

Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**9th July 2018 at 5.45pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor E M Giles (Chair);
Councillor Downing (Vice-Chair);
Councillor Lloyd Vice-Chair);
Councillors Akhter, Bawa, Crompton, Shaeen, and
White.

Apology: Councillor Worsey.

13/18 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2018 be approved as a correct record.

14/18 **Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation**

The Board received a report which set out the Council's current approach to tackling loneliness and isolation.

From 2014-2017 the Council had worked in partnership with the third sector to utilise £1.2m of Better Care Fund monies to support the Community Offer, an initiative that focussed on preventing the need to access more acute health and social care services and improving quality of life through befriending support to vulnerable older people. An independent evaluation of the initiative had identified many positive outcomes for individuals, however, it had been difficult to evidence in a way that demonstrated sufficient financial savings across the health and social care economy. The programme had therefore ended in March 2017.

The evaluation report had suggested that the legacy of the Community Offer could be used to develop a community development focussed approach and the report had recommended

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that the voluntary and community sector collectively considered where greater efficiencies could be made through increased partnership working. Additionally, the report had urged providers to do more to promote their services to secure greater referral numbers.

It was recognised that low level community and voluntary sector support prevented re-admission to hospital. The Sandwell Better Care Fund, using the learning from the Community Offer evaluation, had therefore identified resources of £350,000 to provide grant funding aimed at supporting people home from hospital and helping people to remain well, whilst maintaining independence at home following discharge. Applications for the grant funding had been sought in March 2018.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had funded the establishment of Communities in Sync - an organisation to support the collaboration of third sector organisations seeking grant funding. The Better Care Fund team was working to develop an innovative outcomes-based model, co-designed with commissioners and providers, in consultation with service users. It was hoped that this approach would encourage closer collaboration between providers and empower the sector to offer the kind of personalised and responsive services that traditionally commissioned services had often fail to deliver. The model was expected to be implemented from September 2018, with delivery of benefits being evidenced from winter 2018.

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

- The Community Offer had helped around 1,500 people during its two and a half years. It had been difficult to identify those people working with the voluntary sector and primary care providers.
- It was recognised that data sharing needed to be improved across health and social care and the Better Care Fund would be looking at this.
- Anyone could make a referral for support.
- There was a statutory duty to meet demand for adult social care services and this had to be balanced against investing in earlier interventions, which was a challenge.
- The grant process had been developed to enable smaller local organisations to come forward and take part in the initiatives.

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Communities in Sync would have responsibility for splitting the funding pot accordingly.

- Communities in Sync would be co-ordinating collaboration on innovative ideas to get the best outcomes for Sandwell residents.

15/18

SPARCS Partnership

The Board received a presentation from Murray Hall Community Trust, an organisation that had previously taken part in the Community Offer, about its soon to be launched SPARCS project, which was aimed at reducing loneliness and isolation by building stronger and more supportive communities.

The Trust, in partnership with Agewell, had secured Big Lottery funding for three years for the project, a social prescribing model aimed at enabling people aged over 65yrs across Sandwell to access support and services by building capacity, as well as creating new activities and groups.

The Trust was currently in the process of identifying the initiatives that were still taking place following the ceasing of the Community Offer, reconnecting with those groups/activities that had been forced to stop and determining where the gaps were, using both clinical and social models.

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

- Anyone could make referrals to the project, with the individual's consent.
- Agewell also offered healthy lifestyle advice.
- It was important to acknowledge informal community support work, such as the support provided by good neighbours who did not wish to volunteer formally.
- The Trust also issued foodbank vouchers.
- There was no guarantee that funding would be renewed after the initial three years so establishing services and activities that were sustainable was essential.
- An extensive information gathering and mapping exercise was taking place before the project was to be officially launched and advertised.

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- All referrals were followed up after six to eight weeks to ensure that the person referred was receiving the correct support.

The Board welcomed the presentation and felt that an in-depth review was required to further investigate the work of the Council and its partners in relation to tackling loneliness and isolation.

Resolved that a working group be established, comprising Councillors Akhter, Downing, Shaeen and White to carry out a review into the Council's approach to tackling loneliness and isolation.

(Meeting ended at 7pm)

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