Minutes of: **HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 24 September 2026

Present: Councillor E FitzGerald (in the Chair)
Councillors S Haroon, C Boles, M Rubinstein, K Simpson, D Green, J Southworth, S Zaman and J Roith

Also in attendance: Councillor Tariq Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care
Will Blandamer Executive Director (Health and Adult Care)
Adrian Crook Director of Community Commissioning
Jon Hobday Director of Public Health
Dr Cathy Fines
Leah Robbins Northern Care Alliance
Ahmed Ajmi Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning
Lynsey Postlethwaite Bury Carers Hub
Amanda Brooks N-Compass

Public Attendance: One member of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor L Ryder, Councillor D Duncalfe and Councillor G Martin

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HSC.143 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence are listed above.

HSC.144 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Simpson declared an interest due to working for Persona, this is already noted in his declaration of interest when becoming a Councillor

HSC.145 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2026 were agreed as an accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

HSC.146 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There was one pre submiited question in advance of the meeting submitted by Amanda Barnes the question was:

Can the Health Scrutiny Committee seek clarification from local NHS providers and commissioners on the current eligibility criteria for prescribing Mounjaro (tirzepatide) and other GLP-1 receptor agonist medications for patients with Type 2 diabetes, under active thyroid,BMI of 44,high blood pressure, and sleep apnea in Bury, and how these criteria align with current national guidance?

In response to the question Dr Cathy Fines advised

In response to the question regarding eligibility criteria for prescribing Mounjaro (tirzepatide) and other GLP-1 receptor agonist medications, it was explained that the commissioning arrangements are set at a Greater Manchester level through the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and are not specific to Bury.

Members were advised that Mounjaro has been available for people with Type 2 diabetes for some time, although prescribing criteria have been stringent. Due to the significant number of potentially eligible patients, the ICB introduced a phased cohort approach to implementation. Initially, eligibility was restricted to patients with a BMI of 50 or above and who met four out of five specified clinical criteria, including treated hypertension.

It was noted that this approach has since been superseded following updated NICE guidance. Under the current guidance, eligibility is expected to be widened to include patients with a BMI of 35 or above where they meet the relevant clinical criteria. The ICB is working towards full compliance with NICE guidance across Greater Manchester, although a specific date for completion could not be confirmed.

Members were advised that the implementation of the guidance has been complex and challenging for both healthcare professionals and patients. Eligibility is considered on an individual patient basis, taking account of their clinical circumstances, and not all patients will meet the criteria for treatment. Future phases of implementation are expected to expand access to additional cohorts, including patients within lower BMI ranges, in line with national guidance and commissioning arrangements.

HSC.147 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no member questions.

HSC.148 CHAIRS UPDATE ON GM MEETINGS

The Chair provided an update from the two recent GMCA Joint Health Scrutiny meetings, together with a verbal update from the NCA Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) held earlier that day. Members were advised that the purpose of the update was not to scrutinise the issues in detail, but to identify any matters that may warrant further consideration locally or feedback through regional structures.

Cllr Julie Southworth submitted a question regarding postnatal care provision across Greater Manchester and, in particular, within Bury. Discussion focused on the support available to women following childbirth, including mental health services, health visiting provision and primary care support. Concerns were raised regarding the availability of postnatal services and whether provision had reduced in recent years.

Cllr Southworth also asked what support was available for those affected by miscarriage or pregnancy-related loss. In response, it was explained that support is available through primary care, specialist mental health services, health visitors and community services, although it was acknowledged that some services had been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Fines advised that a range of healthcare support continues to be available, including digital support offers, but acknowledged there remained opportunities to strengthen primary care provision. Will Blandamer highlighted the role of children's services, health visitors, Family Hubs and Live Well services in providing support and opportunities for families to access help and connect with local services. Members were advised that Family Hubs would play an important role in reviewing outcomes and support available to families across the locality.

The Committee received an update from the voluntary sector regarding the challenges facing organisations, including funding pressures, poverty, the rising cost of living and the importance of community innovation and partnership working.

Cllr Green raised concerns about the impact of extreme heat on health services and asked whether the NHS undertakes preparations for periods of hot weather in the same way it plans for winter pressures. In response, Will Blandamer outlined ongoing work to support hospital flow, virtual ward provision and winter planning, while recognising that periods of extreme heat require further consideration in future resilience planning.

Cllr Green further highlighted the risks posed to older people during heatwaves, particularly dehydration and associated health complications, and welcomed the assurances provided regarding future preparedness.

