

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP
3 NOVEMBER 2020
(5.00 pm - 6.00 pm)

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen Alambritis (in the Chair), Rob Clarke, Mark Creelman, Abi Fafolu, Dr Vasa Gnanapragam, Councillor Rebecca Lanning, Martin Miranda, Councillor Oonagh Moulton, Kalu Obuka, Dr Mohan Sekeram Councillor Eleanor Stringer and Dr Dagmar Zeuner

IN ATTENDANCE: Barry Causer (Public Health Commissioning Manager), Louise Fleming (Democracy Services Manager), Farzana Karamat-Mughal (Democratic Services Officer) and Clarissa Larsen (Health and Wellbeing Board Partnership Manager)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

An apology for absence was received from Dave Curtis (Healthwatch Merton).

2 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October, 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4 COVID-19 UPDATE - VERBAL PRESENTATION (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Public Health provided a presentation and an update in respect of Covid-19 in Merton, outlining the latest weekly Situational Awareness Report which was circulated to all Sub- Group Members.

She reported that the very steep increase in infections that had been experiencing appeared to be levelling off slightly, but that there was an increase among the over 60s which was a concern. Testing capacity had improved and there was a new walk-in testing site, though turnaround time of tests was still an issue.

Infection levels across London varied significantly and it was reported that currently Hammersmith had reached over 200 infections per hundred thousand over the seven day period, representing very high sustained community transmission.

Members had been made aware of the Government's announcement of a second national lockdown for England from the 5th November to 2nd December, 2020 and the new restrictions were outlined.

Following the presentation Members' discussed a number of points in detail:

- in regard to transmission within schools, it was suggested that the majority of outbreaks involved staff, and that this was mirrored in other work places, including care homes;
- it was considered that the harm of not having children in school potentially outweighs the harm of infection; it was also recognised that schools and head teachers had been excellent in responding to guidance and carrying out necessary risk assessments;
- it was asked whether any breakdown of data on the impact on Merton's BAME population was available and the Director of Public Health stated that she would investigate and add this to the next update if possible;
- it was emphasised that everyone had a duty of care in following guidelines; keeping their distance and wearing face masks in order to reduce the spread of infection.

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for the presentation and the continued weekly Covid-19 Situational Awareness Report.

5 ENGAGEMENT AND INSIGHT WORK WITH COMMUNITIES (Agenda Item 5)

The Head of Strategic Commissioning of Public Health, LBM, and the Head of Patient and Public Involvement and Equalities, SWL CCG, provided an overview of the engagement and insight work with communities, specifically:

- the impact Covid-19 was having on communities' mental health and well-being;
- the response of Adults Mental Health Services, Children's Mental Health Services, staff and volunteers.

Members were provided with an update on 'Thrive London' that had developed a number of activities to address immediate areas of concern. Further work included, creating wellbeing guidance in 27 languages; funding the Youth Mental Health First Aid programme (a digital version that supports young people education staff and parents); and the Suicide Prevention programme.

Engagement had been undertaken with local communities. A key message from this was that there were significant stresses on communities, as the impacts of pandemic on livelihoods created hardships, including loss of employment, education and financial pressures.

It was important to ensure that services had clear messaging and a mix of communication methods were being used to reach a wide range of people and build relationships, both formal and informal, with community leaders.

The Adult Mental Health Services in Merton commissioned by the CCG had opened up the Orchard Suite for mental health support and also provided a 24 hour support line for residents.

London's Digital Wellbeing Service was providing support for conditions including, anxiety low mood, sleeping difficulties and stress and a high level of people were accessing this.

Children and Young People's Mental Health Services initially saw a drop in referrals but had now returned to usual levels, with a particular increase of the number of referrals for eating disorders. Young people were also reporting concerns relating to bereavement, education and family - including worries about debt and employment of their parents.

Following the presentation Members' discussed a number of points in detail:

- There was a discussion about how to communicate most effectively with those communities that were harder to reach (and may struggle themselves to reach the service), and agreed that it was important we listen to local people and community leaders including, for example, faith leaders;
- The pandemic and lockdown had exacerbated isolation and highlights importance of connectivity which our Social Prescribing link workers, the Voluntary Hub and other voluntary and community organisations could help support. Specific anxieties of young people were discussed and the opportunity to recruit some younger Covid Champions to help share information with their peer group;
- These networks and this Subgroup could have a positive role in sharing accurate information and signposting, helping to tackle any misinformation that was circulating – having 'myth busting' conversations;
- There was acknowledgement that mental health and emotional wellbeing could be difficult issues for people to discuss. Covid Champions could help with this and had interpreters to support conversations. A small grants programme with Merton Giving was also now available that could support wider reach into communities.

