

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

Health and Adult Social Care Committee 11th February 2025

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. Waiting Lists

- 2.2. Progress in reducing the number of people waiting for adult social care services can be seen across teams, however there have been some increases in waiting times for support over the last quarter, in part due to the pressure of reduced staffing capacity during the Christmas period.
- 2.3. Neighbourhood teams are typically dealing with particularly high levels of demand at this time of year, and this is coupled with several vacancies in frontline roles such as Social Work and Occupational Therapy.
- 2.4. Safeguarding work continues to take priority, and we continue to have very low waits for this work.
- 2.5. There has been seen a slight increase in the number of people who are waiting for Occupational Therapy assessments in January 2025 after four consecutive months of reductions. This will be mostly due to seasonal demand and reduced staffing capacity
- 2.6. There has been record levels of activity in completing carer assessments and reviews – with more completed in the first three quarters of 2024/25 (802) than the whole of 23/24 (769). However, the challenges of keeping up with demand continues particularly for those carers who are waiting for a review of their services.

2.7. Safeguarding

- 2.8. There is nothing of note to report since the update that was included in the Cabinet Member update provided to the Committee on 7th January 2025.

2.9. ASC CQC (Care Quality Commission) Assessment

- 2.10. CQC's onsite visit in Camden took place from the 18 to 20 November. A final meeting was held with the Executive Director for Adults and Health, Director of ASC Operations and Director of Strategy and Commissioning on the 3rd December 2024, where some initial feedback was shared by inspectors. At the time of this meeting inspectors were

still in the process of collating, analysing and corroborating evidence. A summary of this initial feedback is set out below:

- Staff gave good accounts of What Matters and the Neighbourhoods and noted that there is a strong story to tell around our assessment approach.
- Staff are informed about and learn from safeguarding investigations
- Work is taking place in regard to carers and autism and staff are supported
- There was good awareness of where we had waiting lists and noted improvements and actions taken to address this.
- Partners and stakeholders were positive about new initiatives and our work with communities around equalities.
- A mixed picture was noted by our Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) and short and long term data.
- Inspectors noted that there are no issues sourcing care services and that the neighbourhood homecare contracts provide stability and the opportunity to build strong relationships
- Examples of co-production and power sharing were noted.
- Inspectors heard positive accounts of our culture of feedback and valuing staff.

2.11. The report of their inspection is currently being drafted and is intended to be shared with us in February, at which time we will also receive a single word rating. We will then have 10 working days to review the report and raise any factual inaccuracies with inspectors.

2.12. **Autism Partnership Board**

2.13. The Autism Partnership Board was set up in 2017 with the aim of improving outcomes for people with autism and to identify and oversee delivery of local priorities. From March 2024, the Board was co-chaired by an autistic resident, Sanjay, Chris Lehmann (Director of ASC Strategy and Commissioning) and Becca Dove (Head of Children and Learning Strategy). The Board brought together residents with lived experience, partners and council officers. The Board has heard from a range of speakers across the partnership and work has included developing a new all-age Autism Strategy through co-production to develop local priorities, a survey with the National Autistic Society to get qualitative insight from Autistic residents, developed a race equality action plan through work with the Race Equality Foundation. The Board also heard a range of updates from across services and the partnership around ongoing work to support autistic residents.

2.14. In December 2024, a decision was taken by Jess McGregor, Executive Director of Adults and Health, and Tim Aldridge, Executive Director of Children and Learning, to stop the Autism Partnership Board in its current form, to design a new governance structure for overseeing the Autism Strategy. The groups associated with the Board will continue. The new governance structure will mean a new Board and new sub-groups. Work is ongoing to create this new governance structure, and to publish a new Camden all-age Autism Strategy in 2025. An update will be shared with Board members in January and February, and we aim to start the new Board and subgroups in April 2025.

2.15. **Care homes**

- 2.16. Commissioners are currently focusing on the re-procurement of Nursing Block Contracts with the current arrangements at Ash Court and Lansdowne due to come to an end in July this year. Good progress is being made and it is anticipated that approval will be sought for new arrangements in Spring. Planning for the care and nursing home 2025-26 inflationary uplift process is also well underway as part of the Joint Market Management Strategy across North Central London. This will provide an opportunity to ensure placements remain sustainable against a challenging financial backdrop for the sector.
- 2.17. Quality Assurance site visits have been taking place throughout January, with Commissioners continuing to carry out site visits for block contract homes on a quarterly basis and spot providers in Camden bi-annually. Care home admissions have so far been slightly lower than expected during autumn and winter but this will provide access to sufficient capacity in borough as we approach the peak “winter pressure” season.
- 2.18. Partnership working between Providers and Health Professionals has improved significantly during 2024-25. This is a result of regular clinician drop-in sessions at the monthly Care Home Managers’ Call and a series of roadshows hosted by Royal Free Hospital and UCLH Teams.
- 2.19. In addition:
- There has been an increase in volunteering and befriending opportunities in Care Homes
 - Care Home residents have benefited from grant funding for transport to increase access to their local community
 - All Care Homes now have a link Social Worker to support with regular Care Plan Audits
 - Adult Social Care colleagues have delivered training on site to increase confidence around Safeguarding reporting
- 2.20. A range of initiatives are planned for the remainder of 2024/25 and beyond, including the implementation of a joint project with Rethink Advocacy to ensure that the resident voice is central to regular Quality Assurance processes going forward.
- 2.21. **‘Planning Together’ for people with learning disabilities and their carers**
- 2.22. In July 2024, Planning Together asked people with learning disabilities, family carers, and service providers to feedback on what is working well in Camden, what the main challenges are, and what they would change if they could.
- 2.23. Planning Together is Camden’s quarterly Learning Disability Partnership Board, bringing together key stakeholders to coproduce and oversee plans to improve the support for people with learning disabilities and their families. Attendees at Planning Together include people with learning disabilities, family carers, Camden Learning Disability Service (CLDS) managers, commissioning, key service providers and local councillors.

