

MAYOR OF LONDON

Caroline Russell AM

Chair of the London Assembly Health Committee
C/o daniel.tattersall@london.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA280222-5583

Date: 31 March 2022

Dear Caroline,

London Assembly Health Committee report – Trans health matters: improving access to healthcare for trans and gender-diverse Londoners

I welcome the Committee's work on the important issue of access to healthcare for trans and gender-diverse (TGD) people in London.

As you know, I am a passionate and vocal supporter of TGD Londoners. I want to ensure that we do all we can for these communities to increase their life chances to live their lives authentically and with respect. It is crucially important that they have fair access to healthcare that meets their needs.

As you are aware, I have no powers or responsibility for the commissioning or provision of health or care services. It is for the NHS to address many of the issues raised in your report and I know you have contacted them directly for their comment. The NHS and others have learned significant lessons about engaging diverse communities through the pandemic response and will be using this learning to improve the ways in which Londoners engage with their services.

I recognise the difficulties that many TGD people have experienced in obtaining access to healthcare. As part of my role as a champion and challenger of the services the NHS provides for all Londoners, I will continue to raise issues such as these during my regular meetings with the NHS.

You have asked for my response to the recommendations made in the report, and these are set out in the Annex below. I will also provide further information in due course once I receive a response from NHS Digital regarding recommendation two.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

MAYOR OF LONDON

Annex 1

Mayor of London's response to the recommendations of the London Assembly Health Committee's Report: Trans health matters; improving access to healthcare for trans and gender-diverse Londoners

Recommendation 1

Using the principles of the Health Inequalities Strategy, the Mayor should convene a consultative group comprised of Londoners with lived experience and subject experts. This group should consider the health inequalities implications of TGD people's healthcare, with this insight used to drive improvements in provision with partner organisations.

The Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy (HIS) focuses on the social, economic, and environmental issues which drive differences in health. A great deal of the HIS benefits TGD Londoners, for example, policies and programmes around mental health. These and other commitments are set out in the latest Implementation Plan published in December 2021.

The HIS is a strategy for all Londoners, and it is not possible in such a broad-ranging strategy to convene and lead work on all groups with protected characteristics. The HIS was and continues to be informed through engagement with a wide range of Londoners, including trans and non-binary Londoners e.g. through the roundtables held to inform "Beyond the Data One Year On" and throughout the pandemic as part of the London Community Response Survey. The Mayor also engages with trans stakeholders through his Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group that includes specific expertise on trans issues, including relating to health.

Recommendation 2

NHS Digital should improve NHS IT systems so that all healthcare providers are able to record trans status in a consistent and inclusive way.

The Mayor welcomes your recommendation that the NHS should improve its systems to enable recording of trans status consistently and inclusively. We all know that, as your report suggests, "without data you are invisible", and this makes it difficult for the NHS to plan its services properly, to understand the scope of what might be needed and to prioritise resources. As well as raising this as part of a wider discussion on TGD general healthcare issues with colleagues in NHS London and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHD) London, the Mayor will also write to raise these issues directly with NHS Digital at national level, where these changes will be needed.

Recommendation 3

In the interim, while system-wide NHS data collection improvements are made, the Mayor should urgently commission research in association with the NHS into the healthcare needs of TGD people in London. This insight should be used to identify areas of focus for the London Health Board and London healthcare providers.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Whilst the Mayor understands the Committee's call for further research into the healthcare needs of TGD people, he does not see this as appropriate for the Greater London Authority to commission. The Mayor would be happy for officers to work with NHS colleagues and for them to promote the importance of this and contribute to the scoping of any commission. However, he sees this as something that sits clearly within the remit of the NHS itself and will encourage the London healthcare system to consider how it can respond positively and actively to your report.

Recommendation 4

The Committee endorses Stonewall's recommendation that training providers, medical and nursing schools, and royal colleges should review training and curricula to ensure that LGBT health inequalities, and the healthcare needs of all LGBT patients and service users, are included as part of compulsory and ongoing training.

The Mayor endorses the Committee's recommendation and will continue to champion this ambition in discussions with NHS London.

Recommendation 5

The London Health Board should work with the trans and gender-diverse consultative group to:

- a) assess how to commission trans-inclusive training programmes for primary care services, such as Pride in Practice, across all London boroughs**
- b) work with NHS Trusts to encourage and support non-clinical staff to provide a trans and gender-diverse inclusive environment**
- c) encourage GP practices to:**
 - i) review existing policies to ensure they are trans and gender-diverse friendly. These revised policies should be available on practice websites.**
 - ii) review their surgeries to ensure they are trans friendly, including by displaying LGBT+ posters and leaflets.**
 - iii) work with NHS partners to consider how to monitor and map healthcare services that have undergone and maintained training, so that trans and gender diverse Londoners can identify and locate inclusive services.**

The London Health Board (LHB) has committed to focusing on the London Vision and has obviously had to spend time considering the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The LHB can encourage the NHS to act on the Health Committee's important recommendations, however, these recommendations all sit very clearly within the remit of the NHS. The Mayor will ask his Health Advisor, Dr Tom Coffey OBE, to work with colleagues at NHS England and NHS Improvement to consider how these issues can best be taken forward. In addition, he will encourage the London Health and Care Leaders Group to discuss the recommendations from your report and ask them to use their influence to promote your recommendations with their wider NHS and OHID colleagues – at a national level where necessary.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Recommendation 6

Once the above recommendations have been embedded across the NHS so that trans status can be recorded in a consistent and inclusive way and healthcare staff have the skills to support transgender people effectively:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities should fund an awareness campaign to explain how to disclose trans and gender-diverse status to healthcare providers and the benefits of doing so.

Again, the Mayor welcomes this recommendation and will ask the London Health and Care Leaders Group to raise this matter with their NHS and OHID colleagues once the other recommendations have been progressed within the NHS.