

**Minutes of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board**

**24<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 at 5.30 pm**  
**at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor S Jones (Chair);  
Councillor Phillips.

**Apology:** Councillors Frazer, Sidhu, and A Underhill.

**In attendance:** David Stevens (Director – Adult Social Care);  
Karen Emms (Operational Manager for  
Performance and Service Redesign);  
Colin Marsh (Divisional Manager - Adult Social  
Care);  
Pam Jones (Healthwatch)

1/15 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup>  
February, 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

2/15 **Continuing Health Care– Checklist Analysis and Promotion**

Apologies were submitted by officers of the Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group who were unable to attend the meeting. The Board deferred consideration of this item to a future meeting to allow the appropriate representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group to attend.

It was confirmed that Healthwatch were looking into the Continuing Health Assessment process. The process was being examined and interviews of service users were planned. This would allow reports to be prepared within an approximate time frame of eight weeks.

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3/15

### **Update on Better Care Fund**

The Board received an update on the Better Care Fund Programme, which would be in place by 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2016.

In Sandwell this would be a single pooled budget with closer working between the Council and Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group. Discussions were ongoing to determine where the budget would be hosted.

It was noted that there would be 13 work streams administered under the Better Care Fund and an updated governance structure had been established for the Programme.

The Board noted that the community offer over six sites had been created, which had received national recognition from the Cabinet Office.

4/15

### **Progress in implementing recommendations from the Peer Challenge Process**

The Board noted an update on the recommendations that had arisen from the Peer Challenge of Adult Social Care. An action plan to address the issues raised in the recommendations was circulated. The plan included actions, named responsible officers, deadlines and progress tracking.

Another Peer Challenge was expected in 2015. Topics selected by the Peer Network in the West Midlands to be the subject of future Peer Challenge Processes included mental health and safeguarding.

The Board was advised that Adult Social Care did not have an inspection regime in the same way that Children's Social Care did with Ofsted, but instead made use of the Peer Challenge process. This was where Local Authorities worked together to 'inspect' each other's performance. Any suggestions that were made were not legally binding, but were used to inform action plans that would be developed to address any areas for improvement identified by the Peer Challenge.

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The Board was informed that a 'super-block' custody suite was being opened in the borough. There were concerns that this could place additional strains on Sandwell mental health services. This suite was planned to take detainees from the Black Country area. Although this was not intended to be used as a place of safety for individuals experiencing a crisis in mental health, it did mean that other such places needed to be developed.

From the comments and questions by members of the Board, the following responses were made and issues highlighted:-

- The Government was making additional funding available for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- If a person detained at the new custody suite needed adult social care support it would be Sandwell's responsibility to provide that support, regardless of if that person was a citizen from another borough. Furthermore, under current legislation, the Council could not charge other local authorities for costs incurred in assessment or aftercare, although it was possible for individuals to access support and care in their home borough.
- The crisis service, Concordat, had stated work with West Midlands Police in order to prevent cells being used as places of safety.
- It was expected that only younger people from mid-teens and older would be likely to be detained at the custody suite. Where these young people required mental health support, it tended to be for personality disorders, self-harm and suicide attempts.
- Diagnoses of mental health conditions had remained similar over time, but different types of condition were starting to become more prevalent. This was potentially due to side-effects of treatments of autism spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder that started to be used ten years ago.
- There was the potential for Government to introduce a formal inspection regime for Adult Social Care if it felt that Peer Challenges were not robust enough. The Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services both promote the use of Peer Challenge processes as best practice.

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- The Council had been subject to a Care Quality Commission inspection earlier in 2014-15, but no feedback had been received to date. Officers opined that the Peer Challenge had felt to be a more thorough and robust process than that carried out by the Commission.

(Meeting ended at 6.01 pm)

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