

Update of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care

Health and Adult Social Care Committee 18th December 2023

1. Purpose of the Cabinet Member update

- 1.1. This paper provides a short round of updates from across the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care. It presents an opportunity for the cabinet member to speak directly to the HASC Scrutiny Committee and highlight key pieces of work, both to share successes and identify challenges and opportunities in the coming months. The Committee are invited to consider the information below and ask questions of clarification at the meeting subject to the Chair's discretion. Requests for additional information can be addressed to the relevant director/s outside of the meeting. The Committee may also use the cabinet member updates to inform their scrutiny work planning for the coming year.

2. Adult Social Care (ASC)

2.1. CQC (Care Quality Commission) ASC Assessment

- 2.2. ASC have continued to use the London Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and Local Government Association (LGA) guidance on preparing for CQC Assessment to make progress on developing our self-assessment. We have embedded the learning from phase one of this work into phase two where we have undertaken a series of reflective discussions and planning to further validate the identified areas of focus from phase one. This includes for example, building our evidence base for co-production in decision making with ASC and demonstrating people are in control of their care arrangements, use of data to understanding the needs of and promote engagement with seldom heard groups, and improving arrangements for supporting those who fund their own care and support. All areas of focus identified whilst developing our self-assessment will feature as areas of focus in our action plan.

- 2.3. Staff engagement is in place across the service with Heads of Service using team meetings to support understanding of the assessment framework and our preparations for inspection. CQC will commence their programme of full assessments of 153 Councils ASC services from December 2023, and we continue to plan for this when it arrives for Camden. This includes a communication and engagement plan for staff and partners, which is being supported by our Corporate Communications Team.

- 2.4. The self-assessment phase of our preparation is on track to be complete early in 2024.

2.5. Shared Lives proposal for Carer Council Tax Exemption

- 2.6. Shared Lives Camden are proposing that Shared Lives carers are made exempt from council tax, in a proposal being brought to Full Council in early 2024. This request is for both in-borough and out-of-borough carers and

would bring the Shared Lives offer in line with the Camden foster carers offer of exemption. Camden requires more Shared Lives carers to meet the needs of Camden's residents who would benefit from drawing on this family-based support. Our pool of available carers is currently limited which impacts on how well placements can be matched to the needs of our residents.

2.7. Shared Lives schemes in London and nationally are also seeking this exemption, which has positively impacted their recruitment and retention of carers. It is hoped that the exemption will enable outcomes that include:

- **Scheme growth.** Council tax exemption will encourage more carers to apply and add to our experienced pool and placement offer.
- **Alignment with other local authorities.** Carers are aware of other local authority offers because they are connected to the Shared Lives plus national network. Carers are questioning why if other boroughs offer council tax exemption why Camden do not.
- **Retention of carers.** Schemes nationally are increasingly seeking funding for council tax exemption payments for their out-of-borough carers, and carers are likely to be tempted to leave and join other schemes if the offer is stronger elsewhere.
- **Income maximisation.** We offer a competitive income in Camden; however, Shared Lives carers are paid significantly less than foster carers and the role is similar in many ways.
- **Smooth transition for residents.** Shared Lives carers often continue to support people they have been fostering into adulthood under a Shared Lives arrangement. As previous foster carers they will have had the exemption, but if they transition to Shared Lives will have the exemption removed.
- **Stability of the placement.** Residents drawing on support through Shared Lives will not have to move out if their carer needs to identify a more viable income once the fostering package ends at 18.
- **Cost avoidance.** If foster carers are ending placements at 18 and an alternative Shared Lives placement cannot be found, the person drawing on care is likely to draw on a more expensive placement.

2.8. **ASC Winter Preparedness**

2.9. *Hospital Discharge, Operations and Commissioning*

2.10. The Adult Social Care (ASC) hospital teams are fully staffed, and the department continues to work closely with health partners to ensure safe discharge. Commissioning officers are working with care providers and colleagues in ASC as well as health partners to ensure plans are in place for the winter period including capacity and contingency planning. Admission avoidance and early discharge are key focuses across the system, supported by the collaborative working on virtual wards and the urgent response service

(previously rapid response) between health and social care. There is a shortage of Pathway 2 beds across NCL, which is being addressed by health systems.