Cllr Zaman declared an interest as an employee of the Northern Care Alliance working within specialist cardiac services. He referred to concerns raised nationally regarding patient experience during recent heatwaves and questioned what measures were being taken to address building temperatures and ensure patient safety. Given his own experiences he noted that windows had remained closed for infection prevention purposes and that fans had been distributed to wards but noted that this didn't help himself and others as it just circulated hot air around. He also commented that some nursing staff had been reluctant to raise concerns referring to the freedom to speak up initiative. He advised he was in a privileged position working for the NCA.

The Chair, Cllr Fitzgerald, asked that the discussion remain focused on the issue of managing high temperatures within hospital settings and not to refer to personal matters relating to workplace. Specifically advising that questions should be general concerns not specifically to workplaces where you are in a position to know more information than others.

The chair advised officers to not answers questions relating to specifics and keep the answers general with the specific question being asked how do we deal with very hot temperatures within hospitals.

Representatives from the NCA advised that recent heatwave periods had been managed as major incidents and that lessons learned were being incorporated into future planning. This included work around ventilation, building maintenance, window replacement programmes and the development of dedicated summer preparedness plans to complement existing winter planning arrangements.

The Chair advised that their was no specific discussion around winter and summer planning at the GMCA meeting it was just mentioned that this change was taking place at a time that the ICB was particularly busy however in the meeting it was picked up that winter and summer both need plans, and to take that their will now be summer plans as well as winter plans, the chair then brought this debate to a close.

Discussion also took place regarding cardiac services across Greater Manchester. Cllr Green raised a question concerning cardiac surgery and service provision within the region.

Cllr Tariq commented on the importance of cardiac health as a public health issue, particularly in parts of Bury where cardiovascular disease remains a significant concern. He suggested that a public-facing communication campaign regarding cardiac services would be beneficial, as information about service provision and service changes is not always easy for residents to access.

Drawing on personal experience, Cllr Tariq spoke positively about treatment received through the Manchester Royal Infirmary and highlighted the professionalism and responsiveness of staff. He reiterated the importance of ensuring that information regarding cardiac services is effectively communicated to residents.

Members were advised that information from the NHS Greater Manchester "Get Involved" programme would be circulated to support wider engagement and awareness.

It was noted that part of the forthcoming deep-dive review into maternity and early years services would consider variations in outcomes and support available across Greater Manchester.

The Chair provided a verbal update from the NCA Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held earlier that day.

Members were informed about the scale of the Northern Care Alliance, including its four hospitals and approximately 90 community locations. The Trust's increased focus on partnership working, staff wellbeing and organisational improvement was highlighted.

Members heard that performance in some areas, particularly elective care, had deteriorated and that support had been offered by partner organisations. The Trust was developing a single improvement plan to address identified areas for improvement, which would be considered by the NCA Board.

The Committee was advised of ongoing work to improve digital records, reduce reliance on paper systems and address the impact of industrial relations issues which continued to result in operational disruption and cancelled procedures.

Updates were also provided regarding spinal surgery, clinical leadership arrangements, cost improvement plans, finance and performance management. Members were informed that a full review of the revised clinical leadership arrangements would take place after twelve months.

The Committee welcomed Leah Robins, Chief Operating Officer of the Northern Care Alliance, and invited comments on matters that members may wish to consider locally through Bury's Health Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Zaman advised that he had three questions to raise. The Chair explained that, to aid the flow of the discussion, members should ask one question at a time. Councillor Zaman stated that earlier in the meeting he had not been given the opportunity to ask a supplementary question, whereas Councillor Green had. The Chair acknowledged this point but reiterated that asking questions individually made the discussion easier to manage. The Chair confirmed that Councillor Zaman would have the opportunity to raise his additional questions once other members had been given the chance to contribute.

Cllr Zaman asked whether Non-Executive Directors had been required to sign non-disclosure agreements and queried how such arrangements would contribute to improvements in patient care. Leah advised that Non-Executive Directors had not been asked to sign NDAs.

Cllr Zaman also asked when the Northern Care Alliance Improvement Plan would be published and made available to partners and stakeholders. Leah Robins confirmed that the plan would be shared widely and used as part of the organisation's improvement and accountability framework.

Will Blandamer advised that the Locality Board was keen to receive the Improvement Plan at the earliest opportunity and requested that it be circulated once available.

Cllr Zaman referred to the Freedom to Speak Up agenda and stated that he had not personally seen sufficient improvement and that, nothing is happening about Freedom to speak up, I'm here in a privileged position and I want to make sure staff voice is heard, consultants are engaging in party politics, and I am speaking up for people at Salford'.

