

Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**Monday 5 December 2022 at 6.00pm
Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House**

Present: Councillor E M Giles (Chair);
Councillors Akpoteni, Allcock, E A Giles, and S Gill.

Also Present: Maxine Groves (Senior Commissioning Manager, Adult Social Care).

60/22 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bhullar, Choudhry and Randhawa.

61/22 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Akpoteni declared a pecuniary interest in the matter referred to at Minute No. 63/22 (Pre & Post Dementia Diagnostic Support) in that she worked within the adult social care sector. This interest had previously been declared on her central declaration of interest, however was being declared as a precaution due to the nature of the agenda item referenced.

62/22 **Additional Items of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business.



Pre and Post Dementia Diagnostic Support

The Board considered a proposal to authorise the Director of Adult Social Care to allocate £376k per annum of Better Care Fund (BCF) monies in a two plus one-year contract for a Pre-& Post Dementia Diagnostic Support Service for Sandwell.

The business case to deliver Sandwell “Better Lives Strategy 2019 – 2024” within the available budget had been approved by the Cabinet in October 2020. The strategy provided the mandate to commission a pre and post diagnostic support service based on a lead provider collaborative approach, which had gone live in August 2021.

In December 2021, the provider had informed the Council of its intention to withdraw from the contract and the Cabinet had therefore approved temporary contractual arrangements with another provider, pending a formal competitive process.

The Sandwell community dementia support service and pathway was viewed as the national gold standard for such a service. The model had been referenced in the Department of Health and Social Care’s new 10-year dementia plan, which was awaiting publication. The collaborative model made use of the relationships between the six towns in Sandwell.

The proposed contract length was in place to provide a sufficient amount of time for stabilisation to allow the workforce to remain intact so that experienced members are retained.

In response to questions from the Board, the following responses were provided:-

- anyone who was registered with a Sandwell GP would be able to access the service;
- referrals to the service could be made by anyone, including self-referrals;
- work was underway to address and reduce inequalities; the Alzheimer’s Society had a dementia connect service



surrounding Sandwell for those not registered to a Sandwell GP;

- training would be provided to frontline staff, schools, colleges, professionals and family members;
- community work would be vital and a proactive approach to gain feedback would be a priority to whoever was awarded the contract;
- the service would adapt in order to reach residents who were more difficult to contact;
- facilities were in place to establish groups to help identify those who may need help;
- plans would be created to address the poor response and interactions rates evident in Wednesbury;
- work had been on-going with faith groups across the borough to help spread awareness around the services that were offered;
- a virtual reality bus, which allowed people to briefly experience what it was like to live with dementia had been commissioned to visit Sandwell in November 2021 and would be commissioned to visit again.

The Board noted and welcomed the report, and endorsed the proposal for submission to the Cabinet on 7 December 2022.

Meeting ended at 6.51pm

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