

Newsletter Issue 13

3rd December 2020

Chat from the Chair

Dear Reader,

As we emerge from Lockdown Two and into Tier 2 many will find the rules confusing and be anxious that they are doing the right thing. Keep up to date with our short guide. Whilst some of us can head out to restaurants, shops, and gyms there are many more who are still not able to enjoy these freedoms due to health conditions or concern about the virus. Moreover, as we head into colder weather and darker nights we do not always see as much of our neighbours as we normally would so please keep an eye out for those who are alone or isolated. If you have any safeguarding concerns, please do raise them, all the contact details are below.



In this Newsletter we are very privileged to be able to share with you the tremendous work Shirley Islam and the community carers do to support those who work unpaid 24/7 looking after family and friends. Their work is vitally important and not always recognised outside the home. Thank you, Shirley, and congratulations, on your award.

We know that the recent months have had impact on mental health and this month members of the East London Mental Health Trust will join us at our Board meeting to talk about their work. Do come and ask your questions.

With Christmas nearly upon us, making sure we know how to access health and social care services is important, our bulletin next week will give you all of the details, and please visit our website for more information.

Finally, the vaccination for Covid has arrived and will be rolled out over the coming weeks. As soon as we know more, we will update our website so please keep checking in.

In the meantime, please do tell us about your experiences and let us know what more you would like to see from us.

Stay safe

Gail Beer Chair, Healthwatch City of London

Healthwatch City of London Board Meeting in Public

Our next Board Meeting in Public will be held on Friday 11th December between 16:00 – 18:00 via Zoom.

Gail Beer, Chair, will give an update on the work of Healthwatch City of London. We will be joined by Dean Henderson from East London NHS Foundation Trust who will give us an overview on their plans for Mental Health service provision post lockdown. We will also be joined by David Maher from City and Hackney CCG, who will provide an update.

Please email info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk to express your interest in attending and for joining details.

<https://www.healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk/event/2020-12-11/healthwatch-city-london-board-meeting-public>

Latest COVID-19 data for the City of London

The joint City and Hackney Public Health Intelligence Team produce regular statistics on Covid-19 levels in the City. The site below breaks down the cases in the City, and in Hackney, and by Ward, this enables residents to see the wider picture of infection rates. The site is updated regularly. <https://hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus-data>

London set for Tier 2

The second national lockdown ended yesterday on 2 December, the government is replacing this with a regionally differentiated approach, where different tiers of restrictions apply in different parts of the country. **London has been placed in Tier 2.** Restrictions are to be reviewed on a fortnightly basis.

Tier 2 is for areas with a higher or rapidly rising level of infections, where some additional restrictions need to be in place. In Tier 2:

- you must not socialise with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place
- you must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden or a public space
- businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs
- pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
- hospitality businesses selling food or drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
 - provide table service only, in premises which sell alcohol
 - close between 11pm and 5am

- stop taking orders after 10pm
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm, as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- early closure (11pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres, and concert halls can stay open beyond 11pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, subject to social contact rules and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- places of worship remain open, but you must not socialise with people from outside of your household or support bubble while you are indoors there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and receptions, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events such as wakes or stone settings.
- organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
- you can continue to travel to venues or amenities which are open, but should aim to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible
- if you live in a tier 2 area, you must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through a tier 3 area as a part of a longer journey

Raising safeguarding concerns

Lockdown has been a difficult time for many, and as Gail said above, now we are heading into colder weather and darker nights we do not always see as much of our neighbours as we normally would so please keep an eye out for those who are alone or isolated.

To report safeguarding concerns please use the following:

Call 999 if you think a person is at risk of immediate harm

Adults:

Call: **020 7332 1224** - 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Call: **020 8356 2300** - for all other times, including weekends and Bank Holidays

Email: [the Adult Duty Team](#)

Full contact details for the [Adult Social Care Team](#)

Children:

Call: **020 7332 3621** 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Call: **020 8356 2710** – for all other times, including weekends and Bank Holidays.

