



ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community
March 2018 Newsletter

Charity No: 1043081

Our members join the 60,000-strong NHS march in Central London on 3 February



POLCE. . . . update NHS by Pam Zinkin

We have barely understood the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs), in which we have no say, or Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs) a dangerous system imported from USA private medical insurance which we are still resisting, but now here is yet another new policy.

This is known as POLCE, which stands for "procedures of limited clinical effectiveness".

Our Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have to consider rationing medical procedures. These are:

- Benign skin lesions
- Cataract surgery
- Interventional treatments for back pain
- Hip arthroplasty
- Varicose veins
- Knee Arthroplasty
- Shoulder decompression
- Knee arthroscopy

Whilst it may be true that some of these procedures need evaluation, this should only be based on **clinical evidence and must NOT be on economic grounds**. We already have the National institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) which aims to do this. This is not a way of deciding what procedures are effective but simply to save money.

It is a threat to the integrity of GPs who make decisions in our interests. It is particularly dangerous because it has been introduced secretly (like STPs); also because any proposals to change existing CCG policies will be clinically led and subject to required levels of patient engagement, public consultation and health inequalities impact assessment. But when the authorities found public consultation too "difficult" it was decided to ignore the legal requirement and just go ahead with considering these policies!

We need to actively monitor what happens through our own experience.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

We visited our Chairman, George Durack in Whittington Hospital's critical care ward. He was being treated for pneumonia and flu. We talked to him about his experience.

It had become increasingly difficult for George to see his local GP except to get an appointment at about a fortnight in the future. But he knew he could not wait that long, and so on 21st February his daughter Elaine took him to the surgery where the receptionist directed him to a GP who advised that he should go to the hospital.

Elaine drove him to the A&E department, arriving at around 10 a.m. Although the medics ensured that he received immediate treatment of a saline drip and anti-biotics, George remained on a trolley for the next nine hours!

Then he was made comfortable in an A&E cubicle, but was not able to go into a proper bed in a ward for another five hours. George saw the staff, stretched to the limit, caring for patients in the most difficult of circumstances. He told us that he was just one of around ten patients waiting on trolleys for beds.



George's experience bears out the King's Fund report that the total number of NHS hospital beds in England has more than halved over the past 30 years, from around 299,000 to 142,000. This is fewer acute hospital beds per person than almost any other comparable health system.

Despite clear evidence that hospitals are overstretched, the report finds that in some parts of the country, sustainability and transformation plans (STPs) have put forward significant cuts in hospital beds, in some cases proposing to reduce the number of beds at a faster rate than the national trend in recent years. The King's Fund concludes that the scale of reductions is unrealistic.

We must also ask the question: what happens if a frail elderly sick person has nobody to help in these circumstances?

Clearly speed was of the essence! George's daughter was crucial to getting him from home to the GP's surgery and from there to the hospital.

We wish George a speedy recovery. Our picture shows Jeremy Corbyn visiting him in the critical care ward on 23rd February.

Good food and good company at our "End the Winter Blues" party



We had plenty of food and lots of chat at our "End the Winter Blues" party on 10th February in The Bungalow at Highbury View. It certainly wasn't an end-to-Winter-start-of-Spring-day! Freezing rain meant that our intrepid party-goers arrived cold and wet, so we were glad we decided on hot soup, cauliflower cheese and vegetarian pasta as a party winter-warmer! But these hot dishes were followed by some lovely sandwiches, cakes and apple pie, so all tastes were covered. Our thanks go to Steve for once again coming up trumps with the cakes! Many of our party-goers took apple pie to eat at home. Our raffle made £54. So even though (as we write) the winter weather prevails, we are looking forward to the Spring and will soon announce a date for our GARDEN PARTY!

Joyce will no doubt be embarrassed that she is both one of our “cover” girls on the front of this Newsletter, but also glamorous on page three. But we think that these two pictures of the same member show the range of Islington Pensioners Forum.

On page one Joyce is dressed up against the cold and the wet on Saturday 3rd February on an important demonstration in defence of our National Health Service and here she is one week



later, on Saturday 10th February, at our “End the Winter Blues” party.

See the back page. We have weekly bingo, a weekly lunch, fortnightly IT and smart’phone classes, monthly Forum meetings with interesting speakers..... Show this Newsletter to your friends and neighbours. Islington Pensioners Forum is the friendly, interesting group standing up for today’s and tomorrow’s pensioners, INVITE YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN US!

Sotheby Mews Day Centre has another 12 months

The Council has decided to delay the closure of Sotheby Mews Day Centre (Highbury East) until the end of February 2019 allowing more time to iron out details. Local Councillor Osh Gantly told users of the centre that this would enable a greater degree of consultation and a greater degree of trust-building.

