

Date:	20 October 2022
Portfolio:	Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector
The Report of:	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis
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- 1. No key decisions have been made in the period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated 12 September.**
- 2. The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date of the new administration.**

2.1. Launch of social care marketplace for residents

The pilot for our social care marketplace is ready to onboard service users. Officers are in the midst of mobilisation with a targeted promotion campaign being rolled out to assessment and care management staff and working with providers to onboard their services to the system.

Work is currently being undertaken with the Learning Disability team as a few user groups have been identified who are keen to use this to pool budgets for shared activities and the digital care account provides the perfect solution to facilitate this. Mental Health teams are next in line, so we can understand how their users might want to use this solution. Although there has been a slow uptake by residents, it is preferable that the right service users access the tech to robustly test its capabilities and ensure it is the right tool for them.

2.2. Whole system approach to addressing obesity

There are five key elements of work in this area:

- Place – making the healthy choice the easiest choice
- Living standards – addressing the social determinants of health
- Communities – understand and empower communities to find their own solutions
- Behaviour change – shifting awareness, skills and attitudes
- Services – effective and equitable.

Excellent progress is being made to bring about improvements to neighbourhoods in Church Street, Churchill Gardens and the Grosvenor estate to encourage more residents to get active.

A key focus for the coming months is to make an application to launch a superzone pilot around a school in the borough. A superzone is an area-based initiative to create a healthier environment around the school, focusing on community safety, active travel, air quality, parks and leisure, licensing and food and drink amongst others. We have identified targeted schools as potential partners located in the 30% most deprived areas in Westminster and are in the process of engaging with the identified schools for the pilot.

Finally, in partnership with Westminster Employment team, there is now a good offer of support for residents to manage their money and maximise income/benefits. Training is being rolled out to front line workers to further extend the reach of this support.

2.3. JSNA on Health Inequalities

To ensure strategic alignment, and to maximise impact, a small cross council working group has been established to scope the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on health inequalities experienced by residents from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on health inequalities, and we have the health data which outlines local health inequalities. However there is a consensus we need to do more and work collectively to build local knowledge and inform our approach systematically and routinely.

Linking to the Fairer Communities commitments outlined in our new strategy, the JSNA will be instrumental in shaping how we understand our communities better. It will support the development of processes and pathways which will overcome the barriers experienced by these communities, as well as invest in primary prevention which addresses the wider determinant of health securing the commitment needed to respond to the drivers of inequalities.

While we develop the JSNA, our work to tackle equalities is ongoing working with our communities, to ensure reach and engagement on key priorities including obesity, immunisations and health checks.

2.4. COVID-19 and Flu

The flu vaccine helps protect against the main type of flu virus and is given in the autumn before flu starts circulating. Typically flu circulating in Australia during our summer months gives a strong indication of what our flu season will look like. The flu season that Australia experienced this year came two months early than usual and with higher numbers of cases than their five year average. Children and adults aged under 20 were particularly impacted.

As well as the flu vaccination, an autumn COVID-19 booster vaccination is being offered to protect those at highest risk this autumn/winter. Both viruses could add to the winter pressures faced by the NHS, particularly if infection waves from both viruses coincide.

Public Health is working closely with Communications and engagement colleagues to deliver a campaign this autumn/winter. This will amplify NHS materials, messaging and resources across the borough utilising Community Champions and our local community and faith groups. The ongoing Health Equalities Programme is embedding initiatives to promote COVID-19 and flu vaccines in their engagement with VCS, leisure services, libraries and family hubs.

2.5. Monkeypox

Monkeypox is a rare infectious disease, usually associated with travel to west and central Africa. Since May 2022 there has been an unusual number of cases increasing within the UK. However, the overall risk to the UK population remains low. Vaccination against smallpox can be used for both pre- and post-exposure prevention and it is up to 85% effective in preventing monkeypox. Anyone can get monkeypox, but currently most cases are in men who are gay, bisexual or who have sex with men (GBMSM). The infection is usually mild and self-limiting, but a person remains infectious to others until their lesions are fully healed. Most people will not require treatment.

Up to 16 September 2022 there were 3,585 confirmed monkeypox cases in the UK. 98.7% were men. So far Westminster has had cases which is the fourth highest in London. The number of cases being identified continues to fall.

Our sexual health services, which are highly respected across London, have been under severe pressure with the demands of the monkeypox outbreak and the stress it is putting on their ability to maintain their normal sexual health service offer. Strategies to support services that have been put in place include a short-term increase in resource to help with vaccination capacity.

