



Item 16.4

Full Council – 21 November 2022

2nd Labour Group Motion

Backlog Britain: Waiting for Care

This Council notes:

All across the United Kingdom the country is facing backlogs across public services. In the past few weeks, we have seen that these delays can have tragic consequences – with a bottleneck in processing asylum applications, leading to deplorable conditions at Manston in Kent.

However, right now across the health sector, with staff leaving the industry in their droves and nurses balloting for a strike for the first time ever; we are seeing even greater delays to accessing healthcare:

- There are some 6.7 million people waiting for routine hospital treatment the highest level since records began 15 years ago. Hospitals, meanwhile, are full of patients who cannot be discharged owing to a lack of care-home beds or community services to support them. This in turn means that nationally almost 700,000 people have waited more than 12 hours in A&E in the first seven months of 2022, with ambulances queuing outside hospital doors for hours.
- The NHS is the Labour Party's proudest achievement – a gift from Nye Bevan to the country which has lasted 74 years. The NHS is a source of national pride, but this year it is facing another balancing act, with spiralling demands for care; while thousands of positions are vacant. As a result, there are now 1 in 9 people in England on hospital waiting lists, with people dying while waiting for care.
- The Health and Social Care Levy was put forward as a means to “fix” social care by providing sustainable funding to the sector. There have been no new announcements from government on what will replace the £13 billion it would have offered.
- Figures from the NHS reveal that last month 7,953 people had to wait more than four hours for emergency care at A&Es in London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust. In North West London, there are now 247,296 residents on the waiting list for care, up from 175,291 just a year ago and the highest number in London. There are 6,225 residents waiting over a year for routine operations.

- At the same time many NHS trusts are supporting their staff through the cost of living crisis by food banks on site, providing salary advances and free school uniforms to the children of NHS staff.
- The NHS Confederation has made an unprecedented intervention, highlighting in an open letter the link between fuel poverty and demand on NHS services, stating that Britain “is facing a humanitarian crisis. Many people could face the awful choice between skipping meals to heat their homes and having to live in cold, damp and very unpleasant conditions.”
- Further on 9th November 2022 NHS Confederation stated that “ If social care reforms are delayed by another year, this will only serve to exacerbate the bottlenecks across local services and harm patients “
- Around 1 in every 10 dentists in England quit last year, leaving 4 million people unable to access an NHS dentist with some parts of the country now described as ‘dentistry deserts’, because remaining NHS dentists aren’t taking on new patients. The British Dentistry Association, emergency teeth extractions are now the most common reason for children to go to hospital.
- Data from the NHS reveals that in the past year, 23,434 GP appointments in the North West London Integrated Care System were held over a month late, as patients struggle to see a GP when they need one.
- That there is a six to eight week wait to access the local Long Covid service based at Central Middlesex Hospital.
- Public satisfaction with GP services has fallen from 77 per cent in 2010, to just 38 per cent now, the lowest level since the survey began in 1983. A BBC Panorama investigation in June found that unqualified staff at Operose Health practices, the UK’s largest GP chain, are seeing patients without the required clinical supervision and support.

This Council believes:

- That Brent owes a huge debt of gratitude to health and social care staff that continue to tirelessly work for a health service that keeps us healthy and has saved lives across the pandemic. However, it also clear that successive governments over the last decade have presided over the deterioration of services, creating some of the backlogs we see today.
- Public services are a public right, but residents in Brent are facing huge delays for the most basic care. The NHS and universal public services need a new deal, if the social contract that bonds citizens and governments, can continue.
- We need a real plan to get waiting lists in hospitals, primary care and dentistry under control. At present there is a golden thread of delay, decay and dither leading back to the Conservatives. Previous governments have reduced waiting times in hospitals from 18 months to 18 weeks.

- That if Brent residents cannot afford to heat their homes and cannot afford nutritious food, we will face a new public health emergency; increasing the strain on our local hospital admissions further.
- Local government has shown that with the right funding, it has a part to play in promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public, and supporting the NHS in alleviating the demand for services.
- In Brent we are proud to have our own Brent Health Matters programme which has:
 - Established a public health prevention team, recruited from our community with lived experiences of what makes Brent, Brent.
 - Worked hand in glove with our multi-faith groups to reach a wide range of stakeholders across Brent, to address entrenched health inequalities.
 - Been at the heart of a public health outreach campaign: coordinating diabetes screenings, organising pop-up Covid-19 vaccination sites; and working now with our community groups to increase vaccination uptake.

This Council resolves:

- As part of the campaign to ensure that healthcare for Brent residents is properly funded, working alongside patient voice groups, to press the case for equitable NHS funding across the new North West London Integrated Care System (ICS).
- To reinforce the Brent Health Matters programme, taking forward transformational projects to reverse the health inequalities the pandemic exposed. We will facilitate more outreach sessions across Brent's communities, such as our diabetes prevention events and our mobile dentistry sessions.
- To bolster our communications campaign across all channels, with a new multi-language information booklet setting out what support is available to residents struggling with the cost of living, energy and food poverty.
- To provide 'Warm Places' a network of spaces where Brent residents can come together to stay warm and receive additional support and advice to alleviate poverty – helping to ease pressures on the NHS.
- To support a national campaign as outlined by the NHS Confederation in support of the action that is so desperately required to address the dearth of adequate social care provision, including introducing a minimum wage for social care staff. Social care is about so much more than alleviating pressure on the NHS, but without action to address the lack of capacity in social care, the NHS will continue to experience huge delays in discharging medically fit patients from hospitals.
- Request that the Leader of the Council write to our local MPs requesting that the backlog in healthcare services and health inequalities in Brent is raised in Parliament; and for those MPs to meet with interested councillors in facilitating discussions.

Councillor Saqlain Choudry
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