

**Minutes of:** **HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 21 March 2022

**Present:** Councillor T Holt (in the Chair)  
Councillors J Grimshaw, M Hayes, C Tegolo, S Walmsley  
and T Pilkington

**Also in attendance:** Christine Seymour, Contact Centre Manager, Adrian Crook,  
Director of Adult Social Care, Cathy Fines Chair of Bury CCG,  
Will Blandamer Executive Director of Commissioning, Cath  
Tickle.

**Public Attendance:** No members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor S Haroon, Councillor K Hussain, Councillor  
C Birchmore, Councillor R Brown and Councillor J Lewis

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**HSC.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence are listed above.

**HSC.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Pilkington declared an interest due to being an employee for Manchester Foundation Trust.

**HSC.3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

**HSC.4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

**HSC.5 MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

**HSC.6 ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT**

Christine Seymour, Contact Centre Manager was welcomed to the Health Scrutiny Committee and provided a brief introduction of herself and her role in the complaints process.

Adrian Crook, Director of Adult Social Care provided an overview of the Adult Social Care Complaints Report. Adrian accredited the report and hard work to Louise Carroll, Customer Complaints Co-ordinator.

The report covers the period April 2020-March 2021 and is a statutory annual requirement. The report shows that whilst service use has remained whilst the occurrence of complaints has reduced. The nature of complaints has changed to be about the quality-of-care services, particularly relating to infection control services and to finances as the rules relating to this have changed. One thing that has been noted is we are answering more complaints faster and due to answering more efficiently the number that went through to the ombudsman has reduced. Compliments have also increased which is testament to the service teams.

Members were invited to ask questions and the following themes emerged:

Assurances were sought regarding the nature of the complaints which did take longer than the usual timeframe. In response Adrian Crook, Director of Adult Social Care advised that the reason for the complaints that took longer was due to them needing a multiagency approach and therefore partners such as the NHS or CCG may be contacted to contribute to the complaint. The Committee were informed that the service/department that receives the complaint is then the responsible department to lead on the response.

The drop in complaints from the local MP's was raised; in response Adrian Crook, Director of Adult Social Care advised that the change in local MP is the reason for a decrease in complaints from the local MP. Further clarification on the method for MP or Elected Member complaints was questioned; it was confirmed that the root for these types of complaints is enhanced to be efficient for responses.

The celebration of compliments to staff was encouraged by the Committee and in response the Committee were advised that compliments were appreciated by staff and the Director of Adult Social Care writes to each member of staff following one.

It was agreed:

1. The report be noted
2. Adrian Crook, Director of Adult Social Care be thanked for the report.

## **HSC.7 PRIMARY CARE UPDATE**

Cathy Fines Chair of Bury CCG introduced herself and an update on Primary Care and General Practice waiting times.

Cathy Fines provided an overview of the General Practice Leadership Collaborative; the purpose is to be the body through which practices in the borough are represented via their membership of Primary Care Networks, Bury GP Federation and the Local Medical Committee (LMC).

Key issues raised by Cathy Fines, Clinical Director, NHS Bury CCG were:

- There is a workforce crisis regarding GP's due to an ageing workforce
- Contacts in General Practice's are now above what has been previously received
- Issues following unmet need following 2 years of working differently through the pandemic

The Committee sought assurances on face-to-face appointments. In response Cathy Fines advised the plan for a digital offer was planned before the Pandemic as an additional offer.

Whilst some members of the public want a face-to-face appointment it may be clinically determined that this is not required.

Councillors raised concerns that complaints they receive as elected members regarding General Practices have significantly increased during the pandemic. In response Cathy Fines advised members that General Practice working practices have changed, and people where possible are encouraged to wait outside until their appointment time. The Committee were informed that Practices are unlikely to ever go back to a full waiting area as from an infection control point of view it is counterproductive. A Committee Member highlighted that most constituents raising the concerns are elderly and not computer literate as Bury has a higher ageing population the concerns were worrying.