Nationally, there was a supply shortage of the smallpox vaccine over the summer as international production catches up with new demand. The approval of intradermal vaccination with a fractional dose now means that one original dose can be divided amongst approximately 4 individuals. The priority for the vaccination programme to date has been to offer a first vaccination to all those at highest risk within the GBMSM community as well as health care workers at high risk of exposure. The UKHSA have now announced that whilst sexual health clinics will continue to prioritise offering first doses to those at highest risk, some clinics will also begin to offer eligible people a second dose 2-3 months after their first dose to provide longer term protection. In the light of national advice there are no current plans to widen the offer of vaccination beyond the existing priority cohorts, though this decision will be kept under review.

2.6. Childhood Immunisation

Increasing the uptake of childhood vaccinations continues to be a priority, particularly given the concerns about polio transmission in London. The Local Authority is not responsible for delivery of childhood immunisations, but we take our oversight responsibility seriously. We convene an Immunisations Partnership Board which meets quarterly and brings partners across the system together to work together with a common aim of driving up uptake of immunisations in Westminster. As a result of the work of the Immunisations Board, Public Health secured a Quality Improvement Grant from NHS England to carry out focussed work to explore whether the delivery of childhood immunisations in alternative settings can increase uptake.

Central London Healthcare (GP Federation) have been commissioned to deliver the pilot. Vaccination and engagement sessions will be held at Children's centres/Family Hubs and nurseries and will also align closely with Health Visitor sessions where possible. Catch up vaccination and engagement sessions will be held at nurseries, pre-schools and primary schools. Where there is still evidence of incomplete vaccinations, children will be invited to attend a session at a convenient community location where there will be an opportunity have discussion and questions answered in addition to vaccinations.

The clinics are being designed to appeal to families as they are in locations which are trusted places where target families are already likely to visit. In addition, efforts are being taken to talk

to the communities we wish to reach to understand what changes would make the vaccination environment more inviting.

2.7. Polio

Following the identification of polio virus in North London sewage samples the NHS has launched a polio vaccine programme for children aged 1-9. Children who have no previous or incomplete vaccination history will be offered their routine polio vaccine and children who have completed their pre-school immunisations and have not been recently vaccinated, will be offered an additional vaccine to increase protection against the polio virus.

Children in Central and West London are being invited to GPs and extended hours services. Central London is also offering pop up vaccination clinics in community settings for those aged 1-9yrs (invitation is via text from GP) and polio vaccination is also available at NWL mass sites in Ealing, Brent and Hammersmith and Fulham for 5-9yr olds.

<http://www.nwlondonics.nhs.uk/polio>.

Work is continuing to develop more local vaccination offers. We are continuing to promote the updates and offer with families, parents and schools through our comms and engagement channels.

Sewage sampling has been stepped-up across London with plans to sample several other sites across England. No patients in the UK have been diagnosed with polio to date. The risks to the general population are still assessed as low.

2.8. Cold Weather Plans

Public Health is involved in the contingency planning for hot and cold weather preparedness via the Borough Resilience Forum. When severe weather is forecast the Bi-borough Emergency Planning Manager sends out an alert and advice for Social Care and Housing Managers, Staff and Service Users in line with the England Cold Weather Plan and action cards. In addition, external comms is triggered by to send out messages in accordance with the alert level to residents via normal comms routes.

Housing has their own severe weather emergency plan (SWEP) which is an emergency response for rough sleepers to preserve their safety and wellbeing during severe weather conditions. It is activated by the GLA if the forecast is below 0°C in London and involves the provision of additional bed spaces and identification of the vulnerable.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocols will operate as usual in support of rough sleepers this winter. Attention is also being directed to proactive outreach to vulnerable residents with review of learning from welfare calls that were conducted during extreme weather this summer.

The “Staying Well this Winter” campaign, led by the NHS with Local Authority support, is planned to include keeping warm messaging as usual with particular attention to cost of living advice. Making Every Contact Count briefings are being planned for diverse staff groups in contact with residents to ensure information/advice and signposting.

To further support residents through the energy crisis, Public Health has funded increased Green Doctors provision, and is pursuing opportunities for the Green Doctors to reach out to more residents through outreach with information on the energy price cap and energy efficiency advice in homes.

2.9. Integrated Care System Update

The North West London Integrated Care Boards have now been formally adopted as per the legislative timetable and Place (or Borough) Based Partnerships are now operating with new governance structures in place. Amendments to the NWL ICB have been requested and accepted to support wider local authority engagement that requires NHS England approval in the coming weeks.