Email: [the Child Duty Team](#)

Dentistry during the pandemic survey launch

In response to COVID-19, dental services have had to drastically change the way they work. Today we have launched a survey to find out how you managed to access dental services during the pandemic.

Most dentists closed from April to September with dental care being provided either remotely with analgesia and antibiotics or through Urgent Dental Care Centres (available by referral from your dentist or NHS 111).

Since September, most dentists in the City of London will now have opened to existing patients.

We are keen to hear about your experiences of accessing dentistry during this time so that we can understand how provision in the City of London is meeting needs.

The responses that you provide will be treated anonymously and will help us understand the state of care locally and drive improvements where necessary during this period. Please complete the survey by clicking on the link below.

[Dental Services access during Coronavirus Survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](#)

Listening to City Carers event

If you are a carer or unpaid carer in the City join us for a discussion on Thursday 10th December between 10am and 11am to share your experience of providing care during Covid-19 and to help others in a similar situation.

The session will be held over Zoom.

<https://zoom.us/j/91496290449?pwd=b3pGdVRDeG85ZUFGTi9RRUdCb0hsQT09>

Meeting ID: 914 9629 0449

Passcode: 376899

Telephone: +44 203 901 7895

Meeting ID: 914 9629 0449

Passcode: 376899

We are aware that not everyone has access to our online newsletter, and we would really appreciate it if you could share the joining details with any carer, that you are aware of, who may want to join.

Reminder to get your Flu vaccination

A reminder to get your flu vaccination if you are eligible. Flu vaccination is particularly important this winter to ensure that the NHS does not have to cope with the twin pressures of rising Covid-19 cases, alongside a national flu outbreak.

Speak to your GP or pharmacist to get the free flu vaccination. Children aged two to three can get a free nasal spray at their GP. School aged children up to year 7 will be offered the vaccine at school. Who is eligible to receive the free flu vaccine now? Pregnant women, children aged 2- 11 years old, if you are a member of a shielding household, persons who are 65+ years old, frontline health and social care workers, and it is now available to 50-64-year olds.

Those with a long-term health condition such as:

- a heart problem a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma
- kidney disease
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment) liver disease
- had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- diabetes
- a neurological condition, e.g. multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy
- a learning disability

- a problem with your spleen, e.g. sickle cell disease, or you have had your spleen removed
- are seriously overweight (BMI of 40 and above)

Square Mile Foodbank

The Square Mile Food Bank was set up by Age UK City of London as a Covid emergency response. The Corporation of London has decided that it is time to move to a 'steady state' food bank provision in the City, and they are currently in the process of transferring their beneficiaries to another long established food bank in Tower Hamlets or a community centre in Islington.

The Square Mile Foodbank will be sending out Christmas / Holiday hampers to many of their beneficiaries on 11th December. The hampers will be delivered to many food bank recipients, but also a little something to a number of elderly, vulnerable, isolated or lonely City residents who would benefit from a little seasonal goodwill.

They are seeking donations, over the next few weeks, of Christmas goodies and treat toiletries instead of the 'usual' food bank items.

Items are needed by 9th December, in particular they would like donations of: Dried fruits, Nuts, Cheese twists and savoury snacks, Cheese Biscuits, Chocolate and biscuit selections, Chocolate Oranges and coins and bars, Christmas puddings and cakes, Stollen and Lebkuchen, Yule log and Panettone, Jams, chutney and pickles.

The usual collection points at Speed House (by the car park attendants, all day, every day), Lauderdale Tower (**every** morning Monday to Friday from 10am-11am), and at Golden Lane Community Centre (Monday to Friday 10am-5pm). These will all be operational up to and including Thursday 10th December.

Perishable items can be accepted at **Golden Lane Estate Community Centre only**. Tuesday 8, Wednesday 9, and Thursday 10 December between 10am – 5pm. In particular, they require Butter, Cheese and Fresh Fruit.

Caring for someone? You are not alone. Meet Shirley, one of the City's unpaid carers.

This year, like no other, has placed an emphasis on the role of Carers in society. When the term 'Carer' is used, the majority of people think of paid Carers provided by the NHS or Social Services. But what about the army of unpaid Carers on whom our society relies?

Shirley Islam is one such unpaid carer. Born and raised in the City, she is a carer of her elderly parents and became a carer at a young age. At the time she just thought it was something you do a duty as a daughter, your parents are unwell, of course you are going to look after them. She didn't realise that in fact, she was a carer.

Whilst on a visit to the GP surgery three years ago, Shirley noticed a leaflet which asked the question, 'Are you looking after someone, Are you a Carer?', it had a list e.g 'do you help with shopping, picking up prescriptions, go to appointments and then she realised.

It wasn't until the Care Act 2014 which came into force in April 2015, significant rights for unpaid Carers were recognised. These rights include,

- A duty on local councils to prevent, reduce and delay need for support, including the needs of carers.
- A right to a [carer's assessment](#) based on the appearance of need.
- A right for carers' eligible needs to be met.
- A duty on local councils to provide information and advice to carers in relation to their caring role and their own needs.
- A duty on NHS bodies (NHS England, clinical commissioning groups, NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts) to co-operate with local authorities in delivering the Care Act functions.

Shirley advises all Carers to let their GP, hospital know if you are looking after someone, it makes the access to services easier, you can book a back to back GP appointment for yourself and the person you care for which will enable you to speak to the GP/Dr directly about concerns for the cared for. As a carer you are also entitled to free Flu Jab irrespective of age.

It is important to have a carers assessment (this is undertaken by adult social care), this will also allow the City to be aware of how many carers there really are in the City, which in turn can influence the services provided to residents. City connections is the contracted service by City of London to provide information and support too. People often don't realise some of the support is not currently means tested for unpaid carer. Some Carers are giving 24 hour care, for others it can be shopping for someone, cleaning someone's house, picking up prescriptions, being a friendly ear etc; and this could be you, a family member, friend or neighbour.

In the last census in 2011, the City of London had 500+ residents self-identified as carers. Shirley wonders in the next census in March 2021 how many will identify now? with an aging City Population and the effects of the pandemic.

City Carers Community

During the first lockdown this year, Shirley set up a Carer Zoom sessions for small caring community in the City of London. The sessions, which are now fortnightly, are designed as 'share and learn sessions', where Carers can share experiences, give advice to others in similar situations and be an empathetic community to each other. Shirley tells us, 'You need humour to get through what can be very difficult times, we are all juggling balls and need the help and support of others'

Initially when setting it up, Shirley had to learn to use Zoom herself, passing on her new found skills to other city carers.

Recently Shirley has been awarded a grant of £500 from the Culture Mile's Imagine Fund. The grant will be used to support the 'City Carers Community', it will fund a paid for Zoom account to enable longer Zoom sessions, telephone access , increase of the share and learn sessions open to city residents, as well as limited group activities to promote health and wellbeing of the Carers taking part. These activities include monoprinting, origami and qigong.

City Carers Community is an idea established by Shirley, as she states "Unpaid carers are largely invisible in society, even though it could happen to anyone of us, at anytime. This summer has placed a spotlight on us, as so many people now find themselves in the position of looking after a friend or family member.

Through running these sessions, a trust has been established, meaning there is an openness to share what we need and feel supported amongst carer peers who 'get it'. With the absence of social settings means the absence of hugs, this is the closest we can get to feel more like us, rather than the label of a carer."

For more information on City Carers Community please email citycarerscommunity@gmail.com

Congratulations Shirley on winning the grant, it is well deserved.

Get in touch with Healthwatch City of London

Visit our website for more information, news and events, have your say about your care, and spread the word about Healthwatch City of London.

Web: www.healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk **Email:** info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk
Tel: 020 3745 9563 **Twitter:** @HealthwatchCoL **Facebook:** @CoLHealthwatch

Portoken Health and Community Centre, 14-16 Little Somerset Street, London E1 8AH