

ASSEMBLY

30 September 2020

Title: Annual Report of Member Champions - 2019/20	
Report of Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Social Care & Health Integration and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing	
Open	For Information
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
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Summary: On 18 February 2018 Assembly agreed new governance arrangements (Minute 56) including the provision of Member Champions. In May 2018, the Annual Assembly approved the new Constitution (Part 2, Chapter 6, Paragraph 9). Under the new Constitution, up to five Member Champions can be appointed by the Leader to support the work of the Cabinet and promote and raise the profile of the cause for which they are a champion. At its meeting on 11 December 2018, Cabinet approved the appointment of Councillor Irma Freeborn and Councillor Chris Rice as Member Champions for Quality in Care and for Mental Health respectively (Minute 71 refers). A work programme was created following this. The appointment of Councillor Andrew Achilleos as Member Champion for Climate Change was approved by Assembly on 13 May 2020 (Minute 7 refers). This report sets out the roles of each Member Champion, the work they have undertaken in 2019/20 and what their focus will be in the coming year.	
Recommendation: The Assembly is asked to note the Annual Report of Member Champions 2019-2020	
Reason(s) It is good practice to report on the work being undertaken by Member Champions who support the Council's aim of encouraging civic pride and enabling social responsibility. This year's Annual Report includes the reports of the Member Champion for Quality in Care, Member Champion for Mental Health, and Member Champion for Climate Change. An overview of the role and job description for each Member Champion is included as Appendix 1 & 2 to this report.	

Report by Councillor Freeborn, Member Champion for Quality in Care

1. Introduction

- 1.1 My report provides an insight into some of the challenges facing those in social care over the past few months when the country went into lockdown because of the coronavirus pandemic. On 29 May 2020, the council wrote to care homes in the borough setting out the support it was offering them during COVID-19. A copy of the letter is included as **Appendix 3** to this report.
- 1.2 During the pandemic, I was not able to visit care homes or other care settings in the borough for public health reasons. The work carried out by those caring for vulnerable adults will always be challenging, but the additional pressure put on them during the total lockdown was unprecedented. I should like to take this opportunity to place my record my appreciation for the work they do.
- 1.3 I have focused on two key issues: The provision of PPE at the start of the lockdown period, and the experience of care homes during the pandemic.

2. The provision of PPE at the start of the lockdown period

- 2.1 One of the most pressing issues after the outbreak of Covid-19 was access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline workers, especially those working in health and social care.
- 2.2 Although the Council is not responsible for the provision of PPE to private care homes, it took the decision to supply it to all care homes, home care agencies, and personal (social care) assistants, free of charge. This was crucial when normal supply chains, including the government's own sources, had failed. One unit of PPE represents an apron, mask, and a pair of gloves or a litre of hand sanitizer. The Council provided: 283,246 units of PPE in May; 294,436 units in June; and 254,615 units in July.
- 2.3 Since the summer, the Council established a robust system to ensure care homes and others were supported in both sourcing and using PPE.

3. The experience of care homes during the pandemic

- 3.1 It feels like a long time ago now, but the pandemic was a very difficult time for care homes in the borough, with residents being separated from their families and outside visitors. There was also a enormous pressure on staff at all levels, none more so than for those who provide direct personal care.
- 3.2 In last year's annual report, I touched on the vital role entertainment and social interaction plays in engaging residents in care. The lockdown meant outside entertainment was prohibited and families were prevented from having their relatives visit them. I am pleased care homes are now gradually allowing outside visiting, for example, in gardens.

3.3 More recently, testing for Covid-19 has been the main challenge facing care homes for older people. These homes have been expected to test staff weekly, and residents every 28 days. However, there have been delays with the delivery of test kits, which is a reflection of the haphazard way in which test and trace has been introduced across the country.

4. Care at home

4.1 In my last Annual Report, I had been asked to expand my visits to include Home Care and Personal Assistants. For reasons due to the pandemic and the need to socially distance, I have not been able to do this. This is something I would like to pick up as and when the guidance on social distancing eases.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Over the past few months, sacrifices have been made by both staff working in the care sector and those receiving care. It has been difficult for those shielding across the community, with residents in care being in the awful position of not being able to see their family.

