

# Agenda Item 3

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP  
6 OCTOBER 2020

(5.00 pm - 6.31 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Stephen Alambritis (in the Chair), Rob Clarke, Abi Fafolu, Dr Vasa Gnanapragam, Councillor Oonagh Moulton, Kalu Obuka, Dave Curtis, Dr Mohan Sekeram and Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Dr Dagmar Zeuner, Mark Creelman

ALSO PRESENT Barry Causer (Head of Strategic Commissioning Public Health), Clarissa Larsen (Health and Wellbeing Board Partnership Manager), Hetty Crist (Senior Communications Officer Public Health), Matthew Leek (Principle Electoral Services Officer) and Amy Dumitrescu (Democratic Services Officer)

## 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rebecca Lanning. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Oonagh Moulton.

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

## 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## 4 SITUATIONAL AWARENESS REPORT: LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL UPDATE (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Public Health (DPH) presented the report, giving an update on the current Covid19 statistics and noting that whilst all figures had increased, testing capacity in London had already increased and therefore many more infections were being identified. Any outbreaks or potential outbreaks in Merton were being monitored; there had been three new incidents in Merton. Whilst there had been small outbreaks in schools and workplaces, these were usually two or three connected cases and nothing that could explain the overall increase in infection rates that Merton and other London Boroughs are seeing.

On the day of the meeting an outbreak had been declared at St Helier Hospital, the DPH reiterated that those who required hospital treatment should still attend and no one should avoid attending if they were in need of treatment or assessment.

On the date of meeting, Merton was an 'area of national concern', with London as a whole close to being considered an 'area of intervention'.

In response to questions from members of the Board, the DPH responded that it was thought that high rates in Boroughs such as Hackney, Newham and Redbridge were related to household transmission as well as community transmission and may be

impacted by employment in jobs involving high exposure. Information was coming from several different sources but the DPH noted that the communication between the NHS and Merton was good and we needed to ensure information was passed on appropriately. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board and this Board receive a weekly Situational Assessment Report and a Covid19 newsletter is regularly distributed by the Council alongside social media posts.

## 5 ENGAGEMENT/INSIGHT WORK WITH COMMUNITIES (Agenda Item 5)

The Head of Strategic Commissioning (Public Health) provided the sub-group with a presentation on ongoing engagement with the community, which is a key principle of outbreak prevention and control, and highlighted a few areas of progress.

Community engagement workshops had been held and these had identified key assets which can then be used to inform communications and engagement. The network of Community Champions continued to increase and meet successfully twice a week. Resources were shared with the Community Champions who could then pass on this information to their contacts.

BAME Voice had been commissioned to explore the impact on, and gain insight of, different BAME communities and to build resilience and increase awareness of key messages.

The Voluntary Sector had identified case studies which would be used to understand the lived experience and Young Inspectors were leading work to involve young people.

There was concern from communities about mental health and isolation and this was one of the themes that was being examined.

Rob Clarke informed the sub-group that Age UK had also seen these issues emerging, and had asked staff and volunteer networks to work with clients to develop case studies that captured their lived experience.

## 6 UPDATE FROM EACH SUBGROUP MEMBER (Agenda Item 6)

Each of the members of the sub-group provided an update and the following issues were raised:

- The challenges around Diabetes, and how culture impinges on diabetes, and ensuring that essential messages are sensitive to cultural and language diversities.
- Covid19 had brought out the best of the community and community spirit, but had also led to a large amount of isolation as well as increases in domestic violence and mental health issues.
- Key conversations with different stakeholders were required to ensure messages were reaching and informing as many people as possible, including faith groups.
- The difficulty in communicating efficiently and effectively any changes in messaging, some of which can happen very quickly, particularly in relation to access to services.
- To assess whether communication via parents of schoolchildren could be further utilised.

- There had been a very good response to the Young Inspector's video on the need to stay safe.
- The difference between communication and engagement should be considered, with emphasis placed on listening to communities.
- The importance of clear messages being communicated into the community and ensuring information is clear and honest to avoid any complacency in light of increasing levels of infection.
- Services need to be delivered differently and how this can be done in a safe way and taken out into the community to ensure those most affected by Covid are still able to readily access the services they need.
- The Community Champions had been really positively received and now covered large areas of the Borough.

## 7 TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES (Agenda Item 7)

The Head of Strategic Commissioning (Public Health) asked the sub-group to consider how to develop and deliver pro-active communications, increase the reach of the Community Champions and how to establish an on-going dialogue with the community. This would be considered by the sub-group and they would respond in due course.

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