We have positioned the joint Health and Well Being Board as the main body overseeing delivery of the joint Health and Well Being Strategy, and delivery of our priorities at Place whilst also moving the meetings out into the community to ensure any public service changes really respond and recognise the needs of local people, facilitating more active engagement and attendance.

Following an extensive engagement programme over the summer months we are now drafting the health and wellbeing strategy with the aim of having a consultative document ready for formal consultation in November. This will also be key to influencing NWL Integrated Care System strategy.

A recent Government announcement by the Secretary of State in September includes an Adult Social Care Discharge Fund of £500m to support discharge planning in the winter months this year. This investment will be critical to manage social care financial pressures to ensure capacity in the social care market and the continued investment and design work to improve patient pathways.

Heading into winter, there remains concerns about the increased demand on services and system partners are in the process of planning to manage this demand. We are concerned that the lack of confirmed additional funding through NWL Integrated Care Board (ICB) for winter means there is limited scope to finalise the plans and put them in place with sufficient lead in time. Our focus however will be on the following:

- Discharge planning and implementation with social workers having greater role in discharge planning on wards
- Strengthening of NHS Home First and LA Reablement
- Ensuring there is block capacity for interim residential care
- Ensuring homecare providers are able to respond to increased demand.

3. Voluntary Sector

3.1 Food and Fuel Poverty Network

The network has met with foodbanks, community pantries, and advice services monthly to hear directly about changes in demand, share approaches, identify gaps and support referrals. The data from the network has been used to shape the Cost of Living Strategy. Funding has been agreed for Mary's Pantry in Pimlico, and new community pantries in Harrow Road at Emmanuel Church and in Church Street at HAFS Academy, along with additional funding for North

Paddington Foodbank, the Abbey Centre pantry and Westbourne Pantry - £130,000 additional funding to support those in food poverty.

3.2 Community Investment Review and Strategy

A review of voluntary sector funding has been conducted across the Council, collating all contracts and grants to the voluntary sector, £33 million in contracts and £3 million in grants. Engagement has been undertaken with the sector on what is working and what needs improving, and a strategy is under development which will look at simplifying funding streams for grants. Work is underway on clarifying the VCS rent policy, maintenance work, and asset transfer policy; standardising contract and grant procedures to include core funding and a consistent council approach; identifying ways to bring in more funding for the VCS.

3.3 Westminster Connects

Working more closely with the Volunteer team at One Westminster, regular volunteer opportunities are sent out once a fortnight to recruit volunteers for all the voluntary sector. The volunteer opportunities run by the council to support vulnerable residents, including shopping, walking companions and dog walking and fostering have increased with a gardening service. A home care volunteer service is being developed with Adult Social Care to help vulnerable residents with 'life admin' and to make a light meal for them. Westminster Connects will be reviewing what it can do to provide more support with the Cost of Living Crisis. A new platform is under development to make it easier for volunteers and community organisations to advertise opportunities, and a review of Westminster Connects will run over the autumn.

A new agreement is in place with the police to support more event marshal volunteering. Additional training will be on offer to volunteers around safeguarding and care, as volunteers are supporting a range of vulnerable people and need to be clear about policies, procedures and support in each case.

3.4 Community Contribution Fund

Funding of £400,000 was awarded in May to 26 community projects supporting young people, reducing isolation or providing support around homelessness. A living impact report is being developed of short films of people who have benefited from the projects, as well as of the community organisations who run them. Over the next 6 months we will have a project manager from the Civil Service fast stream working on ways to increase the income to the Community Contribution Fund.

A new marketing strategy will be developed and shared with trustees by end of November and an online impact report with films of projects and the beneficiaries will be ready by the end of November to demonstrate the impact of the fund. A second round of funding letters will be sent out to band G and Band H households in October.

3.5 VCS Contracts

New contracts began in July with Healthwatch, run by the Advocacy Project, and with One Westminster for Infrastructure Support and Volunteer Development. Additional funding was awarded to have 4 more case workers at CAB due to the increase in demand because of the Cost

of Living crisis. A review has begun on Westminster advice services to inform what is needed in terms of advice services for the next 5 years. The new services will be co-designed with advice services.

Advice services are reporting increased pressure from the cost of living challenges people are facing, and are reporting significant lack of immigration case work support. There is a review of advice services which has begun to prepare for a new Westminster Advice Service partnership contract from September 2023.

The new Healthwatch contract have maintained the same members as the old contract, and are building a priority list of activities with the members for the year.

Advice service, One Westminster and Healthwatch contracts are all on target for the year.

The Abbey Centre contract will be renegotiated for the next five years for a new contract to start in April 2023.