5.2 As part of my role, I would have liked to be able to talk to carers and those in care settings, but this was not possible. Looking to the future, it is clear that the impact of Covid-19 on our care homes and those receiving care at home will last for a long time.

5.3 I am sure colleagues will wish to join me in thanking health and care workers for their immense sacrifice through this pandemic. In the future, I want to explore the experiences of those who have worked and received care through the lockdown as well as pick up my focus on home care provision.

Report of Councillor Chris Rice, Member Champion for Mental Health

6. Introduction

6.1 This year has presented immense challenges for both providers of mental health services and those seeking help. My intended focus for this year was the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team, following concerns raised about access to services by Looked After Children. It is worth remembering that young people, as a result of lockdown, will be facing unprecedented challenges due to missing out on schooling and social opportunities.

6.2 I continue to be on the Governing body of NELFT. The work carried out by this organisation has faced the additional pressures of a large percentage of the population working from home or being furloughed. The risk to the wellbeing of already vulnerable people has been well-publicised.

6.3 My report this year will focus on the work of CAMHS, NELFT and other services, as well as looking at the forms of collaboration being undertaken by these organisations with other partners in the sector. A copy of guidance given to those working in

mental health through COVID-19 is included as an appendix to this report (**Appendix 4**).

7. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS)

- 7.1 In February, I was able to visit the B&D Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS). The OFSTED inspection of Children's Social Care Services in 2019 had raised concerns that Looked After Children (LAC) did not have sufficient access to specialist mental health services.
- 7.2 There was subsequent investment in a Looked After Children Social Worker with a specialist remit in mental health to address this concern. However, the therapeutic gap in access to treatment remains. In response, NELFT set up a weekly CAMHS "hot clinic" where children and young people could be considered without a formal referral. NELFT opened this resource to other aspects of Childrens Social Care, for example Learning Disabilities, which has improved referral numbers.
- 7.3 It is worth noting that CAMHS receives referrals for assessment for children who might be experiencing very difficult social circumstances, but who do not have a diagnosable mental health condition. The universal mental health/wellness offer centres on Kooth (an online resource), which may not be accessible for children with additional vulnerabilities.
- 7.4 The CAMHS team employs the "Thrive" model, nationally recognised as a model of best practice, but a definitive diagnosis is not a prerequisite for an offer of support as it is needs-based. The model offers a more fluid approach to managing the changing needs of a young person when dealing with their emotional and mental health requirements. However, what fundamentally underpins the care pathways for treatment by the CAMHS mental health service, is a defined mental health need. I was informed during my visit that understaffing at the B&D CAMHS is severe, with in-house measures put in place by the team to help manage stress. More needs to be done to lever additional resources from the CCG to manage this shortfall.

8. North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)

- 8.1 As part of my role as a Mental Health Champion, I have attended all of the monthly governing body meetings for the North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT). Since early in the year, the meetings have primarily been focusing on the outbreak of COVIDCovid-19 and the subsequent pandemic.
- 8.2 Staff resources have been organised to help meet the priorities and changing needs of service users. We discussed the risk to frontline staff and how important it was that all employees, including those at risk of developing serious complications, should be protected as much as possible. Individual risk assessments have been on-going for all staff. Antibody tests have also been made available. The importance of giving support to staff who have experienced traumatic events has also been emphasised. They have been working heroically in these very testing times.

8.3 Moreover, there has been concern nationally and locally that there could be a “tidal wave” of new demand for mental health services arising from the extra pressures on many people due to fear of the Covid-19 virus and possible lockdowns, e.g. loss of loved ones, employment, income etc. It also exacerbates concern in the ability to recruit trained staff. Going forward, NELFT is reviewing how to shape the services that it provides in the coming months.

9. Collaborations between NELFT and Other Organisations

9.1 During the pandemic, NELFT and social care worked collaboratively to ensure that service users remained safe and well. Additional support and guidance were given to providers, including webinars on how to manage challenging behaviours, in order to maintain service users in the community. During this period, admissions to inpatient care remained stable.

9.2 As the lockdown has lifted, the numbers requiring inpatient care have increased by a third from the expected baseline. The concern for social care and commissioning is that the new admissions were either not known to services or had been closed to secondary services for five or more years due to a stabilisation of their presentation. There has been a spike in IAPT self-referrals for anxiety and depression, which may have an impact on referrals for social care in the longer term.

