

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 29 January 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee held at
North Wing Corporate Room 10 on Wednesday, 29 January 2025 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Christopher Boden (Chairman)
David Sales (Deputy Chairman)
Michael Hudson
Deborah Oliver
Deputy Alpa Raja
Steve Stevenson

Officers:

Simon Cribbens	-
Chris Lovitt	- Deputy Director of Public Health
Ellie Ward	- Community and Children's Services Department
Jayne Moore	- Clerk
Amy Wilkinson	-
Rachel Talmage	-

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

Add Solomon Whittle – Graduate, People & HR

Lewandowska, Wioletta Principal social worker

Hannah Dobbin, Strategy officer

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Deborah Oliver declared that she is a registered patient at the Neaman Practice, and is registered as a carer with Imago Carers Support.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the meeting of 09 October 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

4. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

The Committee noted that an update on public health partners on the delivery of public health commissioned health services in the City of London would be welcome, and noted that the update would be covered at the Committee's May 2025 meeting.

5. NHS NEL FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the report of the Director of Partnerships Impact and Delivery at NHS NEL Integrated Care Board and City & Hackney place-based partnership.

The Committee made the following comments and points:

- Clarification on which projects were specifically City-based (as opposed to City & Hackney-based) would be welcome;
- Noting that 687K people travel into the City every day for work, more information on their needs would be welcome;
- Given the scarcity of resources (and noting the financial recovery plan likely to affect services), there appears to be a lack of information on priorities;
- More information on prevention of ill health would be helpful;
- Further clarification on which health inequalities are being targeted is required, noting the references to these being place-based; and
- There is not enough detailed information on the effective use of physical resources, noting national directives around the use of resources – mainly in the acute sector.

On the above points, the meeting heard that the 2025-26 plan is currently being drafted and is expected to include more information on these matters:

- City-based projects;
- The health needs of those travelling into the City for work;
- Clearer information on priorities given the restrictions around resources, noting the significant financial restraints;
- Information of prevention of ill health, noting the emphasis on prevention at Government level;
- Specific health inequalities; and
- Use of physical resources.

6. CARERS STRATEGY ONE YEAR REVIEW

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Children & Community Services.

In response to these three Member questions:

- When might carers get an emergency card?
- What is available to support carers resident in the City when people are moved to residential care that is necessarily outside the City?

- Could the outreach services be expanded to those that work in the City and other stakeholders in the City that are also carers?

- How many carers are in the City?

- Does the City of London Corporation take responsibility for City of London carers rather than it being a shared budget in an area that includes Hackney?

The Committee noted these responses:

- Carers are to be supported in applying and accessing the card during 2025;

- Support services are available to carers for those in residential care, though there is a recognition of the difficulties of being a carer and work is ongoing to address that kind of care and support;

- The Carers' connection group engages with City workers that are carers, and any City workers can also be directed to their local areas, noting also that the budget and statutory remit is focussed on the City's responsibility to its residents though voluntary initiatives are an option in line with funding opportunities. Some signposting and communication options are available to raise awareness of support resources such as the Dragon Café in the City, and the Committee noted that staff would seek to initiate support options for carers that work in the City, and explore funding opportunities for that (see action point 1);

- According to census data, just under 500 people in the City self-identify as a carer, and Imago figures suggest that 80–100 carers are known in the City, and 30-40 carers have received a support plan; and

- Carer support is an adult social care responsibility funded from the City budget.

A Member commented on apparent delays in sufficient carer training, including emotional support, noting also the listening ear service at City and Hackney Carers Centre that is available to City of London carers. In response to a Member question on when carer training might take place, the meeting noted that Imago Carers Support is approaching its delivery phase and that carer training provided by Imago is expected to begin shortly (see action point 2). The meeting noted that because the cohort of carers in the City is quite small and their needs vary, training has been provided directly rather than through the provision of a course that is likely to be poorly attended. Members also noted that a national online carers' training service is shared with Imago and with City carers.

Members also noted that a befriending service is expected to be available soon using the resources of the voluntary and community sector.

Members commended the achievements and ambition of the City of London's carer support, commenting also on the fact that a large number of those self-identifying as carers were not known to the City. The meeting heard that the City engages in awareness-raising around what constitutes being a carer, and that in some cases it was thought that those who self-identified as carers on the census included those with childcare responsibilities or other kinds of responsibilities.

7. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE SELF-EVALUATION 2024

The Committee received the report of the Head of Children's Social Care and Early Help.

The Committee congratulated the executive on the excellent outcome of the Ofsted inspection of September 2024.

A Member asked for further information on the department's relationship with the City of London Police, and whether custody visits are being undertaken in the correct manner. The meeting heard that while there is always room for improvement, the relationship with the Police is good and custody visits are properly conducted and encompass child exploitation concerns as well as interventions to support those children.

A Member asked whether there were any City-specific aspects of child exploitation. The meeting noted that the City's connections to finance were such that the drug trade was active because of the existence of people with high levels of disposable income, leading to children being involved in county lines. The meeting also heard that interventions are also taking place to ensure that hotel staff are vigilant about child exploitation taking place at hotels, and (in response to a Member question) that areas of concern are referred to the City's licensing team, particularly where instances of criminal behaviour are not reported.

A Member asked for further information on reports of higher levels of mental illness among children since the Covid pandemic, and what were the prognoses. The meeting noted that the issues were widespread and included children in the City, and that mental health risks were identified by the City of London at a very early stage of the pandemic and mitigating action taken. Members heard that early intervention is critical on these issues, though funding is a key area of concern.

8. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Noting that this was likely to be the final meeting chaired by him, the Chairman thanked the team and congratulated the City of London local authority's exemplary social services.

All the discussions being had in the Public session of the meeting, the public was not excluded from any part of the meeting and no Non-Public session took place.

10. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for subsequent items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 12.40 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Jayne Moore