

AGENDA

HEALTHWATCH HAVERING GOVERNANCE BOARD

1.30 PM
TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2024
TO BE HELD AT THE OFFICE

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of interest in the business before the Board

3 Minutes of meeting held 15 October 2024, and any matters arising

Attached.

4 Finance Report

(a) Finance Report for October

The report is attached.

Expenditure for the month was £12,364, which is broadly in line with recent monthly outgoings. Expenditure included £714 to buy the office photocopier as authorised at the last meeting.

Bank balances at the end of the month were:

Current - £16,082

Savings - £12,034

There is nothing to which attention needs to be drawn.

(b) Employers' National Insurance Contributions

All employers are required to pay National Insurance Contributions (NICs) in addition to any NICs that are payable by employees themselves. Currently, Employers' NICs are levied at a rate of 13.8% on earnings above the threshold of £9,500 pa.

In the budget in October, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer raised Employers' NIC from next April by a considerable margin: the rate was increased to 15% and the threshold was lowered to £5,000 pa. The combined effect, for all employers, is to significantly increase the cost of NICs.

For us, a rough calculation suggests Employer NICs will rise from about £6,920 this year to around £9,980, an increase of some £3,060 (nearly 45%).

Small companies can, however, claim an Employment Allowance (EA) under which contributions of £5,000 are rebated: if the EA were applied to us this year, NICs would drop to £1,920; EA will rise next April to £10,500 so no Employer NICs would be payable at all.

Previously, we were told that we did not qualify for EA because HMRC advise that:

“You cannot claim if you're a public body or business doing more than half your work in the public sector (such as local councils and NHS services) - unless you're a charity.”

That HMRC advice does not exactly reflect the wording of the legislation about EA, which states:

“A person cannot qualify for an employment allowance for a tax year if, at any time in the tax year, the person is a **public authority which is not a charity**. (**public authority**” includes ... the performance of functions ... which are of a public nature)”

The coming increase in NICs has, however, prompted a review of whether in fact our activities constitute those of a “public authority”) as our functions, although reflecting the views of the public, are not necessarily “of a public nature”.

Accordingly, it is intended to apply to HMRC for the EA. If granted, EA will apply not only to the current year but retrospectively to the past four financial years.

The Board will be kept informed of the progress of this application.

5 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

An oral report will be made at the meeting.

6 NHS North East London/North East London Health and Care Partnership

An oral report will be made at the meeting on any issues.

7 Safeguarding and Quality - update

To receive an oral update from Ms Old.

8 Engagement projects - update

- **Long COVID**

Following the agreement in principle of the HPbP Board to setting up a Peer Support Group, the working group comprising Public Health Havering, North PCN and Healthwatch is now looking further into the logistics of organising it.

An oral report will be made at the meeting.

- **NHS Dentistry in NEL**

- This project is on hold pending a response from NHSNEL.

- **Creative Health Havering**

- Healthwatch Essex are arranging an exhibition at the Mercury Mall over the Christmas/New Year and we will be helping them. The opportunity for the exhibition to be staged at other venues in Havering (possibly Queen's Theatre and St George's Centre) is being explored.

- **North East London Research Engagement Network (REN)**

- The REN survey has been completed and the results are still awaited.

- **Enter & View visits**

- The report on the Mealtime visits at Queen's Hospital has been published, together with a detailed action plan from BHRUT which will be the subject of a follow-up visit in due course.

The report of the E&V visit to the Greenwood Practice has been cleared with the practice and published.

The report of the E&V visit to the ELIFAR facilities (formerly Lilliputs) in Wingletye Lane is in hand.

The latest E&V visits to A&E are now in hand. The outcome of them will be reported in due course, together with reports about last year's E&V and subsequent informal visits.

An initial visit to the new St George's Centre will be taking place on 4 December, with a formal E&V visit to take place once it has been open for a couple of months.

- **Patient Participation Groups (PPG)**

- It is apparent that the re-establishment of PPGs is no longer as high a priority for NHSNEL as was previously the case. The new appointee who it was thought would be taking this forward is now in

post but has been tasked to concentrate on reaching out to minority ethnicities. We have pointed out that the demographics of Havering are very different to those of the neighbouring boroughs in NEL and that a different approach is needed here; and that PPGs might be a useful way of persuading those whose culture does not recognise the GP system to become more involved with their GP practice.

- **Mystery Shopping – provision of Hearing Loop systems at health facilities**
 - Both the Polyclinic and Queen’s Hospital visits took place at the end of October. The visits went well; hearing loops were observed in place and staff knew how to use them.
- **NSPCC Pants Campaign**
 - It has not proved possible to arrange the focus groups we had intended to so, instead, an online survey has been launched widely. The findings will be reported in due course.
- **Defibrillators in Havering**
 - Contact with the LAS has produced a list of the locations in Havering known to them where defibrillators (defibs) are available. There are about 180 such locations but the LAS have identified a need for at least one further defib in each of the following areas: Havering Park/Chase Cross, Rise Park, Hylands and Elm Park West. They have asked for help in identifying possible locations in those areas.

9 St George’s Centre - progress

An oral report will be made at the meeting on progress with this project.

10 “Fixing the NHS”

The Government has launched a consultation exercise on the future of the NHS, prior to developing a 10 Year Health Plan for England. They have invited “everyone” to contribute. This stage of the consultation ends on 2 December.

It is open to us to respond to the consultation by answering a series of questions (see the paper from the Department of Health & Social Care appended to this agenda).

The Board is therefore invited to consider the DHSC questions and to decide (a) whether to respond and, if so (b) what that response should be.

Please note that it is open to individuals to comment – go to <https://change.nhs.uk/en-GB/projects/start-here> .

11 Veteran Friendly Framework programme

Royal Star & Garter, Royal British Legion and the NHS are working in collaboration to ensure that every veteran in the UK who lives in a residential care setting receives more tailored support.

Details of the scheme are attached to the agenda.

Although we are not directly involved in the scheme, in future E&V visits to residential care and nursing homes for the elderly we can ask whether the home is signed up to the scheme.

12 Any other business

Other matters (if any)

13 Next meeting

The next meeting is on 21 January 2025, at the office.