Councillors reported this decision to a meeting of Sotheby campaigners on Tuesday 20th February, but the campaigners went on to hand over their 2,000-strong petition to the Council meeting on 22nd February. underlining their disappointment that they had not been properly consulted and that they fear the loss of

their much-loved accessible centre, especially as Highbury Roundhouse (also in Highbury East), the proposed new centre, is not on a bus route.

Clearly the Council is caught between the effect of the £200m cuts in government grants, the aim to maintain current services and the need to open up space for the building of genuinely affordable housing.

The Council will now spend more time working with Highbury Roundhouse and the Sotheby campaigners to make sure that the best possible arrangements are finally put in place.

Hanley Crouch brickworks community centre opens in Tollington ward

The Brickworks is officially open! And what’s more the new state of the art building provides 23 new council house properties as well as a community centre offering a variety of services benefitting both the old and the young.



ISINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM : A HUB FOR ALL OLDER PEOPLE!
Following recognition by the Council that IPF could publicise all the services provided in the borough, the National Lottery has granted us the resources to produce a website and database to enable us to broaden our scope to show older people an up-to-date “what’s on” all over the borough. We will keep you informed; right now the website is being designed and we are collecting information about events and regular services to satisfy all tastes and abilities — bingo, dancing, exercise, talks, outings etc. Let’s all work to overcome isolation! There’s always something going on and we will do our best to ensure that everybody knows about it!

Prostate Cancer is a Man's Disease, but.

if detected early enough, it can be cured using modern cancer therapies. SO DO NOT BE EMBARRASSED. . . . GO TO YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

A recent report revealed that deaths from prostate cancer — 11,800 a year — had for the first time overtaken breast cancer. Prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer found in men. The problem occurs more frequently in men over 70 years of age (can also be diagnosed in younger men) and those of African or Afro-Caribbean descent.

Research has found men are embarrassed to be examined, and ashamed to tell their GP or receptionist at the surgery about intimate problems.

If you are a mother, wife, son, brother, uncle or friend and a man tells you he is having these problems,

please persist that he goes to see his GP for tests.

So what are “these problems”?

- Having to get up at night to urinate
- Poor stream or urine flow
- Difficulty stopping or starting when urinating
- A feeling of urgency when needing the toilet

The test is quick and easy — the medics are thoughtful and understanding. The examination of the prostate is through the back passage to look for any suspicious lumps, and a simple blood test measures the levels of PSA in the blood.

Don't forget, prostate cancer, especially if detected early enough, can be cured using modern cancer therapies. So do not be embarrassed go to your doctor as soon as possible.

Bob Collins

Joint Chair, Islington Pensioners Forum

THE THORNY QUESTION OF CARE

Alistair Hannah and Jayne Moran came to our February Forum meeting. They are part of the Improvement Team in Islington Council's Adult Social Care Department, and responsible for Direct Payments (i.e. personal budgets for those needing social care).

Under this system a person needing care is assessed and then receives money in order to choose and pay for their own care; in so doing they become responsible for the wages, National Insurance, tax and the pension of the person they employ, as well as holidays and time off for sickness and maternity leave.

The Council will help with the business plan and pay for checks on personal assistants.

The payments are reviewed after 12 weeks and then after six months; the recipient can ask for a review at any time and have their own advocate with them

During the course of questions and discussion the thorny question: “what is social care?” was raised, for there is ambiguity about health and nursing care which has traditionally been the responsibility of the NHS and therefore free at the point of delivery and the kind of care that was set out in the 1948 National

Assistance Act (home helps, meals-on-wheels, day centres, luncheon clubs, residential care homes etc.) that was the responsibility of local authorities.

Over the years care provided by the NHS has been gradually handed over to local authorities and the term “social care” has crept in. Although in law only a qualified nurse can handle a person's drugs, the cuts in funding and the crisis in the whole care sector means that care workers without such qualifications take responsibility for a person's drugs. It seems that the care crisis has now forced the NHS to consider the implementation of Direct Payments for personal health budgets. This is likely to set up a conflict between so-called “social care” delivered by Councils and “nursing (health) care” delivered by the NHS.

This was a really interesting meeting on a subject which is not far out of news headlines on any day of the week, and which is of such concern to all people reaching the point where they are in need of care.

Members felt that we should invite Alistair and Jayne to a future meeting, especially when the government's Green Paper on Care is ready for consultation.

“Who Cares?”

A soon-to-be-published pamphlet contains the lecture given by Professor Dame June Clark on 4th October 2017 at the Royal College of Nursing headquarters as part of the Jack Jones Annual Lectures. This opens up the whole debate about nursing care and how this is being “lost” in the delivery of what is now called “social care”. It raises important questions about the delivery and funding of care and is an important contribution to the promised government Green Paper on care. We will keep members informed of publication date etc.

Blackpool! I will be back there this year

The 2017 Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool was my first visit to this National Pensioners Convention annual event, although I had visited Blackpool before.

