

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **NORTH CENTRAL LONDON JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **FRIDAY, 31ST JULY, 2020** at 10.00 am in Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Tricia Clarke, Pippa Connor, Alison Cornelius, Linda Freedman, Lorraine Revah (substitute member) and Edward Smith.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Lucia das Neves, Osh Gantly, Alison Kelly and Samata Khatoon

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Paul Tomlinson

The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the North Central London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Members agreed to elect a Chair for the duration of the meeting and to defer the election of a Chair for the 2020-21 municipal year to the 25th September meeting.

Councillor Pippa Connor (LB Haringey) was nominated to chair the meeting and this nomination was seconded. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED –

- (i) THAT Councillor Pippa Connor be elected chair for the duration of this meeting.
- (ii) THAT the election of Chair of North Central London JHOSC for 2020-21 be deferred to the 25th September 2020 meeting.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRS

Members agreed that the election of Vice-Chair(s) should be deferred to the 25th September meeting.

RESOLVED –

THAT the election of Vice-Chair(s) be deferred to the 25th September 2020 meeting.

3. GUIDANCE ON REMOTE MEETINGS HELD DURING THE CORONAVIRUS NATIONAL EMERGENCY

The Guidance was noted.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference were noted.

5. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Alison Kelly (LB Camden), Cllr Lucia das Neves (LB Haringey) and Councillor Samata Khatoon (LB Camden). Councillor Khatoon was substituted for by Councillor Lorraine Revah.

6. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PECUNIARY, NON-PECUNIARY AND ANY OTHER INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

Councillor Cornelius declared that she was a Barnet Council appointed member of the Eleanor Palmer Trust, and served as its Vice-Chairman.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Pippa Connor conveyed her thanks to Councillor Alison Kelly, the outgoing Chair of the Committee, for her hard work in scrutinising and engaging with health services throughout North Central London.

8. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

9. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no notifications of urgent business.

10. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2020.

Councillor Linda Freedman noted that her first name had been omitted from the attendance list.

Councillor Alison Cornelius said that her declaration of interest should be amended to clarify that she was a council-appointed trustee of the Eleanor Palmer Trust.

With regard to the care homes item, Councillor Cornelius noted that members had requested a list of care homes in the North-Central London area by borough and had not been provided with one yet. She asked that this be provided forthwith.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2020 be approved, subject to the amendments above.

11. NORTH CENTRAL LONDON SYSTEM RESPONSE TO COVID-19: NCL TEMPORARY SERVICE CHANGES MADE IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

Consideration was given to a report from North London Partners in Health and Care.

Mike Cooke (Independent Chair of the North London Health and Care Partnership) and Frances O’Callaghan (Accountable Officer for North-Central London Clinical Commissioning Groups) presented the report to the Committee. Mr Cooke highlighted that, although it had been a very challenging time for the health service, he had been impressed by the joint working between local authorities and the NHS.

Ms O’Callaghan outlined that, given the unprecedented emergency situation that coronavirus had placed the health service in, there had needed to be changes in service delivery which could not go through the normal consultation process. Clinical assurance had been obtained for changes through the NCL Clinical Advisory Group. As conditions changed and various services were going to be returned to normal, this would need to be cleared with the Clinical Advisory Group.

Key points that officers highlighted in their introduction to this item were:

- Urgent cancer treatment was continuing;
- Some services were being delivered digitally – but officers were aware of the ‘digital divide’ and the problems this caused for access;
- Critical care was focused on UCLH and North Middlesex Hospitals.

Members asked what the recommendations for the future based on the experience of the pandemic would be. Ms O’Callaghan said that recognising the interdependence between health and social care was an important one. The importance of mutual aid between different parts of the health service was another important lesson learnt.

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In terms of social care, important issues were the need to make available testing slots for social care workers and the need for mutual aid to ensure that enough PPE was available in the right places for the appropriate staff.

Members queried the decision-making process behind releasing patients into care homes, as there was public concern that some of those patients had coronavirus and so contributed to the spread of Covid-19 in care home settings. Mr Cooke said that he did not believe this had happened to a significant degree in North Central London. Releasing patients into the care of care homes was an operational matter but, in order to avoid the spread of coronavirus, patients who were being discharged into care homes were sent to a ward in St Pancras Hospital where they could be monitored for Covid-19 symptoms.

