

Report to Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

13th October 2022

Subject:	Impact on Registration related services when the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital opens in 2024
Director:	Director and Monitoring Officer – Law and Governance Surjit Tour
Contact Officer:	Services Manager - Registration Mark_Satchwell@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the impact and approach taken to the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital for Registration related services.
- 1.2 Identifies any recommendations it wishes to make.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 From 2024 an increase in demand for Registrations related services is certain, as health care services move from City hospital in Birmingham to the new Midland Met Hospital in Smethwick.
- 2.2 This will likely see increase of up to 5000 registration (4000 birth and 1000 death) events for Sandwell as a Local Registration Service, more complex and an increased volume of cases referred to the Black Country Coroner, as well an increased number of cases referred to the Bereavement Services team related to Public Health Act funerals.



- 2.3 Analysis of the new revenue and resource implications has been completed and a need has been identified to provide additional staff and resources to meet this new business need. This has already been accounted for as part of the budget setting process for 2022/2023 and will be for each financial year going forward.
- 2.4 The Board is now requested to consider and note the current position, progress made to manage this increased demand and make any recommendations it wishes to make.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people Timeliness of birth registration events affords families and their children access to key services support services early at a point of need.
	A strong and inclusive economy The proposals and actions taken to date will ensure key bereavement related services continue to be available locally to families in Sandwell.

4 Context and Key Issues

Impact on birth related registration events

- 4.1 Following the closure of the Sandwell and Solihull maternity units in 2011, the Birmingham Local Registration Service have consistently been registering 7,000 extra births per annum.
- 4.2 Of these Solihull Local Registration Service historically registered 3,000 a year prior to their maternity unit closing. An estimated 4,000 extra births registrations are therefore likely to take place at the Midland Metro Hospital when it opens in 2024.
- 4.3 It is anticipated as with all other registration events in Sandwell, these will take place at the Register Office, Highfields House, West Bromwich.



Impact on death related registration events:

- 4.4 Historically some Sandwell residents who have been admitted to City Hospital for treatment and care have sadly passed away. It is anticipated that these deaths will likely occur at the Midland Metro Hospital in Sandwell when it opens in 2024 following the cessation of some services at City Hospital which will transfer to the Midland Metro Hospital.

Historic total number of deaths at City Hospital are detailed below:

1 January 2018 – 31 December 2018 - 754 deaths

1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019 - 838 deaths

- 4.5 The above figures are pre-Covid and actual numbers which have been provided by Birmingham Register Office and City Hospital in Birmingham.
- 4.6 Other Birmingham hospitals have reported a general increase in the number of deaths and we would therefore reasonably expect an increase in death related registration events up to 1000 per year.

Impact on Public Health Act Funerals

- 4.7 The Council is responsible for making funeral arrangements for anybody who dies within the borough, when no other arrangements are being or are likely to be made for example; when the deceased has no family and the deceased hasn't left a will. The responsibility is placed upon the Council by Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. This includes deaths in hospitals.
- 4.8 In 2020, the Council through its Bereavement Service made the necessary funeral arrangements on behalf 60 deceased persons, of which 36 were referred from Sandwell Hospital. The remaining deaths were in the community.
- 4.9 Again, historically some Sandwell residents who have been admitted to City Hospital for treatment and care will have sadly passed away at the hospital. It is anticipated that these deaths will in the future occur at the Midland Metro Hospital in Sandwell following the cessation of some



services at City Hospital which will transfer to the Midland Metro Hospital.

- 4.10 The number of deaths referred by City Hospital to Birmingham City Council to make funeral arrangements in accordance with its obligations for Public Health Act funerals is according to the trust on average 3% of all deaths at City Hospital.
- 4.11 When the number of deaths in 4.1 are considered, we can therefore anticipate an additional 24 cases being referred to Sandwell, which equates to estimated 40% increase in the number of Public Health Act funerals which will need to be arranged and administered by our Bereavement Services team.

Impact on the Black Country Coroners Service

- 4.12 For the purpose of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and where a coronial area covers one or more local authority areas, Schedule 2 requires those authorities to agree which of them will be the 'relevant authority' (formerly known as the 'lead authority'), for the Black Country jurisdiction that is Sandwell.
- 4.13 The Black Country Coroners Service will investigate a death which occurs in any of these areas, and:
- The cause of death is unknown
 - The cause of death is unnatural; or
 - The deceased was in a state of detention, e.g. police custody, at the time of their death
- 4.14 Accounting for a potential 1000 additional death registrations as outlined in 4.6 and with on average 34% of all deaths in 2020 referred to the our Coroner, it is anticipated 340 additional cases will be referred into our coronial jurisdiction.
- 4.15 Hospital deaths referred to a coroner given the setting can often be more complex by nature which could see as many as 66 complex cases (19%) referred for inquest.
- 4.16 Revenue implications associated with the service are share equally by the four Black Country local authorities in accordance with the existing



collaborative agreement. This agreement is due for a further review by March 2023

5 Implications

Resources:	<p>When the new demand for registration related services in Sandwell are considered and benchmarking with current resources that are in place to meet the existing business need, it is estimated that an additional six full-time equivalent posts will be needed across the three teams within Registration Services to ensure that adequate resource is in place to meet the new business need.</p> <p>The cost associated with these posts are estimated to be £189,000 and have already been accounted for in 2022/2023 as part of the Council budget setting process.</p> <p>This additional expenditure will be partly offset by an increased income target for Register Office Services of £55,000 which will be generated from certificate services for registration events.</p> <p>An increase in Public Health Act Funerals will likely see expenditure rise from by an estimated £8,000 which we will look to mitigate as part of the annual budget setting process for Registration Services.</p> <p>Changes and improvements to Highfields House (Sandwell's Register Office) have already been completed to allow for the additional Registration events to take place. These include more robust DDA compliance, an improved reception area and new appointment rooms. Service reviews are also being completed to ensure consistency and efficiency in service delivery is improved going forward.</p> <p>Our coroners court at Jack Judge House needs updating. A new purpose-built court is necessary as well as reception areas, advocate and jury rooms are needed to help not only with current demand for</p>
-------------------	--



	<p>service delivery but to support an increase in volume and the more complex cases which are likely when the New Midland Metropolitan hospital opens.</p> <p>Estimated costs associated with the improvements to the coroner's court are £530,000 which forming part of much wider commercial use for the building which is being co-ordinated by our Land, Assets and Building Services team.</p>
Legal and Governance:	<p>The Registration Service Act 1953 is an Act to consolidate certain enactments relating to the registration of births and deaths in England and Wales.</p> <p>For the purpose of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and where a coronial area covers one or more local authority areas, Schedule 2 requires those authorities to agree which of them will be the 'relevant authority' (formerly known as the 'lead authority'), for the Black Country that is Sandwell.</p> <p>The responsibility is placed upon the Council by Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 where people who have passed away and have no next of kin, or whose next of kin, relatives or friends are unable or unwilling to make the necessary arrangements for a funeral. This includes deaths in hospitals.</p>
Risk:	The analysis and actions undertaken taken to date it is felt will ensure appropriate mitigations have been put in place to manage the impending increase in demand for Registration related services.
Equality:	Services provided by Registration services have and will continue to ensure the needs of all community groups and protected characteristics are met.
Health and Wellbeing:	The proposals and actions taken to date will ensure Registration related services continue to be available locally to families in Sandwell at key moments in their lives.



Social Value	There are no specific Social Value issues regarding the proposals contained in this report.
---------------------	---

6 Appendices

None

7. Background Papers

None

