

Minutes of Health and Wellbeing Board

**Wednesday, 30 June 2021 at 5.00 pm
at Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Hartwell (Chair)
Councillor Ahmed, E M Giles, Shackleton.

Also present: Councillor S S Gill.

Voting members: Dr Ian Sykes (Vice-Chair, GP Representative), Dr Priyanand Hallan (Primary Care Network, GP Rep), Michelle Carolan (Sandwell Managing Director – Black Country and West Birmingham CCG), John Taylor (Chair of Healthwatch Sandwell).

Officers: Mark Davis (Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations), James Cole (Black Country and West Birmingham CCG), Chris Guest (Divisional Manager, Adult Social Care), Justin Haywood (Operations Manager, Adult Social Care Commissioning), Jayne Leeson (Chief Executive, Changing Our Lives), Vicki Merrick (Commissioning Team Manager, Adult Social Care Commissioning), Sirraaj Nadat (Changing Our Lives), Ashi Williams (Director of People, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust), Clair Norton (Board Project Manager).

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Simms (Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life) (voting member); Mark Axcell (Chief Executive, Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust); and Richard Beeken (Interim Chief Executive, Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospitals Trust) (discretionary members).



2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2021 were received.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2021 are approved as a correct record, subject to reference to “Sandwell and Birmingham CCG” in Minute No. 8/21 being corrected to read “Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG”.

4 **Development of the Board**

Councillor Hartwell Health introduced herself as the new Chair of the Board.

She reported that she would be setting up a workshop event to shape the future direction and work programme of the Board.

5 **Primary Care Update**

The Board noted an update on the current situation in primary care in Sandwell.

It was clarified that GP practices had continued to operate and see patients throughout the pandemic, albeit there had been longer waiting times and telephone consultations were the main type of consultation offered. Some practices were working together with one in three seeing patients face to face.

GP practices remained extremely busy and were offering 32,000 appointments each week, 57% of which were face-to-face. In addition, primary care had delivered over 100,000 covid-19 vaccinations. In Sandwell, 38% of 40-49 year olds, 50% of over 50s and 83% of over 60s had now received two doses of the covid-19 vaccination.

111 and 999 services were operating at 25-30% above predicted demand, with 4,500 999 calls a day being taken. Attendance records at A&E had reached their highest ever in May as people were now addressing health issues that they previously had not due to the lockdown.

Virtual appointments via Zoom or other platforms were likely to become an accepted practice. Those people who required face-to-face appointments were

encouraged to contact their local practice via telephone or digitally first, so they could be directed to the appropriate medical professional more quickly.

The Board commended the excellent work by health colleagues and the voluntary and community sector in delivering the vaccination programme.

[Councillor Shackleton left the meeting.]

6 Sandwell Good Mental Health Strategy

The Board received a draft Good Mental Health Strategy for Sandwell. This was to be the first standalone strategy of its kind for Sandwell. Separate autism and joint carers strategies were also being developed.

Changing Our Lives had been commissioned to undertake a piece of public engagement in 2019-2020. The 'State of Sandwell' engagement was a series of conversations that asked residents what mental health meant to them and what they thought was important for good mental health. The engagement focused on general population, rather than specifically on people who accessed mental health services. Views had also been sought specifically from minority ethnic communities and new migrants.

The feedback from the consultation had resulted in the development of eight promises, which also reflected the key strategic priorities detailed in the NHS Long Term Plan and West Midlands Combined Authority's Thrive Programme:-

- Sandwell will be a mental health aware community
- Think all age
- Available when you really need it
- Zero suicide
- Recovery
- Safe places
- Tackle the causes of poor mental health
- Expert response

To reflect other strategies, a ninth promise would be added.

The promises were high level and further detail would be set out in an action plan.

In response to questions and comments, it was noted that:

- A Mental Health Task Force already existed, led by Public Health, and was seeing positive work bringing agencies together.

- Children's Services had carried out engagement with young people and would make the findings available to support the development of the Strategy.
- An all-age, all-needs pathway was required, with a preventative focus, to avoid the need for more complex services.
- It was felt there was too much discussion around thresholds for accessing mental health services. This contradicted the aim of developing services designed for early prevention. A partnership approach was key, in line with the Integrated Care Partnership.
- Reconnecting people and reducing the impact of social isolation was essential to facilitate good mental health.
- A personalised approach would be taking to targeting BAME communities, where stigma still existed around mental health. Resources were required to support grass roots organisations in the voluntary and community sector to grow support in the community.

The Board endorsed the eight promises (with the ninth promise to be developed). The final strategy and the action plan would be presented to the board before the official launch of the strategy in 2022.

Resolved that the draft Sandwell Good Mental Health strategy, and the eight promises set out within it, are endorsed as a basis for formal stakeholder and public engagement, with a view to formal launch of the final Strategy by end March 2022.