9.3 The CCG have commissioned MIND to deliver a listening service for people that have been bereaved, with a referral pathway to longer-term therapeutic input for people with more acute need. I am concerned that the commissioned service is with the Christian Association of Counsellors, which is not culturally appropriate for our population.

10. Thrive LDN

10.1 Thrive LDN is a citywide movement to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Londoners. It is supported by the Mayor of London and led by the London Health Board partners. We are promoting the resources below to residents, through our One Borough Voice page, BDCAN and B&D Collective Networks and through local voluntary sector organisations.

11. Conclusion

11.1 I would like to thank the hard-working staff who have continued to serve those suffering with mental illnesses over the past year. Their dedication to service users has been important in ensuring that the problems exacerbated by Covid-19 do not turn into another public health emergency. In the future, I would like to continue focusing, where possible on CAMHS and the quality of service being experienced by our young people.

Report of Councillor Andrew Achilleos, Member Champion for Climate Change

12. Introduction

- 12.1 I was appointed Member Champion for Climate Change on 13 May 2020 and have just embarked on my activities for the coming year due to the pandemic.
- 12.2 My work programme for 2020-2021 has a unique focus on our local parks, open spaces and highways. It provides scope to learn from partners across local government and beyond and seeks to address the Council's goal of becoming the green capital of the capital.

13. Work programme for 2020-2021

- 13.1 I have agreed the following Work Programme for the coming year with the Leader of the Council and Councillor Geddes.
1. **Promote the natural habit:** Visit nature conservation areas in and out of borough, including beekeeping, nesting and roosting sites, towers, green walls at the Chase (already used as an educational resource), Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park etc Tell us what the natural diversity of these areas is and find ways to highlight this to residents by working with the ranger service and promoting on social media.
 2. **Promote local engagement in parks and open spaces:** Look at who uses the parks eg community groups, both formal and informal. Could these groups be used to set up 'Friends' networks where the members clean up the parks and apply for external funding?
 3. **Promote the reduction of the use of Single Use Plastics:** Visit other local authorities, businesses, and CU London to look at lessons we can learn from other organisations about eliminating single use plastics.
 4. **Carbon emissions:** Review the Council's actions to reduce carbon emissions.
 5. **Promote the council's energy efficiency initiatives:** Visit two homes a year that have been retrofitted with enhanced insulation and getting an understanding from residents of what the changes have really meant. And visit council properties that have had their EPC rating upgraded.
 6. **Promote cycling & walking:** Look at ways we can encourage cycling and walking. What has worked in other councils and what has not? Champion what we have got and advocate for what we have not.
 7. **Promote sustainable resources to build cycle lanes:** Promote sustainable cycle lanes. Some use plastic and glass recyclates and are lined by solar panels.

8. **Establish the viability of a borough-wide bicycle network:** Assess the viability of a borough-wide cycle network. Doing so by joining the borough with lines that criss-cross (ie a diamond shape), to establish how easy it is to get from Riverside-Barking-Chadwell Heath-Village without a car.
9. **Promote green jobs, borough-wide:** This will require a plan to include jobs created by the council to new startups.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Climate change is the issue of our time. It crosses national and international boundaries and has socio-economic implications as well as repercussions for the natural world.
- 14.2 The World as we know it is changing. Freak weather events have become more common and traditional seasons have given way to milder winters and hotter summers in recent years. This presents difficulties not just for our way of life but for wildlife, generally. The borough's parks and open spaces present a real opportunity for us to invest in our wildlife, but this must include using the power of park users and not just money. We can empower sections of the community who already use our parks to actively engage with spaces that ultimately belong to the residents of our borough as much as they do the council. From Sunday footballers to dog walkers, the parks mean a lot to our community and they present the clearest opportunity to tackle the environmental inequalities that exist throughout the country. By changing the way we approach management of parks, we can use and expand existing networks and ensure the future of our parks and open spaces as a resource for all.

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1: Generic Job description for Member Champions
- Appendix 2: Role overview for Member Champion for Quality in Care, Member Champion for Mental Health and Member Champion for Climate Change
- Appendix 3: Barking and Dagenham's support for care homes during COVID-19
- Appendix 4: Guidance on providing humane, supportive, and practical help to those affected by COVID-19