

# Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**Monday 28 March 2022 at 6.00pm**  
**Committee Room 1, Sandwell Council House**

**Present:** Councillor E M Giles (Chair);  
Councillors Bhullar (Vice-Chair), Akpoteni, Fenton, R Jones,  
Khatun and Melia.

**In attendance:** Councillor Suzanne Hartwell (Cabinet Member).

**Officers:** Alexia Farmer (Manager – Healthwatch Sandwell);  
Kulwinder Johal (Deputy Director of Operations – PCCT,  
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust);  
Steven Nelson (Programme Manager – Targeted Lung  
Health Checks, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals  
NHS Trust).

## 21/22 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Fisher and L Giles.

## 22/22 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

## 23/22 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March  
2022 are approved as a correct record.



## 24/22 **Urgent Item of Business**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

## 25/22 **Overview of Phlebotomy Service**

The Board received an overview of phlebotomy services provided by Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (SWBHT).

The phlebotomy service was available to children and adults in Sandwell and West Birmingham and operated both as an acute and a community service. Referrals had to be made by a registered medical practitioner.

In response to the pandemic in March 2020 an appointment system had been implemented. This had enabled the service to plan its resources to manage the demand in all clinical locations and introduce more clinics. There were now eight locations offering the service. Appointments could be made by telephone or by email and patients were offered the choice of location according to the type of blood sample required. Specialist blood tests - where the sample would degrade if not transported for testing within set time or temperature limit parameters – could only be performed at Sandwell Hospital or Birmingham Treatment Centre however.

On average the phlebotomy service completed 20-25,000 appointments per month of which 93% were attended. In January 2022, 4,766 appointments had been offered on the same day. The majority of patients were offered appointments within 7 days of booking.

In terms of staffing, the service was committed to recruiting from the local population and there were progression routes for existing staff within the Trust, including an apprenticeship. The apprenticeship lasted 12-months to obtain a Level 2 or 3 qualification with a substantive post awarded at the conclusion of the programme.



[Councillor Akpoteni arrived.]

The following was noted in response to questions and comments:-

- There was currently insufficient patient feedback to justify extending the service into the evenings and weekends, however this would be explored further by Community Diagnostic Hubs.
- Feedback to date indicated that the vast majority of patients wanted their appointments between 10am and 2pm.
- Patients who attended without prior booking could wait to be seen if they chose to.
- There was a domiciliary service in operation 7 days a week for care homes and those with mobility issues delivered by the community nursing team.
- Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (SWBHT) was required to advertise any new vacancies at pay scales 2 to 4 as an apprenticeship. Anyone who joined the apprenticeship programme was guaranteed employment at the end. SWBHT advertised its vacancies on its website, the NHS Jobs website, and promoted vacancies regionally through various mediums.
- Patients requiring transport had to book themselves, to ensure that their mobility issues were addressed and the correct transport provided.
- Complaints to Healthwatch had reduced in recent months and there had been none in the preceding month.
- Work was ongoing to expand the online booking system, however patients needed to book by phone the first time to set up their user registration. Once registered patients could also book via the NHS app.

26/22

## Targeted Lung Health Check Programme

The Board received a report on a new Targeted Lung Health Check Programme run by Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and its planned implementation in Sandwell.



Current data indicated that 1 in 2 people in the UK would be diagnosed with a cancer during their lifetime and 75% of lung cancers were currently diagnosed at a late stage (3 or 4).

The lung health check programme aimed to contribute towards meeting the ambitions set by central government that by 2028:-

- An extra 55,000 people each year would survive for five years or more following their cancer diagnosis.
- Three in four cancers (75%) would be diagnosed at an early stage.

People between 55 and 74 years old, who had ever smoked and who were registered with a GP would be targeted for the programme. This represented 62,234 in Sandwell. It was predicted that in Sandwell the programme could contribute to finding 361 additional cancers at an early stage that would otherwise remain undiagnosed.

23 locations across the country had been selected for phases one and two of the programme (which had begun 2019), based on prevalence of cancer and levels of deprivation. Sandwell would be added to the programme in phase three beginning in July 2022, along with another 15-20 locations. Phase three would expand the scope of the programme by another 1 million eligible applicants. In phase four (2023-24) the programme would be rolled out to a further 20% of eligible population. Current take up for the programme stood at around 50% of the eligible population.

Eligible applicants would be invited for an initial lung health check including an assessment of lung cancer risk. For those assessed with low risk no further action would be taken, those with incidental findings would be referred to primary care. Those considered high risk would be offered a low-dose CT scan and, depending on the findings, referred for further assessment and treatment.

Spirometry (previously suspended during the pandemic) would be brought back to the programme for high-risk patients from April 2022, and this would assist in identifying other health conditions affecting lungs.



Alongside the CT scans, participants in the programme would be offered smoking cessation interventions. Conversations were ongoing with Healthy Sandwell to ensure that smoking cessation services were co-located with targeted lung health check locations.

At present satisfaction with the programme among service users was high with 94% of survey respondents finding the lung health check programme 'a good or very good experience'. A large proportion of respondents also expressed preference for an option to book the initial lung health check scan online.

Members were asked to assist in suggesting appropriate locations across the borough for the mobile units.

The following was noted in response to questions and comments:

- The dangers of passive smoking were acknowledged. Data was being evaluated to inform national rollout of the programme.
- The programme was promoted both nationally and locally. The Trust was working with primary care networks and GP practices to reach those eligible. Local promotion would also consist of targeted advertising, initially in primary care settings, digital screens on bus stops, with social media promotion as well. Every eligible patient would receive a letter and a call as a reminder to book their lung health check.
- The programme would be promoted in a range of languages.
- CT scans could detect incidental damage to the lungs from factors other than cancer but identifying the specific cause (for instance the effects of flu or vaping) could only be inferred based on scan patterns.
- The programme was currently funded for four years and for each eligible patient to have two sets of scans in that period (total of two scans over four years), however, the scope could be expanded.
- Standard waiting times applied for treatment following identification of cancers through the programme. It was hoped that additional funding would be allocated for treatment of additional cancers and incidental diagnoses such as aneurism and COPD.



- The national rollout phase in 2023-24 would include those with a family history of cancers, and eventually the programme would cover the entire population.
- The start date for the programme in Sandwell was July 2022 and this had not been delayed due to the pandemic.
- For the national rollout, screenings would take place in mobile units, as well as at the forthcoming Community Diagnostic Centres.

27/22

## **Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Transformation Plan**

This item was deferred.

Meeting ended at 7.33pm

Contact: [democratic\\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk)