7 Joint Carers Strategy - Update on Current Position

[Councillor Ahmed left during the consideration of this item; therefore, the Board was not quorate for the remainder of the meeting].

The Board received an update on the development of a Joint Carers Strategy for 2021-25. The publication of the new Strategy had been delayed due to the covid-19 pandemic. It was proposed that, rather than delay publication further, a review and refresh would be undertaken 12 months. It was noted, however, that the delays had allowed for the Strategy to be reflective of the NHS Long Term Plan and the Carers National Action Plan.

The 2011 census had identified around 30,000 people in Sandwell having an informal caring role and this was expected to increase by 7,000 in the 2021 census. A marked increase was expected in the number of carers aged over 50.

The aspiration was to develop a truly joint strategy that positively shared the responsibility for supporting carers between the Council, the CCG, Health

Trusts, the Voluntary and Community Sector and local businesses / employers.

The Strategy set out nine local promises based around five key themes identified in the Carers National Action. 300 carers' views were represented, including young and parent carers, carers of people with mental ill health and BAME carers. 200 carers had been engaged through Healthwatch and 60 carers engaged through West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre. Carers would also be invited to a future meeting of the Board to share their experiences.

The Strategy set out nine Promises for Carers in Sandwell:-

- Awareness and Diversity
- Information, Advice & Assessment
- Workforce
- Carers Health & Wellbeing
- Employment & Financial Wellbeing
- Living Well in the Community
- Managing & Reducing Risk of Carer Breakdown
- Supporting Young and Parent Carers
- Innovation & Best Practice.

In response to questions and comments, the following was noted:

- The whole Board acknowledged the enormous contribution of unpaid carers. Unpaid carers provided annual public saving of £800 million in the UK;
- Healthwatch was keen to continue to be involved in the further development of the Strategy and was keen to ensure that the hidden impact of covid-19 on carers was considered.
- There had been a scaling back of services during the pandemic, which had impacted on many carers so building trust was very important.
- Concerns were expressed about the ability to deliver the final Strategy in six weeks.

Progress on the Strategy would be presented again to the Board in September 2021, along with proposals for a refresh of the Strategy in September 2022 and any views emerging from partners and consultations with carers could be added then.

Resolved:-

- 1) that the nine Promises for Carers in Sandwell, are endorsed as a framework for the final Joint Carer's Strategy;
- 2) that plans to review the Joint Carers Strategy after 12 months, in order to enhance the strategy with learning coming out of Covid-19 in relation to the experiences of carers, are endorsed.

8 Sandwell Autism Strategy - Update on current position

The Board noted an update on the development of an Autism Strategy. Work had commenced in 2019 with Changing Our Lives being commissioned to lead on its development.

A series of consultation events had been held in 2019 involving a range of key stakeholders, including people with autism. The workshops had been structured around three key questions:

- What does a good life look like for an autistic person?
- What are the barriers to autistic people living a good life?
- What needs to change so that Sandwell is a great place to live for autistic people?

Clear priorities had emerged from the workshops, which had been converted into nine Promises:-

- Awareness and acceptance
- Friendships and connections
- Making everyday services accessible
- Coproducing a better future for autistic people
- Improving access to diagnosis and post-diagnostic support
- A skilled and knowledgeable health and care workforce –
- Autistic people and their families receive the right amount of support at the right time
- Transitions throughout life
- Access to employment, increasing skills and learning opportunities.

The Board noted that just 15% of autistic people were in full or part-time employment.

In response to questions and comments, the following was noted:

- Autism had been identified as a system priority by the CCG and the Strategy tied in with a wider piece of work that the was being undertaken at a Black Country level. Significant funding was expected and the CCG

was working with Changing Our Lives, Autism West Midlands, the Combined Authority, the voluntary and community sectors and Black Country Healthcare.

- The number of autism diagnoses and requests for assessments had increased significantly in the last year.
- There was no national strategy for autism and Sandwell was the first area to produce one.
- A Strategic Needs Assessment was needed in order to plan services effectively.
- It was noted that schools were improving in terms of diagnosing autism, including having people trained to recognise autism, but lack of enough dedicated school provision for people diagnosed with autism was an ongoing concern.

The nine Promises and findings from the consultation would now be shared with statutory partners, the voluntary and community sector and local businesses. An action plan would be co-produced with key stakeholders that enhanced and contributed to interdependent strategies and action plans. The three year Strategy and action plan would be launched in 2022.

Resolved :-

- 1) that the Board endorses the nine Promises set out in the Autism Strategy and the next steps to be undertaken in development of the strategy;
- 2) that the Board endorses the next steps towards the launch of the final Strategy in 2022.

Meeting ended at 6.50pm.

Meeting ended at Time Not Specified

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