He commented on concerns that had been raised with him from colleagues regarding workplace culture and asked what more could be done to ensure staff, particularly junior doctors, felt safe to raise concerns.

The Chair reminded Cllr Zaman that questions should be asked in his capacity as a councillor and not in his capacity as an employee of the NCA. She advised that questions should focus on matters relevant to Bury residents and should not rely upon personal employment experiences or information obtained through his role within the organisation.

In response, Leah outlined the work undertaken to promote a positive speaking-up culture, including the appointment of a dedicated Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and the inclusion of staff engagement and culture within the wider improvement programme. Assurance was given that staff should feel able to raise concerns without fear of detriment or recrimination.

Cllr Zaman further asked what action was being taken to ensure that Jewish patients and communities felt safe and supported when accessing services advising that this has been raised to him through a number of emails from residents. He questioned whether this would form part of the Improvement Plan.

Cllr FitzGerald advised Cllr Zaman that accusations should be formed through facts not speculation, and sought clarification on whether any concerns had been identified through engagement work and whether wider equality impacts were being considered.

Leah advised that the Trust continues to engage with community and voluntary sector partners, including representatives from the Jewish community and the FED, to understand concerns and ensure appropriate support is in place.

Cllr Rubinstein stated that he has been recently under the care of the NCA and has had no issues and the care provided was to a high standard.

Cllr Tariq highlighted the Northern Care Alliance's longstanding commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. He noted the strength of the Trust's EDI arrangements, staff training programmes and governance structures, and recognised the resources dedicated to monitoring and reviewing equality issues.

Cllr FitzGerald referred to previous work undertaken across Greater Manchester relating to anti-racism and equality impact assessments and stressed the importance of considering the impacts of decisions on different communities and protected groups.

Leah acknowledged that while positive work was already taking place across the organisation, there was always more that could be done in general. She advised that programmes were in place to address violence, aggression, discrimination and other unacceptable behaviours experienced by staff and patients.

It Was Agreed

- The update was noted.

Actions

- Circulate information relating to the NHS Greater Manchester "Get Involved" programme.
- Circulate the Northern Care Alliance Improvement Plan when published.

HSC.149 UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS OF CARERS STRATEGY

Members of the Committee had been asked to view the presentation in advance of the meeting. The Committee received a presentation from Lindsey Postlethwaite (N-Compass) and Ahmed Ajmi, Strategic Lead for Integrated Commissioning, on the Bury Carers Strategy and ongoing support available to unpaid carers across the borough.

Officers provided an overview of the strategy and highlighted a number of case studies demonstrating the positive impact of services available to carers. The Committee heard about efforts to improve access to support, including small packages of care, peer support opportunities and activities aimed at reducing isolation. Examples included community arts and crafts projects and initiatives delivered during Carers Week, such as creating post box toppers. Feedback from carers indicated that these activities had helped reduce feelings of isolation and encouraged greater community involvement.

Councillor Tariq thanked the team for their work and welcomed the progress being made through N-Compass. He reflected on attending a carers session and noted the valuable experiences, views and insights shared by carers. He emphasised the importance of continuing to engage with carers across all communities within the borough and encouraged Members to promote local drop-in sessions to their constituents.

Lindsey Postlethwaite advised that feedback gathered through drop-in sessions is helping to shape and inform the development of the strategy.
Adrian thanked staff, carers and partners for their contribution to the development of the strategy. He highlighted the importance of co-production, describing carers as the driving force behind the network and stressing the importance of connecting carers with support services and one another.

In response to a question from Councillor Simpson regarding support for young carers, Lindsey Postlethwaite advised that N-Compass works with young adult carers. Ahmed Ajmi added that there were aspirations to develop a Carers Charter in partnership with carers and stakeholders through a co-production approach. Councillor Simpson also highlighted the need to raise awareness of the experiences of siblings of children with disabilities.

Councillor Fitzgerald asked how carers who may not currently identify themselves as such are located and supported. Adrian explained that the Care Act places a responsibility on services to identify and support carers. Dr Fines added that GP registration processes include questions which help identify individuals who provide caring responsibilities.

Councillor Tariq highlighted the need to recognise and support young carers and those caring for older siblings, ensuring that appropriate support is available.

Councillor Southworth asked how support is offered to carers who may be reluctant to access services. Lindsey Postlethwaite advised that some individuals decline support because they do not wish to feel like a burden. However, carers are able to register for services and access support when required, with a range of flexible options available. Adrian added that it is important carers continue to access support for their own wellbeing while carrying out caring responsibilities.

