

HEALTH SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
7th November 2017

WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CARE SERVICES

Written Question to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services received from Ms Rhian Kanat

On the 1 October 2017, health visiting services in Bromley were moved from Bromley Healthcare to Oxleas following the end of the previous contract term. This resulted in the drop-in baby clinics run across the Borough being cut from 11 to 7 clinics a week and removing clinics from previously well used locations such as the Beckenham Beacon entirely. No meaningful consultation of service users or notification about these changes appears to have taken place. In answer to a question at the last meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee, the relevant Portfolio Holder stated that Healthwatch Bromley had carried out a consultation on these changes, However, Healthwatch Bromley have told me that they conducted a consultation on other childrens' services for the CCG earlier this year but that did not include health visiting services.

- 1) Please confirm why there was no meaningful service user consultation about these service changes and why service users were not given adequate notice of the changes? Bearing in mind the lack of consultation, what is the rationale and justification for these cuts?

Reply:

I do not accept the premise of your assertion that there has been no meaningful consultation and there have certainly been no cuts.

In 2016 Healthwatch was commissioned by Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group to carry out community engagement with Bromley residents to inform the re-tendering of children's services. Through Bromley's Children and Young Peoples' Working Group it was agreed that it would be both appropriate and cost effective to include consultation on the Health Visiting Service as part of this engagement process. Public Health worked with Healthwatch's Engagement Manager when the engagement strategy was being developed and Health Visiting was covered in this piece of work.

One of the key findings in the engagement exercise in relation to health visiting was local families' desire for clinics to be facilitated in various locations across the borough enabling them to have their babies weighed and have the opportunity for face to face interaction with the Health Visiting service throughout the week and that work amongst much more is in train .

Provision of Health Advice Clinics continues to be a key function of Bromley's Health Visiting Service. There are plans for there to be a total of 9 drop-in clinics in the borough but additional methods of communication between families and the health visiting service are also being introduced as part of this service.

Oxleas are developing a "Live chat Virtual Nurse" service and the remodelled service will be working even more closely with Children and Family Centres in order to build networks for families and provide joined up support in order to enhance resilience in families.

There is also now a single point of access for queries about the Health Visiting service.

Written Question to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services received from Ms Chloe-Jane Ross

Well-used and vital Health Visitor Services have been removed from the Beckenham Beacon without consultation (the closest service is now in Penge and only offered on 1 day a week). I understand local young families were not provided with adequate notice, many turning up to the clinic with their children to find a note on the door advising the Beacon Clinic was no longer operating.

- 1) What oversight does Bromley Council have over the Health Visitor Service and what is the Council doing to address this issue (noting that the Beacon is a wide-ranging polyclinic serving a large geographical area with a high population of young families)?

Reply:

Local authority oversight involves on-going contract monitoring ensuring that the provider is delivering quality services and meeting the key performance indicators set out in this specification. The local authority works closely with the provider to facilitate and develop partnerships within the system with other relevant services to ensure families receive a joined-up service. An example of this with health visiting is the close working relationship that is being developed with the Early Intervention and Family Support Service.

Since contract allocation to Oxleas, Bromley CCG in conjunction with the Local Authority have been fully involved in the implementation of the new service. Contract implementation meetings are held regularly (at least bi-weekly) and are attended by Public Health, procurement & early intervention local authority representatives as well as senior members of Oxleas' staff and CCG safeguarding and contract management colleagues. In addition to the face to face meetings there is continuous email and telephone contact between the local authority and the provider to ensure high quality health visiting services are delivered for Bromley families.

I think we would all agree that the communication from Bromley Healthcare regarding the future reprovision of Health Visiting services could and should have been handled more effectively.

ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN OF HEALTH SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Oral Question to the Chairman of Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee received from Councillor Ian Dunn

- 1) Please provide an update on developments in the South East London STP footprint? Please also explain how the Capped Expenditure Process might impact the London Borough of Bromley?

Reply:

An update on the South East London STP footprint relating to the Capped Expenditure Process is due to be considered at the next meeting of Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 6th March 2018; however I will request the Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group provide a brief verbal update on this item under Any Other Business later in the meeting.

Supplementary Question:

There was no supplementary question.