6 LATEST COVID-19 - TRAINING AND COMMUNICATIONS OPPORTUNITIES (Agenda Item 6)

The Head of Strategic Commissioning for Public Health asked Members' what training or communication support they need to be able to help to identify and support vulnerable people during the lockdown and how partners can help:

- establish on-going dialogue with the community to better understand the lived experience, help prevent outbreaks and mitigate social and health harm;

- deliver pro-active communications e.g. videos of trusted local leaders and residents to support key messages; and
- increase the reach and effectiveness of the Community Champions.

Subgroup Members' agreed to consider this request and to let officers know of any needs or opportunities. To contact Clarissa Larsen clarissa.larsen@merton.gov.uk or Barry Causer, barry.causer@merton.gov.uk



South West London
Clinical Commissioning Group

MERTON HEALTH AND WELLBEING COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP



**The Impact of CoViD-19 on Mental Health
and Wellbeing – Insight and Action**

03 November 2020

Merton

MERTON ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES RESPONSE TO DEMAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Service Area/Care Group

MERTON ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACTIVITY

MERTON IAPT AND ACUTE INPATIENT ACTIVITY

Across all adult mental health services commissioned for the people of Merton, activity reports indicate there is no particular pattern of changes in activity caused by increased demand.

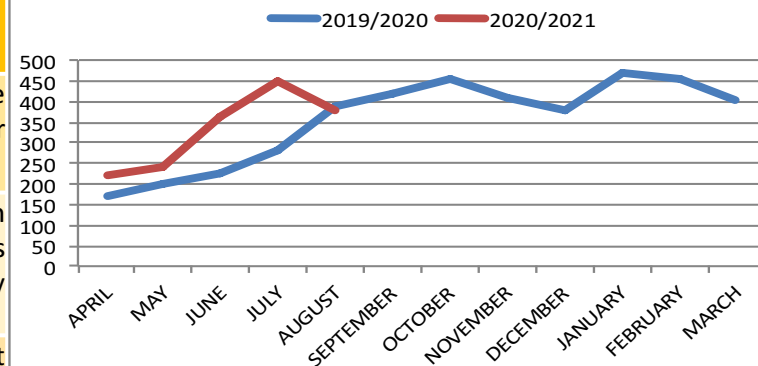
Some services, such as the Merton IAPT service, are reporting an increase in activity 2020/2021 compared with 2019/2020. This is in part because the service increased online therapy options very quickly as the national 'lockdown' was introduced.

Other services, including some inpatient services, and some urgent care services, have reported a reduced level of activity in the period April to August 2020/2021, compared with the same period of 2019/2020.

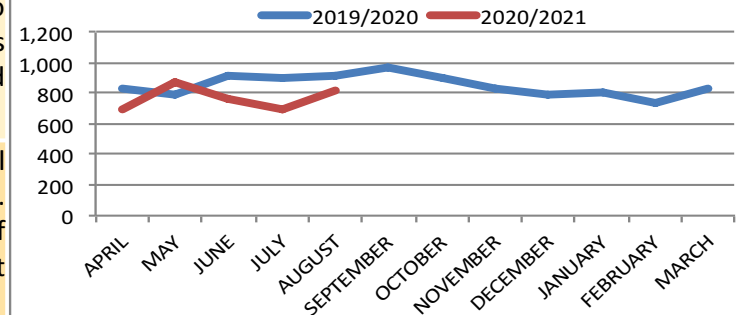
South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust also opened the Mental Health Emergency Service (MHES), known as the Orchid Suite, which operates from Springfield Hospital, and extended the Crisis Line to create the Mental Health Support Line.

Many more Merton residents are accessing the new Mental Health Support Line than accessed the old Crisis Telephone Line. It's possible the new emergency services are relieving the flow of patients into services like the psychiatric liaison service at St George's Hospital, or inpatient services at Springfield Hospital.

