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HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND OLDER PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

14 MARCH 2022

(7.15 pm - 8.33 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Peter McCabe (in the Chair), Councillor Janice Howard, Councillor Nigel Benbow, Councillor Pauline Cowper, Councillor Mary Curtin, Councillor Helena Dollimore, Councillor Jenifer Gould and Di Griffin

Stella Akintan (Scrutiny Officer), Keith Burns, Head of Commissioning and Market Development, Mark Creelman Executive Director Merton and Wandsworth, SW London CCG and Dr Dagmar Zeuner (Director, Public Health)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Linda Kirby and Co-opted Member Saleem Sheikh

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

Councillor Dollimore declared she is a vaccinator with St John's Ambulance

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Dollimore expressed concern that the Panel had not been provided with the latest immunisations data. The Chair said the Panel cannot compel organisations to attend and he is disappointed that this information has not been provided. The Scrutiny officer said the report was slightly delayed due to pressures on resources caused by the impact of the pandemic. In the past NHS colleagues have always provided timely reports to this Panel.

4 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CARE HOMES IN MERTON (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Public Health gave an overview of the report.

A panel member said that the Department of Health praised Merton for their response to the pandemic. The Director of Public Health reported that a Government Minister had visited care homes in Merton and found that the council has established a close relationship with care homes during the pandemic.

A panel member asked about the source of funding for Temporary Alternative Discharge Destination Facilities. (TADD) . The Head of Commissioning and Market Development said Merton has two TADS which enabled the department to secure beds quite quickly.

A panel member extended congratulations to officers for their work with care homes during the pandemic and asked if we are preparing for a potential outbreak of a new variant. The Director of Public Health said funding is available for infection control and preparedness is being maintained within the system.

The care home manager said care homes have a named person on covid preparedness.

A panel member asked about pressures within the system. It was reported that these are reducing, a small number of staff resigned due to covid mandate, the impact of the reversal of the mandate remains to be seen.

A Panel member asked about the number of unvaccinated Merton staff. The Head of Commissioning and Marketing Development said there are over 1000 staff in Merton 32 are unvaccinated and have exemptions. There are 93 exemptions amongst agency staff. Over 50% of staff have had the booster. Merton data compares well with London and England averages.

RESOLVED

The panel agreed to send a letter to all care homes thanking them for their hard work during the pandemic.

5 UPDATE ON COVID RATES IN MERTON (Agenda Item 5)

The Director of Public Health gave an update on the latest position covid and reported that rates of covid and hospital admissions are in decline.

Universal testing will end on April 1st, vulnerable people will still be able to access tests and anti-viral medication.

Local councils will rely on national survey data for the latest covid rates and will apply national estimates to local situations.

The Director highlighted that vaccinations are an important plank post pandemic

6 REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD 2021 (Agenda Item 6)

The Director of Public Health gave an overview of the report.

The Chair thanked the Director for her work.

7 TOPIC SUGGESTION REQUESTS FOR 2022-23 (Agenda Item 7)

The Panel agreed to send topic suggestions to the scrutiny officer