

8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2021

8.1 Question from Sarah Jameson

Since April 2019 when the NHS Primary Care BSL supplier was changed to D A Languages, Deaf patients who do not use technology have been unable to access Primary Care at all. Inaccessible healthcare is contrary to the Equality Act and the NHS Accessible Information Standards. When will this be remedied? For the previous 25 years a seamless service was provided by Deaf Connexions. The NHS Rapid Review identifies excellent BSL service provision occurs when local Deaf specialist organisations are used.

Response from Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board

Thank you for your question.

Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny (NHOSC) made its disappointment at NHS England & Improvement's (NHSE&I) lack of progress to improve the BSL interpreting service for primary care clear on 15 July and the subject of 'Access to local NHS services for patients with sensory impairments' is on the agenda again for 20 January 2022. It is recognised that there have been problems with the service since its launch in 2019 and the pandemic has held up progress towards resolving them over the past 18 months. NHSE&I assured NHOSC that a pilot service to assist local BSL users who faced real barriers in accessing the interpreting service would be launched in July. Re-procurement of the overall Translation and Interpreting services for the East of England was also underway and a new service for the longer term was expected to be in place by November 2021.

We were encouraged to see that NHSE&I and the Clinical Commissioning Group recognised there were problems and were very keen to speak with people who could help them get to the root of the operational issues.

NHOSC has also recommended that the CCG and providers should consider mandatory training with regular refreshers for front line staff in the requirements and implementation of the Accessibility Information Standards.

8.2 Question from Cllr Brenda Jones

There are at least 8 private mental hospitals still operating in Norfolk. Given the continuing pattern of inadequate and dangerous care in similar hospitals what has the Health and Wellbeing Board been doing to ensure that safe and adequate care is provided, and how have these repeated tragedies been allowed to happen on our watch?

Response from Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board

Thank you for your question.

The important Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) published by the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) on the 9 September 2021 made a set of key recommendations, and I am sure that I speak on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board when I express my wholehearted dismay at the avoidable deaths of three patients in the hospital which should have been providing good health care and protecting them.

The CCG have outlined actions which review the health care of other patients in private hospitals, in line with requirements from NHS England's response to the SAR.

Because these services are health services, the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed to accept an agenda item to discuss this matter and take oversight of progress.

In addition, the NSAB will take a coordinating role to ensure that the recommendations of the SAR are implemented. It would be the Health and Wellbeing Board's expectation that every organisation prioritises its response to that process.