

Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**Monday, 17 July 2023 at 5.07 pm
at Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor E M Giles (Chair)
Councillors Tipper, Millar, Johnston, Kalebe-Nyamongo,
Uppal, S S Gill and Dunn

Also Present: Liann Brookes-Smith (Interim Director of Public Health),
Maura Flynn (Sexual Health Project Manager), Johane
Gandiwa (Committee and Constitutional Lead Officer) and
Anthony Lloyd (Democratic Services Officer).

12/23 Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Councillor M Allcock.

13/23 Declarations of Interest

An apology was received from Councillor M Allcock.

14/23 Urgent Additional Items of Business

There were no urgent additional items of business.

15/23 Towards Zero HIV Transmissions 2030 - Sandwell Action Plan progress

The Board received a summary on the progress towards achieving zero HIV transmissions in Sandwell by 2030. HIV late diagnosis in was seen as one of the biggest challenges in Sandwell. Almost 56% of HIV infections diagnosed among Sandwell residents were



late. This was in comparison to a national rate of 43%. Late diagnosis meant that health was compromised, treatment was delayed, and further transmission was still a risk. Brushstrokes had been working with new arrivals to overcome language barriers to ensure that information regarding HIV was available to all residents of Sandwell.

Rates of STIs were higher among younger people. Regular campaigns to promote the use of condoms had been conducted and literature searches had taken place to understand attitudes and barriers to condom use. Condoms were available at no charge as part of the sexual health offer and were available through the C-Card scheme. Condom use was low in Sandwell which was in-line with national trends.

Achieving sexual health was an overall goal of optimal health and early detection and low cases of HIV would improve health outcomes. Many diagnoses were identified during secondary care and therefore, were often late which resulted in longer recovery times for patients.

The actions advised for achieving the towards zero target were broadly summarised using “Prevent, Test, Treat, Retain”. The prevent action was to promote the use of condoms as a first line of defence against HIV as well as ensuring the increase of uptake of PreExposure Prophylaxis among those at high risk. PreExposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) was a medication that could be taken by those who were at a higher risk of HIV who were HIV negative to prevent HIV infections. The test stage aimed to improve access to testing and partner notification including the introduction of testing in primary and emergency settings. The “Treat” aim was to ensure that rapid initiation of treatment following diagnosis was in place to obtain an undetectable viral load. The “Retain” action ensured that robust processes and support were in place to ensure people who lived with HIV remain in care locally or had been successfully transferred elsewhere.

Following questions from members, the following responses were provided:-

- Although officers were aware that GPs were extremely busy, some GPs had responded positively to offering HIV tests and some had begun testing already;
- Work was underway to investigate why a good portion of HIV tests had not been returned in comparison to other STI tests;

- Younger people requesting C cards would be safeguarded to ensure that they were being used in a safe manner with full consent;
- Officers would investigate raising awareness of HIV in schools however, members were minded that HIV awareness was relevant to all age groups.

Officers were thanked for their attendance and hard work.

16/23 Joint Health Scrutiny Arrangements

The re-establishment of joint working arrangements with Birmingham City Council enabled both Councils to scrutinise health matters that were relevant to both areas. The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 mandated local authorities to appoint joint committees where a relevant NHS body or health service provider consulted more than one local authority's health scrutiny function about substantial reconfiguration proposals.

Resolved: -

- (1) that the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee arrangements for scrutiny of matters affecting the Sandwell and West Birmingham area are re-established with Birmingham City Council;
- (2) that the following members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board be appointed to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Birmingham City Council - Councillors E M Giles, Dunn, Millar, Johnston and Kalebe Nyamongo.

17/23 Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/24

The relevant Director(s) were invited to attend a training and work programming session on 12 June 2023 for overview and scrutiny members. This included an overview of the services, key issues and priorities relevant to the Board's terms of reference. A list of items had been identified during the year for scrutiny and pre-decision scrutiny.

Additionally, the Board were reminded of the on-going Social Isolation and Loneliness Scrutiny Review that had started in the 2022-23 municipal year. The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board agreed at its meeting on 28 March 2023 to continue the review into the 2023-24 municipal year (minute no. 11/23). Members were asked if they wished to establish a working group to continue the review.

Resolved: -

- (1) That the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/24 is approved
- (2) That the following members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board establish a working group to continue the Social Isolation and Loneliness Scrutiny review – Councillors Millar, Tipper, E M Giles, Dunn, Gill and Kalebe-Nyamongo.

18/23 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Cabinet forward plan was noted by the Board.

19/23 Scrutiny Action Tracker

The Scrutiny Action Tracker was noted by the Board.

20/23 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022 are approved as a correct record.

Meeting ended at 6.16pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk