if they have a question about their care.
2. The Council's support for care homes during the coronavirus pandemic, including the provision of advice, guidance, training and equipment, be commended.
3. Care homes and carers be thanked for providing service users with outstanding support

during the coronavirus pandemic.

4. The Council introduces a care worker of the year award, to recognise the outstanding care provided across the borough.
5. Adult Social Care work across the Council and with colleagues and partners, including providers, to raise the profile of the work done by care homes and promote opportunities for a career in care homes.
6. To aid recruitment, to investigate whether it would be possible for Opportunity Lambeth to work with Care Homes across the borough.
7. The Council signs up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and ensure those working in care homes receive payment of their salary for periods when they are on sick leave, are given appropriate training, receive regular appraisals/pay reviews and feel supported.
8. Lessons learnt in relation to Covid-19 should be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 6 – 12 months. This should cover matters in relation to both care home provision and delivery during the pandemic, with input from service users and carers. To ensure service users and carers are listened to and heard, thought should be given to the methodology that is used, and by who, to capture these experiences.
9. All care homes should have a clear, transparent and well publicised complaints procedure, setting out how to raise concerns freely and confidentially, who to contact and how to appeal.
10. To help create an atmosphere where workers feel able to report concerns, the Council should ensure all care homes have a whistleblowing policy and ensure staff are aware that they can raise concerns freely and confidentially.
11. The Council ensures all care homes hold regular meetings for families and carers, with suitable safeguards established to support, and hear from, residents who are not visited/supported by friends or family.
12. An annual report on care homes be provided to both Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet to provide details on:
  - Monitoring and inspection, including data from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Lambeth's own commissioners;
  - How CQC ratings in Lambeth compared to other boroughs;
  - The challenges and opportunities for staff and service providers – including information on staffing levels, vacancies and future staffing requirements;
  - The experiences of service users and carers, including feedback on the care and services received;

- The number of complaints received as well as lessons learnt; and
- The impact of Brexit and Covid-19, including the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE).

13. A report on the future use of Minnie Kidd House, setting out care provided, environmental issues, including work required for the building to be compliant with fire safety standards, and next steps, be considered by Overview and Scrutiny at a future committee meeting, with input from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

14. To help maximise health and wellbeing in care homes, schemes that increase community interaction and encourage residents to get involved in local activities, including interaction with ward councillors, should be supported.

15. An officer briefing on future care models be provided to Councillors.

#### **4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22**

The report presented provided information on the committee's work programme for 2021/22, including an update on actions and recommendations arising from previous meetings.

During the discussion it was highlighted that the meeting scheduled for 6 October 2021 would be brought forward to late September, with a time/date to be confirmed outside of the meeting. It was noted that this meeting would focus on matters relating to climate change and would include information on air quality reporting and an update on the citizens' assembly.

It was noted that a number of requests had been received for Overview and Committee to consider in relation to covid related expenditure, violence affecting young people / youth violence and, subject to speaking to the Chair of Corporate Committee, work that had taken place in relation to covid support fraud checks. The Chair asked for any additional future work programme suggestions to be circulated via email so that these could be considered ahead of the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to the comments above, the work programme and the status of actions (Appendix 1) be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.29 pm

CHAIR  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday 21 September 2021

Date of Despatch: Thursday 12 August 2021

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