- 2.11. Reablement is an essential aspect of discharge and winter preparedness across the health and care system, reducing the need for our residents to draw on longer-term care and support. There are three core providers of reablement operating in designated areas across Camden, alongside a small group of spot providers to support any unanticipated winter pressures that may arise. ASC utilises Henderson Court to offer live-in reablement for up to 6 weeks where residents are unable to return directly to their main place of residence upon discharge. We are enhancing the reablement approach in two local care homes. The two homes, Wellesley Road and Maitland Park, will recruit specific reablement workers who will embed a reablement approach within the care home. This will ensure that residents, especially those with short-term placements, are offered support to maximise independence and wherever possible return to their own home.
- 2.12. There are increasing pressures on capacity in both nursing and residential homes, with Camden's block beds already at capacity. To mitigate these market issues, we are negotiating with a provider to arrange short stay/interim placements, ensuring that safe and effective hospital discharge and community admissions can continue.
- 2.13. *Camden Integrated Learning Disability Service (CLDS)*
- 2.14. The most effective way for people with learning disabilities to stay well during the winter season is to ensure that they, their family members and their support workers are vaccinated against flu and Covid. Currently, the uptake of vaccines from people with learning disabilities in London is the lowest in England, and the ICB are raising this with the local GP practices who are responsible for delivering the vaccination programme. As per previous vaccination programmes, CLDS Nurses offer additional support to GPs to enable them to offer vaccines to 50 people with the most complex needs who would not be able to be vaccinated, even with 'reasonable adjustments' from their GP. A low vaccination uptake could lead to an increase in hospital admissions as well as both paid and unpaid carers being unable to support due to their own ill-health.
- 2.15. CLDS anticipate an increase in financial hardship, particularly for people who pay their utilities via a key meter, so we are working via Planning Together, our Provider Forum and the Carers Centre, to ensure people are able to access hardship support when they need it.
- 2.16. We anticipate increased difficulty in sourcing new floating/community support packages due both to the imminent closure of the Camden Society and the general problems in recruiting support workers across the sector. Commissioners will explore if neighbourhood care providers can offer this support.

2.17. *Camden and Islington (C&I) Mental Health (MH)*

- 2.18. The main challenge facing C&I over the next few months is the spread of flu and Covid. The NHS Trust has started a campaign for flu and Covid vaccines for staff and residents. There are designated clinics where staff can access vaccinations and more clinics being set up locally within various MH facilities, with some clinics offering vaccines to residents as well. In addition to these increased locations for vaccination, staff will actively encourage and support residents to obtain their vaccines.
- 2.19. The availability of MH beds, as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation by people experiencing MH issues, are also significant concerns. Through the winter season, there will be close monitoring of bed occupancy and capacity across the health and care system. Regular meetings are also taking place to monitor the situation for MH patients across all A&Es within NCL. The Trust are focussed on avoiding A&Es as a first line place for people to attend. The Trust use the Mental Health Crisis Access Service (MHCAS) where possible and supported by the Health Based Place of Safety (HBPoS). In order to create/increase capacity where needed, there will be a focus on discharges and in particular, Clinically Ready for Discharge patients. The Trust now report on these daily across NCL and they are monitored in Bed Management, Multi-Agency Discharge Event (MADE) and Super MADE meetings. As always at this time of year the Trust will look at who can be discharged or sent on leave at Christmas, and will spend the next few weeks preparing for the longer bank holiday weekends. In addition, over the Christmas period the Trust will focus on ensuring there is plenty of assessment capacity in the Crisis Teams to assess people in the A&Es as required.
- 2.20. In recognition of continued concerns about loneliness and its impact on MH, there will be a crisis centre open during the Christmas holiday period called Crisis At Christmas that provides shelter and food to homeless people during Christmas. Some staff members from the Trust join and support the work voluntarily. This is in addition to the crisis and residential services that will run 24/7 over the festive periods. This is in addition to the services available year round, such as the crisis team, MHCAS and HBPoS.

3. Health and Wellbeing Department updates

3.1. Winter Preparedness

- 3.2. **Covid-19:** There are numerous different Covid-19 sub-variants currently in circulation in England. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency) monitor variants and there have not been any reported changes in disease severity to date. Covid-19 activity continues to decrease nationally including the percentage of people who tested positive and hospital admissions.