MERTON IAPT PATIENTS ENTERING TREATMENT PER MONTH, 2019/2020 COMPARED WITH 2020/2021



MERTON ADULT ACUTE INPATIENT ACTIVITY (OCCUPIED BED DAYS) 2019/2020 COMPARED WITH 2020/2021



MERTON ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES RESPONSE TO DEMAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Service Area/Care Group

MERTON ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACTIVITY

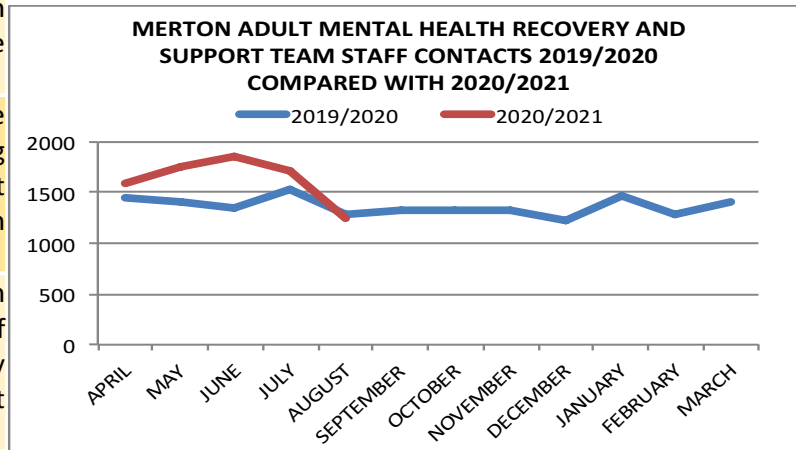
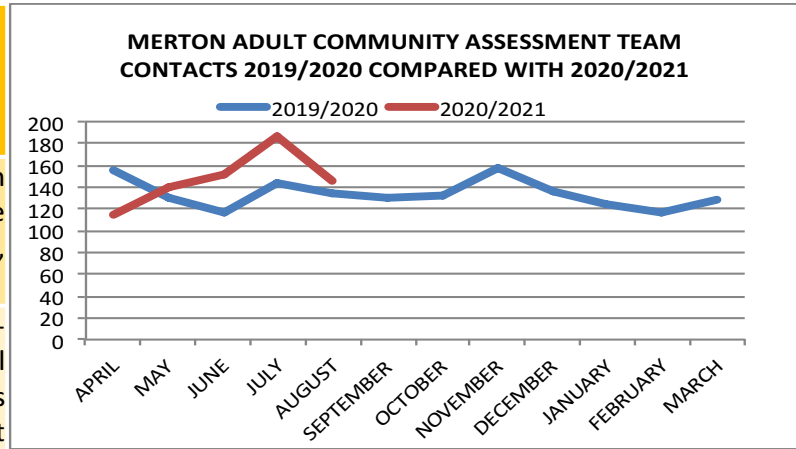
MERTON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Generally, community mental health services provided by South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust, are reporting higher levels of activity this year (April to August 2020), compared with the same period last year.

Recovery and Support Workers carried out client assessments for:- CoViD-19; welfare; and risk shortly after the initial national ‘lockdown’. Community staff have ‘zoned’, or categorised, clients on caseloads ‘red’, ‘amber’ or ‘green’; red indicating the highest level of need. Arrangements were made to maintain contact with clients according to their zone, some clients having planned face to face visits, etc.

The activity reports do not convey the extent to which the additional activity is in support of new people, or in providing support to known patients, although the Merton Assessment Team is reporting higher levels of activity this year compared with the same period (April to August 2019/2020).

The Trust has reported, anecdotally, that its services are seeing an increase in referrals that are urgent and of a high level of complexity. The routine data reported by the Trust do not fully convey the extent to which the challenge faced by Trust colleagues is growing.



MERTON ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES RESPONSE TO DEMAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Service Area/Care Group	MERTON ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
DISCUSSION	<p>South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust have reported increased levels of activity, and increased complexity, in the people approaching primary and secondary mental health services in Merton for assistance. Has this been your experience; are you happy that anyone who needs help is getting it?</p>
	<p>To date, there has been little analysis of the new services, such as the Mental Health Support Line, and the Orchid Suite. Also, services have changed the way they work in order to extend a supporting hand local residents in need – community mental health teams are making greater use of on line platforms and Merton IAPT has offered a greater number of treatments on line. Are these changes to the way services are working helpful and easy to engage?</p>
	<p>Is there anything about the ways in which mental health services are operating at this time that you would like to see changed?</p>
	<p>Is there anything about the ways in which mental health services are operating at the moment that you hope will continue, even after the nation returns to the way it worked before the national emergency?</p>