So why the interest in this?

As a member of the Islington Pensioners Forum I am interested in anything to do with pensioners, being one myself. I wanted to hear the views of others, especially the main speakers that would be there from the different regions, especially what is happening to them with the cuts and mismanagement in some services.

There were so many different projects and speakers it was impossible to attend them all and we had to choose the ones we were most interested

in. But there was no shortage of speakers, venues to visit, stalls for literature — some for sale, some free.

Although the weather was very cold and there was a wind, I truly did enjoy every minute; besides we were all in good company. The journey there and back was a bit difficult for us older ones all hiping and hopping, but we made it. Our hotel was very near the venue, so we did not have a lot of walking there and back. The food was good and the rooms comfortable. Not forgetting the last night when we had a pleasant time in the ballroom.

This is why I can recommend it to all and I will be back there this year!

Eula Harrison

Beware Rogue Builders!

We are publishing here a letter sent by Terry Wood, raising awareness of a report which appeared in the Islington Tribune.

I was very interested to read in the *Islington Tribune* the police would like a revival of the Neighbourhood Watch and local intelligence provided by its members. In particular I am glad the police spoke of rogue builders operating in the area.

I am involved with Neighbourhood Hackney. This is my experience:

People, myself included, have been stopped in the street by rogue builders' vans. The common opener is: "We did work for your neighbour where you live. What's your address?" They even say: "We will drive you home."

This is what happened in Blackstock Road. I reported it to the police. But sadly many elderly people have fallen for it and some went to the bank to draw out money for work not done up front.

Barclays Bank now monitors money being drawn by the elderly suspecting they are the victims of fraud. They have no shame and target the elderly. I hope local Islington Police warn people in their local meetings of these scans.

Without putting yourself in danger, try to get the licence plate number and report it to the police.

ISLINGTON'S FAIR FUTURES COMMISSION

Presenting the findings and recommendations of Islington's Fair Futures Commission, Jermain Jackman (chair) and Kaleema Woodbyrne (deputy chair) explain that they and their fellow Commissioners want to overcome the situation where young people are not part of the discussions that directly impact on their lives. They wanted to make sure children, young people and their families drew on their own experiences to guide their own narrative rather than being presented with pre-existing notions of what works for them.

Their 60-page report contains background information, proposals and true reflections of what young people, parents and children consider to be important to make changes. They spoke to different pockets of the com-

munity and were particularly interested in the most vulnerable, the invisible and the voiceless. They experienced the joy of bringing together passionate young people and adults into the same room to create solutions. They shared their knowledge, experiences and ideas in order to make a difference for their own generation and the next. The report is based on themes and issues about growing up in Islington in order to make big and small changes.

We in the Islington Pensioners Forum are part of the National Pensioners Convention "Generations United" Campaign and we have invited the Commission to present the report to one of our Forum meetings. Our generation has a responsibility for the future!

INFORMATION

BINGO every Monday	1 pm at 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Lunch and a chat on Wednesdays	1 pm in the IPF Hall, address above
IT and Smart Phones on Wednesdays	3.30 p.m in the IPF Hall, address above
Thursday 15th March 10.30 a.m.	Forum meeting: Speaker from the Fair Futures Commission invited.
SEE BELOW FOR A SUGGESTED SPRING/SUMMER OUTING	AT FEBRUARY'S FORUM MEETING WE ASKED IF YOU WOULD TAKE PART IN A SUB-COMMITTEE TO DECIDE ON OUTINGS

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

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Charity Number: 1043081

Supported by Cripplegate Foundation, the Big Lottery and Islington Council

Office opens 10.30 a.m.- 2.30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, but please call first.

Sign up for our online Newsletter on our website: www.islingtonpensionersforum.org

Presidents: Jeremy Corbyn MP & Lord Smith of Finsbury

Joint Chairs: George Durack, Bob Collins

Secretary: Dot Gibson **Assistant Secretary:** Annette Thomas **Treasurer:** Eric Hill

Committee members: Frances Bradley, Joyce Herron, Supa Kusumratana, David Milner, Blanche Woodbridge, Pam Zinkin, Eddie Zissler

We would like to know whether members are interested in one of the River Lee boat trips departing at Broxbourne Riverside. There are various choices:

- **Sunday Lunch Cruise 3 hrs £27.50 per person**
- **Fish & Chips Cruise 2½ hrs £18.00 per person**
- **Cream Tea Cruise 2 hrs £14.00 per person**
- **High Tea Cruise 2 hrs £18.00 per person**
- **Hot Pie Cruise 2½ hrs £16.00 per person**
- **Ploughman's Lunch 2½ hrs £16.00 per person**

Please let us know your name, address and telephone number if you would like us to organise one of these cruises and let us know which one you would prefer.

**Hand in this information at the Forum meeting or post to:
IPF Outings, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN**