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GENERAL NOTES

1. **Our “Hard of Hearing” campaign:** This campaign could have huge impact on facilities available locally for people with poor hearing, but only if our members participate actively and encourage other members of the public to do so too. Our initial pack and question papers can be freely copied or obtained on request to the Chairman, Tel: 01895 636095.
2. **Publicity help needed:** Our Executive wants to publicise Community Voice in social media. Volunteers willing to assist, please contact any Executive Member.

NORTH WEST LONDON REGIONAL NEWS

1. **Prescription restrictions:** NHS North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups has launched two changes to prescription of medicines across its eight boroughs, Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, and Westminster:
 - i) Restricting prescription of products that can be purchased without a prescription
 - ii) Reducing waste associated with repeat prescribing, particularly routine re-ordering by pharmacistsbut the following groups of people are exempted from the new restrictions:
 - School age children, if the product needs to be given at school.
 - Care home residents
 - Anyone officially declared homeless
 - People with a diagnosis of dementia
 - People with a diagnosed learning disability
 - Individuals with funded care packages that require a carer to administer a medicine or treatment
2. **A&E Four Hour Waiting Times:** In August, Hillingdon Hospital achieved 88.2% success, which was below the 90% target, with London North West Healthcare Trust achieving even less with 85% in August and 81.2% in September. However Hillingdon Urgent Care Centre achieved over 99% in both August and September.

London Ambulance Service:

1. **London Ambulance Service response times are the best!:** LAS has been reported by Sheffield University as the best performing Ambulance Trust for response times. New standards started in late October and subsequently only the following will be reported:
 - Category 1: Life threatening injury or illness – target 7 minutes
 - Category 2: Emergency calls e.g. strokes – target 18 minutes
 - Category 3: Urgent calls, may be treated at home – target 120 minutes.
 - Category 4: Less urgent - advice over phone or referred to GP or pharmacist

Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS FT:

- 1. Finance:** The Trust has a planned deficit of £5.7m for 2017/18.
- 2. Wimpole Street Outpatients and Diagnostics:** Income in September was £83k better than plan although year to date it was £176k below plan.
- 3. Nurse staffing:** Registered nurse staffing at the Royal Brompton site averaged 91% for days in September and 85% for nights due to below plan activity in the heart division, particularly in private patients and critical care where refurbishment works continue. On the Harefield site registered nurse staffing averaged 99% of plan on days and 103% on nights as ward activity was close to what was expected - apart from the transplant wards, where activity and acuity remained high.
- 4. Conflict of Interest Policy:** Hospitality of up to £50 need not be declared, hospitality of £50 to £150 must be authorised in advance, and above £150 must be refused

HARROW NEWS

London North-West Healthcare NHS Trust

- 1. Car parking charges:** Charges for people visiting Northwick Park, Ealing and Central Middlesex hospitals changed on Monday 6th November 2017.

	Old tariff	New tariff	Change
Up to 1 hr	£2.60	£2.70	+10p
Up to 2hr	£4.90	£5.10	+20p
Up to 3 hr	-	£5.50	New
Up to 5hrs	£6.30	£6.50	+20p
Up to 8hrs	£9.40	£9.80	+40p
Over 8hrs	£12.20	£12.50	+40p

The following concessionary schemes remain unchanged:

- 5 and 7 day pass (offering discount on hourly rates)
- £1 charge for patients receiving dialysis and for cancer patients undergoing treatment, surgery and follow-up (for 24 hours)
- £5 charge for frequent outpatient attendees, visitors with relatives that are gravely ill and visitors who have an extended stay in the hospital (for 24 hours)
- 25% discount off standard tariffs for visitors to the Regional Hyper-Acute Rehabilitation Unit (RRU)
- Free parking for blue badge holders (for six hours)

Northwick Park Urgent Care Centre

- 1. Northwick Park Urgent Care Centre:** The June Care Quality Commission inspection rated this service as “Requires improvement”. An action plan has been developed.

HILLINGDON NEWS

Launch of Brunel Partnership

The Brunel Partners Academic Centre for Health Sciences was launched at Brunel University in a high profile event on 17th November. Linking the University with the Hillingdon Hospitals NHS FT and Central and North West London NHS FT, the new partners plan to develop health care for local people, academic research, and staff training – a pioneering and exciting combination in which it could lead the country and the world.

The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS FT

- 1. Appointment of an Academic Centre Support Officer:** Applications for this new post closed on 3rd November. The post arose because a pioneering new partnership between Brunel University London, The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust aims to revolutionise the way health and social care is delivered in the community by launching the new Brunel Partners Academic Centre for Health Sciences. This will provide research, develop new methods of healthcare delivery, and train future generations of healthcare professionals.
- 2. Infections at The Hillingdon Hospitals FT:** One case of MRSA and four cases of Clostridium Difficile were reported to the end of July this year, but with no lapses in care. The Trust also had one case of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) on which it is working closely with Public Health England.

Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group

- 1. Primary care staff recruitment by 2020/21:**
 - GP Recruitment:** The CCG aims to recruit ten new GPs per year to total 40 new GPs by 2020/21. It will work with General Practices to ensure that employment conditions are attractive, making Hillingdon a good place for GPs to work.
 - Nurse recruitment:** Nurse placements will be extended from 38 to 55.
 - Apprenticeships for receptionists, admin staff, health care assistants and nursing associates :** These will be increased to 30 apprenticeships.
 - Pharmacists will be upskilled:** So that they can undertake patient consultations.
- 2. Central & North West London Community Services:** Services are performing to the level required by key performance indicators and there are low levels of staff vacancies and sickness. Patients report good satisfaction with the services provided
- 3. Hillingdon Children and Young People's Mental Health Services:** Hillingdon is now in the third year of its five year plan for these services. In response to a 14% increase in referrals to these specialist services since 2014, more patients have been seen than originally expected. but the target of seeing 85% of referrals within 18 weeks is not expected to be reached until the end of November 2017. The groups of children seen as vulnerable for poor mental health and emotional wellbeing are:
 - Looked after children
 - Those in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System
 - Young carers
 - Children who have been abused or neglected
 - Children presenting in cof plan risis who cannot be managed by local services

SOUTH WEST HERTFORDSHIRE

West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust

- 1. Fund raising for child patients at Watford General Hospital:** A glittering ball is being held for the sixth time at the Watford Hilton Hotel, 7.30pm to midnight on 24th November, including a three course dinner with wine, a lottery, an auction, dancing, and a "dress to impress" dress code.

Funding is for a new echo machine, TVs and a Christmas party for paediatric patients. The echo machine, which costs £38,000, scans for cardiac problems and heart abnormalities. The new machine would mean that patients could have their heart scan on the ward rather than at alternative locations.

To donate, or to purchase tickets, £40 per head, Tel: 01923 436693.

- 2. Non-emergency patient transport:** This is now being provided in Hertfordshire by the East of England Ambulance Service. To check eligibility for transport or to book a

journey Tel: 01603 481208. The contact centre is open every day from 8am-6pm, with an answer machine service operating outside of those hours.

Three Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group

1. Restricted surgery:

- Obese' patients will not be referred for routine surgery unless, over nine months, they reduce their weight to an acceptable level. This applies unless a surgery wait would be more harmful.
- Similarly, smokers will be required to quit smoking before non-urgent surgery.

2. Restrictions on prescriptions:

- Gluten-free food will no longer be generally available on prescription.
- Nor in most cases items easily bought from local shops for short-term conditions.

3. Fertility treatment and sterilisation restrictions:

- Specialist fertility and IVF treatments and female sterilisation will only be funded in exceptional circumstances.
- Vasectomies will still be funded as this is cost effective.

GENERAL HEALTH NEWS

Epilepsy Drug Risks to Child in Womb Known Four Decades Ago

(Guardian 27.9.17)

Warnings to women that an epilepsy drug, Epilim, could cause birth defects and developmental problems in their babies could have been made public more than 40 years ago, the Fetal Anti-Convulsant Syndrome Association told a hearing of the European Medicines Agency in London on 26th September 2017.

An estimated 20,000 British children have been severely harmed because their mothers were prescribed the drug which contains sodium valproate.

UK medicine regulators knew the risks when they were considering licensing the drug but documents from 1973 show they thought that telling patients "could give rise to fruitless anxiety". The Committee on the Safety of Medicines said the warning should not go on the package inserts.

Babies whose mothers are prescribed the epilepsy drug during pregnancy run an 11% risk of birth defects and a 40% risk of developmental problems (Autism etc.) The Epilepsy Society said a survey of 2,000 young women with epilepsy in August 2017 found that 68% of them did not know of the drug's dangers.

Acid Reflux Drug Linked to Stomach Cancer – a current risk

(Guardian 1.11.17)

A drug used to treat acid reflux & stomach ulcers is linked to a more than doubled risk of stomach cancer, a study in the BMJ journal "Gut" reveals.

Millions of bottles & packets of the drugs, which include **omeprazole** & **lansoprazole** are prescribed in England each year. More are bought over-the-counter. If people take the drugs long-term, the risk of cancer rises 5-fold after a year & 8-fold after 3 years.

Scientists at University College London & Hong Kong University suspect the pills stimulate a hormone called gastrin, which triggers the growth of cancerous cells.

Comment: There may be good reasons to take the drug despite its risks. Prescriptions often need to balance the patient's conflicting risks but, if concerned, discussing the options with a GP may be helpful.