- 2.24. Themes from the discussion included increasing accessibility of universal services in the public realm (such as transport), quality housing for people with learning disabilities and more flexible support to do the things people value and need. Feedback has been cross-referenced with interconnected strategies and action plans, for example the Carers Action Plan, to establish any actions that have already been undertaken or are planned. Where necessary, officers will take forwards new actions and look to influence wider partners and regional/national policy. An update on progress will return to a future Planning Together meeting.

3. Health and Wellbeing (Public Health)

3.1. Expansion of the Community Champion Programme

- 3.2. The Community Champions were launched in three clusters of estates in Kentish Town, Kilburn and Regents Park in 2020. The programme builds on the strengths, skills and knowledge of local communities, by recruiting residents to work together to improve health and wellbeing, tackle inequalities and address local issues of concern.
- 3.3. The model involves a VCS organisation with a presence in the area employing a community champions co-ordinator. The co-ordinator recruits volunteer community champions who, supported by the co-ordinator, take a localised approach based on resident-led neighbourhood priorities to support improved health and wellbeing.
- 3.4. An external evaluation found the model to be successful in enabling the personal development and empowerment of participants, encouraging people to voice and advocate for their needs, encourage the learning of a diverse set of skills among its residents, cultivating community networks in areas where they are weak, and enabling a range of health improvement activities such as healthy eating (community kitchens, nutrition workshops and diabetes awareness workshops.), fitness classes and both men and women's football, and reduced social isolation. Building on this success, the programme is being expanded from April 2025 to develop further in each of the five neighbourhoods, for a further three years.

"I didn't think I would enjoy being a community champion as much as I have done. Until I joined the group, I didn't know many of my neighbours although I have lived in the estate for 13 years. Now I know so many more people and feel much safer." (Regents Park Community Champion)

3.5. Community Connectedness Communication Campaign

- 3.6. The Council's new *Camden, together* campaign, co-designed with Voluntary Action Camden, is the first step in a longer-term communications strategy to reduce loneliness and improve community connectedness. The initial phase launched in December and runs until the end of February. The campaign has two strands, with the first addressing the stigma of loneliness head on and signposting residents and people who want to help to support if needed, and the second signposting to ways to connect with people in their community.

3.7. The campaign has been rolled out across council channels including print (bus shelters, Camden magazine, Housing News, posters for libraries, leisure centres, family hubs and sheltered housing) and digital (enewsletters and social media), as well as internally to raise awareness amongst staff. The campaign is performing well so far and is receiving positive initial feedback and interest from a range of partners, who have been sent digital packs and posters (including VCS organisations, pharmacies, GPs, primary care organisations and schools), as well as coverage in the Camden New Journal in December.

4. Other portfolio updates

5. Developing a new model of Mental Health Social Work in Camden

5.1. The current delivery of Adult Social Care in Mental Health services is governed under a long standing agreement between the London Borough of Camden (LBC) and the North London Foundation Trust (NLFT) whereby social care staff employed by the Council are seconded into the Trust to deliver our statutory duties.

5.2. In 2023 a review of these arrangements identified opportunities for improvement relating to safeguarding practice, application of statutory duties (i.e. Care Act 2014), and access to social care support for residents with mental health needs.

5.3. In November 2024, a formal staff consultation for proposed changes to the delivery of Adult Social Care within Mental Health Services was launched, with proposals to create a new model for Mental Health Social Work which:

- Works in partnership with the Trust to retain the strength and benefits of a multi-disciplinary approach to Mental Health care,
- Further strengthens models of integrated neighbourhood working,
- Provides assurance on the delivery of the Council's statutory duties, and
- Embeds '*What Matters*' strengths-based practice within Mental Health Social Work.

5.4. Proposals included:

- For all Mental Health Social Work staff to report directly to the Council. Staff to exclusively work with residents who have care and support needs relating to their mental health regardless of whether they are known to specialist services
- To create a Mental Health Social Work Hub to receive, triage, and progress all new referrals into mental health social care and connect people into local services.
- To create 3 localised Mental Health Social Work Teams (MHSWTs) to work alongside the Trust's 3 Community Mental Health Services, Inpatient, Specialist and Crisis Teams. MHSWTs to become part of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) as they are established.

5.5. The staff consultation concluded on 13 January 2025, and efforts are now focused on reviewing all feedback and finalising the model and operational policies alongside Trust colleagues for implementation in Spring 2025.

REPORT ENDS