Councillor Boles asked about transition arrangements between young carers' services and adult support. Ahmed Ajmi advised that the service works closely with GPs and other referral routes, including self-referrals. Work is also underway with young carers to build relationships and support transition planning, including the development of transition assessments within Bury.

Councillor Zaman queried waiting times for carers assessments. Adrian advised that the median waiting time is approximately 30 days, although priority cases are assessed more quickly. An initial holistic assessment is generally undertaken within one week, followed by the development of a tailored support plan.

Councillor Zaman also asked about the number of unpaid carers within the borough and how carers can be better identified. Officers advised that identification and promotion remain key priorities. Work is ongoing to increase awareness through social media campaigns, carer champions, engagement with local services and carers assessments. Adrian added that Census data indicates there are approximately 18,000 unpaid carers in Bury, highlighting the importance of continued promotion and development of the service. The Committee also heard about the role of co-production networks in helping to engage with and support carers across the borough.

It Was Agreed

- Update be noted

HSC.150 ACHIEVEMENTS OF CARE MARKET WORKFORCE SUPPORT (BURY CARE ACADEMY)

The Chair reminded Members that they were expected to have viewed the presentation in advance of the meeting and noted that carers had been a topic previously considered by the Committee, including scrutiny and challenge of Council activity in this area.

Sue Waldron, Bury Care Academy Manager, presented the update and provided an overview of the Care Academy's work and progress. Members were advised that the Academy is still relatively new and meets quarterly with providers to share learning, best practice and ideas. Currently, 51 providers are engaged with the Academy.

Sue highlighted ongoing work to engage stakeholders and build relationships with partners, including local GP practices through BARDOC. Website engagement and social media activity had increased, with ambitions for the website to become a one-stop shop for information on careers in social care, recruitment opportunities, training and support. Members heard about myth-busting sessions promoting careers in social care, attendance at careers events, and support provided for interview preparation and employability skills.

The Committee also received information on a range of initiatives and case studies, including a young people's project where nine participants started a four-week programme, seven completed it and four subsequently secured employment opportunities. Further work included collaboration with neighbouring care academies, the Rising Stars programme for future leaders and managers, workforce development activity and preparations for CQC inspections. Sue also highlighted plans for the forthcoming Bury Care Awards.

Councillor Tariq thanked Sue and her team for the insightful presentation and commended the work of the Care Academy. He commented that the Academy was making a genuine difference in supporting individuals and contributing towards recruitment and retention within the social care sector in Bury. Councillor Tariq welcomed the progress achieved since the

Academy's establishment and highlighted the positive collaboration between the Care Academy and Persona.

Adrian Crook added that he was incredibly proud of the work being undertaken and described the Academy as a significant achievement for the sector.

Councillor FitzGerald welcomed the work being undertaken, particularly the placements and employment opportunities being created. She noted the wider challenges across Greater Manchester and highlighted the importance of health and social care careers.

Councillor Rubinstein referred to the value of the care sector to Bury's economy and asked what the main constraints were on workforce recruitment and retention. In response, Adrian Crook advised that pay levels and perceptions of careers within social care remained the key challenges.
Councillor Tariq highlighted links with the previous agenda item, noting the increasing complexity of needs and the importance of the carers strategy. He commented that the impact of workforce pressures could be felt across services and communities. Adrian acknowledged that workforce shortages could create gaps in provision and stated that attracting people into the sector required payment of the Real Living Wage, high-quality services and positive workplace cultures.

Councillor Simpson declared a personal interest as an employee of Persona. He asked how standards could be raised within the care workforce, particularly as some carers undertake responsibilities comparable to nursing roles. In response, Adrian Crook referred to emerging national proposals and anticipated recommendations from Baroness Casey's review, advising that information would be circulated once available.

Councillor Tariq referred to the example of Killelea House achieving an Outstanding CQC rating and noted the commitment demonstrated by social care staff despite ongoing challenges within the sector.

Councillor Boles asked what age groups the Academy was targeted towards and whether further work could be undertaken with Key Stage 4 pupils. Sue Waldron advised that the Academy regularly engages with schools and colleges through careers events, presentations and mock interviews.

Councillor Boles suggested there may also be opportunities to engage with alternative provision settings. Adrian Crook added that vacancy levels had reduced and that the sector was increasingly focused on developing local talent and "growing its own" workforce.

It was agreed:

- That the update be noted

HSC.151 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business

COUNCILLOR E FITZGERALD
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.15 pm)