

3 August 2023

Councillor Lucy Knight  
Chair, Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee  
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
Kensington Town Hall  
Hornton Street  
Kensington  
London W8 7NX

by e-mail via: james.diamond@rbkc.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Knight,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 July 2023 and for the invitation to speak at the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee on this important matter.

The consultation process is led by North West London Integrated Care Board (NWL ICB) and as such I have copied our response to Rob Hurd, Chief Executive, and Toby Lambert, Executive Director of Strategy and Population Health.

Turning to the recommendations of the Committee in relation to the Pre Consultation Business Case (PCBC) and how we are ensuring these are reflected in our work:

**1. Inclusion of an option of refurbishment and investment at the Gordon Hospital so that modernised inpatient services can be reopened which meet high-quality standards of care for patients**

We are assessing a number of options involving the reopening of inpatient services at the Gordon. These include fully reopening the three wards with bed numbers the same as in 2019, and options which reopen with fewer beds, but which are closer to delivering good quality modern facilities. None of these options will fully meet a standard of “high quality modernised inpatient services,” because the physical constraints of the building and its location mean it is impossible to provide high quality modern inpatient services that comply with the Royal College of Psychiatrist’s essential, expected and desirable standards – for example, good, safe unlimited access to outdoor space.

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## **2. Consideration of the implications of rising demand for mental health services in RBKC, the inpatient services needed to help meet the mental health needs of RBKC residents (particularly in the context of the Grenfell tragedy), and commissioning of additional acute mental health inpatient provision as required**

We have closely monitored the demand for inpatient care throughout the temporary closure of the wards and have seen a drop in the number of admissions across RBKC and the City of Westminster. We are required to find an inpatient bed for every resident who needs one, with assessments carried out by NHS and Local Authority staff. In RBKC, we were admitting an average of 44 people a month in 2019/20. This number has fallen to 30 people a month in 2022/23. We believe this is as a result of improvements in community services which allow us to meet the needs of more people in the community and prevent the need for an admission. Evidence tells us that treatment and support in the community is clinically more effective in most cases.

We know there will be times when the right care for a resident involves an admission, and it is our duty to provide an inpatient bed for anyone who needs one who is a resident of the boroughs CNWL serves. We currently have no inappropriate out of area placements (inpatient admissions for residents of CNWL boroughs to beds not provided by CNWL).

We have considered future demand for inpatient services as part of our analysis. Projections suggest an increase in demand is unlikely, however we will be monitoring this closely and if we need to commission additional beds to support changing demand in the future we will work with NWL ICB to do so.

### **Dedicated Service and Grenfell Health and Wellbeing Service**

Our Dedicated Service and Grenfell Health and Wellbeing Service have worked with the bereaved and survivors to understand the support that they want and need. We know that overwhelming demand is for improved community services. All the information we have suggests that while the Grenfell tragedy has increased demand for community mental health services, there has been no corresponding increase in demand for inpatient hospital provision. We are continuing to work with the Grenfell community and NWL ICB to define the future of these really important services.

## **3. Urgent review of any pressure on services at St Charles Hospital, and wider mental health services in RBKC, which have resulted since the temporary closure of the Gordon Hospital wards**

We continue to monitor the impact on other, non inpatient services in the City of Westminster and RBKC. We believe the reduction we have experienced in inappropriate out of area placements suggests we have the right overall bed capacity across NWL, once we take into account additional beds which we are putting in place to support patients from outer London boroughs who

historically received care at the Gordon and would currently need to be admitted into St Charles.

We have seen more than twice the amount of people accessing community mental health hubs in RBKC over the last three years and are proud that our community teams are seeing and meeting the needs of many more people in the borough.

We are working closely with your officers to understand any impact on AMHP services and with the Police to do the same and are grateful for their support. We have yet to find any data or evidence which suggests that the best way of addressing pressures on wider mental health services is to significantly increase inpatient provision.

Although we are able to place residents into a bed when they need one we accept that sometimes the process is too long and admissions can be delayed as a result. We believe the services which will have the biggest impact on wider pressures are those such as the Mental Health Crisis Assessment Service (MHCAS) which are directly focussed on supporting people experiencing crisis. Our experience shows that those who are assessed in the MHCAS are less likely to end up needing an acute bed than those assessed in A&E. The options under consideration for the consultation include how we can further augment this provision.

Thank you again to the Committee for your support and input into the process so far. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my team if you would like to discuss any aspects further.

Yours sincerely,



Claire Murdoch  
**Chief Executive**

cc.

Rob Hurd, Chief Executive, North West London ICB

Toby Lambert, Executive Director of Strategy & Population Health, North West London ICB

Ann Sheridan, Managing Director, Jameson Division, CNWL