The Acting Chair, Councillor Pippa Connor, asked that more information about the release of patients from hospital into care homes be provided for the Committee when it considered the care homes item at its 25 September meeting.

ACTION: North London Partners

There was a discussion about delays in other treatment which were occurring during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Several members raised particular concerns about screening, about elective surgery and about dialysis. Officers said that the infection needed to be under control and that patients needed to feel safe when they were coming into hospital. When this had been achieved, then the health service could move towards tackling the backlog that was emerging with regard to other treatments and appointments. Mr Cooke said that there was a London Transition Board, which included a representative from London Councils and from the Mayor's Office, which was looking into the recovery from the pandemic period.

With regard to minimising visits to A & E over the last few months, where the matter could be dealt with by other means, members were informed that people were being advised to ring 111 before they visited A & E. Members said that it was important that there was clinical triage for these calls, rather than relying on telephonists without medical qualifications. They also asked whether there had been engagement with the public about the use of 111 to minimise use of A & E. Mr Cooke informed the meeting that there had been engagement with a sample of Londoners who had been selected via a process led by the Mayor's Office.

There was a discussion about digital consultations by GPs. It was noted that some GP practices had been conducting telephone consultations where necessary and appropriate prior to the pandemic striking, and this might be a method that older patients felt more confident with – rather than online digital processes.

There was a discussion about the service variations mentioned in the report. Members noted the importance of separate coronavirus and non-coronavirus pathways in hospitals. Where possible, this was being done; however, many older hospital complexes did not have the building layout that made this possible.

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Moorfields and Chase Farm were now better able to deal with non-coronavirus cases separately than before.

Concern was voiced about the long-term effects on the health of some people who had had Covid-19. Officers acknowledged that this was a fast-developing field and said there would be a multi-disciplinary approach taken to rehabilitation. Members said they would welcome further information about this as it developed.

It was noted that Great Ormond Street Hospital had dealt with a disproportionately large number of child patients during lockdown, and there was now a re-opening of some children's services in UCLH and North Middlesex. The paediatric beds in Barnet General remained closed. A decision would be taken on re-opening them in September.

A member asked what was happening with regard to the LUTS clinic, a matter on which the Committee had received a number of deputations from concerned patients over the past few years. Ms O'Callaghan said she would liaise with the relevant officer (Richard Dale) about providing a written update on the topic.

ACTION: Frances O'Callaghan / Richard Dale

With regard to maternity services, officers said that a limited homebirth service had been reinstated in May. Councillor Clarke asked that more information be provided about this and how the restoration of the service was developing.

Members queried the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on BAME communities. Councillor Smith said that, in Enfield, there was particular concern about the number of deaths and serious illnesses that had occurred among the Somali community in that borough. Members also made reference to the impact on the health workforce, particularly as many health workers were from BAME backgrounds.

Ms O'Callaghan said that Dr Fenton's study on the impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority populations was being reviewed and that NCL health partners were working on implementing the recommendations. She added that health bodies would be encouraging the take-up of the flu vaccination among their staff.

Members expressed concern about the mental health impact of the pandemic. Ms O'Callaghan said some good work was being done on this, and that a triaging system was used to direct patients to a specialist section at St Pancras so that they did not need to go to A & E.

Members asked that a report be provided at a future meeting updating members on the impact of Covid-19 on health services and on developments flowing from this. Councillor Connor would liaise with officers about this paper.

RESOLVED-

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- (i) THAT the report and comments above be noted;
- (ii) THAT a report come to a future meeting of this Committee on the impact of Covid-19 on the NCL health system on developments flowing from the pandemic.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the dates of future ordinary meetings would be:

- Friday, 25th September 2020
- Friday, 27th November 2020
- Friday, 29th January 2021
- Friday, 26th March 2021

It was also noted that a special meeting would be arranged for early September to consider the orthopaedic services review.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 12:20pm

CHAIR

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MINUTES END