Concerns were raised around the operation of the 'ask my GP' service and the implications it has from shift workers or those who cannot access the service during its short opening hour. Even with enhanced services and online options there is a worry from members that people with health inequalities may not get access to the GP. In response Cathy Fines stated she accepted there is still problems with resources, and it is a national problem. Half of the current GP's could retire over the coming years and work is taking place to retain and recruit additional capacity. In response to the query about the 'ask my GP' system Cathy Fines informed the Committee that the service gives an option of clinically triaging individuals. Although people may not want to wait for a response their request will have been triaged and although it is uncomfortable knowing people may wait it is safer as we know who these people are. Cathy also assured the Committee that if individuals do not have access to the online service they can call and have a receptionist put through their request. The Committee were informed that current activity in primary care is higher than we can currently meet and to solve this the Primary Health Care Team needs to be bigger than GP's only. First contact may change from GP's to Advanced Nurse Practitioners or Mental Health Practitioner for example.

A Committee Member questioned if practices approaches to services and the digital offer could be standardised across the Borough and how the promotion of alternative support via 'Care at the Chemist' and holistic practitioners could be improved. In response Cathy Fines stated this work will take a long time to embed but neighbourhood working should help with this, especially on how to improve digital offers.

It was agreed:

3. The report be noted
4. Dr Cathy Fines, Chair of Bury CCG be thanked for the report.

## **HSC.8 MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE**

Will Blandamer introduced the item covering Mental Health which provided an update following the report in November which detailed the investment plan for the adult community mental health system and developments and investment into the children's mental health system.

It highlights provision to deliver the Long-Term Plan deliverables against the backdrop of the impact of the COVID pandemic for adults and children and young people (CYP)

The report outlined the investments in the following areas:

- Community mental health teams
- Mental health support capacity
- Community Eating Disorders
- Tier 2 children's mental health
- Getting help phone line

- Pilot of peer lead crisis help line

The report also highlighted the key challenges

- Workforce challenges
- Recruitment is challenging
- Challenges around Child & adolescent MH services

Committee members sought assurances on how prepared Bury is for Refugees. Adrian Crook advised that we are ready, and the community hub's will be the first point of help and support.

It was agreed:

1. The report be noted

## **HSC.9 ELECTIVE CARE WAITING LISTS UPDATE**

Will Blandamer provided an overview of the report on Elective Waiting Lists including the 52 week and 104 week wait challenge. In outlining the paper he advised the body of work is being overseen by Bury Elective Care Board and gives an update on the following:

- While you Wait Programme
- Work with providers NCA MFT and other providers of secondary care
- Reducing unnecessary follow-up's
- Independent sector capacity
- Work with partners across GM
- Work with NCA in gynecology
- And new models of dermatology

It was agreed:

1. Will Blandamer to get a response to Councillor Pilkington regarding 'ending painful historectomie'.
2. The report be noted.

## **HSC.10 COVID-19 UPDATE**

Will Blandamer, Executive Director provided a brief verbal update on Covid-19. He advised that locally and Nationally case rates and prevalence are rising. This rise has been sharpest in sharpest in the South East & London, though the North West is increasing too.

Case data is less reliable than it was and likely to be a significant under-representation of the true case rate, but Bury's rate is 466.2 per 100k.

Confirmed case rates are up sharply across all age groups – unusually synchronised compared to previous waves.

Vaccination is offering good protection against the most severe impact of Covid-19 but there is likely to be increased impact on the health and care system due to:

- care home outbreaks
- Staff sickness absence, and absences relating to childcare
- More with Covid-19 in hospitals

It was requested by Committee Members that it is placed on record that individuals with known positive Covid results are not asked to work in care homes as another authority has.

It was agreed:

1. The report be noted.
2. Will Blandamer be thanked for his update.

## **HSC.11 URGENT BUSINESS**

Councillor Holt, thanked the committee, Will Blandamer and reporting officers with particular thanks to Adrian Crook, John Hobday and Lesley Jones.

Councillor Walmsley, said thank you to Councillor Holt for Chairing Health Scrutiny and it has been a pleasure to work with him on behalf of the Committee. It has been an interesting year and this year saw the set-up of a Task and Finish Group and shining example of positive work the Committee has achieved.

**COUNCILLOR T HOLT**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.40 pm)**