

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 Sekeram and Councillor Eleanor Stringer

ALSO PRESENT Dr Dagmar Zeuner (Director, Public Health), 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 large increase in infection rates
that Merton and other London Boroughs had seen.

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 going there if they were in need of treatment or assessment.

Merton was on the date of meeting within 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 were impacted by household overcrowding as well as high exposure, low control jobs. There was information coming from several different sources but the DPH noted that the communication between the NHS and Merton was good and they needed to ensure information was passed on appropriately. There was currently a Covid19 newsletter regularly distributed by the Council as well as social media posts. The DPH advised that there was knowledge of community clusters and this was being looked at to see if there were any links between these, however as yet nothing had been found.

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

The Head of Strategic Commissioning (Public Health) provided the sub-group with a presentation on working 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 understand the impact on those 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 of many throughout the Borough 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 they had also seen the emerging issues and had asked staff and volunteer networks to assess the themes and these had led to putting together the case studies in capturing the 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 the culture impinges on diabetes and ensuring that communities are engaged with so the essential messages reaches those who are currently not engaging with advice or services including being 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 educating 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.

- The needs for different communications with different groups and addressing particular issues for particular groups including providing access to numerous channels.
- To assess whether communication via parents of schoolchildren could be further utilised.
- There had been a very good response to the Young Inspector.
- A few local complaints had been received about shops and similar issues, but the Merton Communications team had not received anything negative about the campaigns that had been undertaken so far.
- That the difference between communication and engagement should be considered and listening to communities through that engagement.
- The importance of clear messages being communicated into the community and ensuring information is clear and honest to avoid any complacency in areas such as Merton with levels (but still increasing) levels of Covid infections.
- Services need to be delivered differently and how this can be done in a safe way and how these can be taken out into the community to ensure those most affected by Covid are still able to access the services they require but aren't seeking out themselves.
- The Community Champions had been really positively received and covered all 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.