- 3.3. **Influenza:** National hospital admission rates for influenza remain low and the intensive care unit and high-dependency unit rate for influenza also remains low nationally.
- 3.4. The UKHSA detected a single human case of influenza A(H1N2)v in North Yorkshire. This is the first detection of this strain of flu in a human in the UK but there has been a total of 50 human cases of influenza A(H1N2)v reported globally since 2005; none of them linked genetically to this strain. The strain that was isolated from a sample taken in a GP practice is similar to flu viruses that are circulating in pigs in the UK but transmission from pigs to humans is rare. The source of infection is being investigated and the case who only experienced mild respiratory illness has recovered, and the situation is being monitored by UKHSA. UKHSA detects human case of influenza A(H1N2)v - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- 3.5. **Winter vaccinations:** The winter vaccination programme is underway for Covid-19 seasonal booster and annual flu vaccines. Groups eligible on the NHS are similar for both vaccines, such as adults over 65 years, care home residents, frontline health and social care workers, and those in clinical risk groups. Additionally, children are eligible for the flu vaccine. For adults over the age of 65, a total of 15,232 in this eligible group in Camden (51%) had already received their Covid booster vaccine as of 23rd November.
- 3.6. Information on how to get your flu or covid vaccine can be found on the Camden Council website by clicking on the following [link](#)¹, including through walk-ins and the Camden Vaccine Bus which has restarted this year. The national 'Get Winter Strong' campaign to promote the vaccines is underway and this has been promoted in local communications to residents and key risk groups, such as adult social care staff. As with last year, there is an additional flu vaccine offer to Council Staff for those not in eligible groups: 204 vouchers have been issued so far to council staff (55 to school staff) on request and 12 vouchers are still available. This allows council staff to access free flu vaccination at Boots chemist using a voucher.
- 3.7. **Cold weather** resources and guidelines have been produced by UKHSA and include cold weather and health: guidance and advice, action cards, advice on keeping warm and well and a communications toolkit. These resources have been shared with Adult Social Care Colleagues and our communications team have prepared local communications for when weather health alerts are received from UKHSA. We continue to offer "Warm Welcome" spaces across Camden, and these are available in libraries, children's centres and other community buildings in the borough. The location of Warm Spaces can be viewed in the [map on this link](#)².
- 3.8. There are plans to offer emergency accommodation to people sleeping rough to preserve life during severe weather. The primary offer will be self-contained accommodation in the borough supported with shared sleeping sites when

¹ <https://www.camden.gov.uk/covid-19-and-flu-vaccinations>

² <https://ssa.camden.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=%2FMapProjects%2FWarmSpacesMap>

single occupancy beds are not available. Camden and Westminster have joined forces to open a shared sleeping site for 50 people at Connection at St Martin's and Camden Public Health Team have provided health protection advice for the Sever Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) Hub risk assessment.

3.9. Voluntary and Community Sector health days and events

3.10. Local organisations have been keen to work with the Council in setting up health and wellbeing awareness events that enable deeper reach into communities on issues that matter for our residents. There have been a number of successful events which are either promoted directly to appeal to specific communities (such as the popular Somali Youth Development Resource Centre health events for Somali communities, with clinician support to help identify undiagnosed long term conditions and to encourage general practice registrations) or are promoted more broadly for everyone wishing to attend a local community centre (such as the Queens Crescent Community Fundays run by Queens Crescent Community Association, attended by the Health Bus and other organisations).

3.11. We are keen to support community organisations looking to infuse health and wellbeing into their community events, especially where there are specific needs that can be addressed well through these events. Clear promotion of these events needs to be well targeted to help meet these needs and ensure good footfall. We have a range of options to support these events, including attendance by health improvement services, the Health Bus, clinicians, and resources/information.

3.12. Community Connectedness and Friendships

3.13. The Community Connectedness and Friendships Working Group continue to bring together partners to collectively work to promote community connections to reduce social isolation and loneliness, a key driver of poor health outcomes. An update on progress against the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-30 priority on community connectedness and friendships will be presented at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 20th December. Here, partners from the voluntary and community sector will showcase the valuable work they are doing in communities to reduce loneliness and therefore build resilience and improve health outcomes for residents. Plans for a communications campaign to raise awareness and reduce stigma around loneliness and social isolation will also be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Upcoming Community Connectedness and Friendships Working Group meetings will focus on progressing actions within the group's three priorities;

- Improve identification and engagement of people who are chronically lonely and isolated.
- Undertaking a borough wide communications campaign to increase awareness and reduce stigma.

- Explore service area specific opportunities to help reduce social isolation and loneliness.

An update on Community Connectedness and Friendships is scheduled to be presented at HASC's meeting in January 2024.

3.14. **Healthy Weight Action Plan**

3.15. We are in a health and wellbeing crisis linked to population levels of overweight and obesity that keeps intensifying. This crisis has major and sustained impact on residents, communities, health & care services, workplaces, and the economy. Reducing and reversing this impact requires concerted and ongoing local/national action on a range of factors, drawing together the collective action of a broad range of organisations/sectors.

3.16. Camden is committed to drawing on all available resources and levers to support residents to have and maintain a healthy weight. This will include enhancing the local environment to support healthy behaviours, and continuing to address the wider determinants of health, including poverty experienced across our communities. Clinical and senior leads support both the need for a plan and the benefit of coming together to work across organisation and portfolio boundaries on addressing this vital issue. Local Action will focus on

- **Early years** – further progressing support for families to enable infants and young children to maintain a healthy weight.
- **School years** - working through Camden's family of schools & with parents to take forward the principles of the healthy schools programme.
- **Adult years** – supporting people motivated to move towards a healthier weight, often at key stages or events in life, ensuring strong links between frontline services and effective healthy weight support.

REPORT ENDS