

**Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board  
22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021**

<b>Report Topic:</b>	<b>End of Life Care</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Suni Patel (Public Health, SMBC) / Anna Lock (SWBH NHS Trust)</b>
<b>Link to board priorities</b>	<p><b>3. We will work together to join up services</b></p> <p><b>4. We will work closely with local people, partners and providers of services</b></p>
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an update on the work of the End of Life Care Strategic group supporting End of Life care in Sandwell</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the Board note the content of the report and presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Key Discussion points:</b>	<p><b>Priority 3. We will work together to join up services</b></p> <p>The aim of this focus theme has been to work collaboratively and creatively and by introducing a ‘Public Health’ approach to improving health and wellbeing at the end of life. It also focuses on working towards developing a compassionate community approach through influence of policy and practice to move towards encouraging local citizens to talk about death and dying sooner.</p> <p>The multi-agency Sandwell End of Life Strategic group has representatives from the local hospital trust, the CCG, voluntary sector and key services from the council including adult social care, public health, bereavement services, housing and neighbourhoods and holds meetings bi-monthly (currently virtually).</p>

### **Progress to date**

Previously the issues for improving the palliative and end of life care service for local people included: multiple service providers, gaps and duplication in services, confusion for patients, lack of crisis response and patients unable to choose their preferred place of death. The Sandwell End of Life strategic group have been working on a strategy and action plan that;

- Continues to encourage a borough wide conversation and awareness about end of life
- ‘Opening up’ of conversations about death and dying, moving towards a culture which sees death as a natural part of life rather than something to avoid discussing
- Linking up partners and providing necessary skills / education to enable people to access information and support about death & dying

Based on previous stakeholder engagement outcomes such as a change in culture / attitude to dying, an opportunity to choose where they die, communication across the professionals involved in care and training for all professionals involved in end of life care, the strategic group has worked hard on creating an accessible strategy and action plan. We also created a communication and engagement plan to co-exist with the action plan. These documents are regularly reviewed and updated during the bi-monthly meetings. We also hosted a virtual engagement event for consultation on the strategy document in March 2020 (originally this had been intended to be a community engagement event but had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic). Despite limited responses, the group were able to finalise and complete the strategic document. The final format is on one page with 6 key promises each with a number of action points – please see attached appendix 1. The group wanted a strategic

document that could enable delivery of the key action points and support involvement of all partners.

**Priority 4. We will work closely with local people, partners and providers of services**

As outlined previously, this workstream developed a multi-agency approach to shape and deliver the End of Life Care Strategic action plan and creating the strategy on a page (SOAP) entitled Sandwell Better Endings – End of Life Care Strategy 2021-2026 - please see attached appendix 1. The group successfully hosted a virtual event during Dying Matters week in May 2021. This was attended by over 85 stakeholders including residents, key professionals and representatives from community & faith based organisations.

Based on the 6 key promises the sessions were themed as follows;

- 1. Conversations in preparation:** - Focusing on the benefits that making plans in advance of dying have and how this can help those left behind
- 2. Talking openly about death and dying:** - Exploring how the African Caribbean community in West Bromwich and Neighbourhood Services at Sandwell Council are joining the conversation
- 3. Death and younger people:** - Hearing from the young people from The Shape Programme about their bereavement experiences and what they would like to happen to make things better
- 4. A confident workforce:** - With many people wanting to die at home, discussions about how working with care homes and primary care teams can make a difference to how people can live well until they die
- 5. A compassionate community:** - exploring how a local Yemini community centre has responded to meet the needs of their bereaved community members as

well as a new compassionate community initiative led by the voluntary sector in Sandwell

**6. Employers and Bereavement:** - discussing employers and bereavement as many people who are bereaved are also working with a personal experience of bereavement and how work place policy can affect bereavement. This session also covered how Covid impacted support SWBH offered bereaved families and the difference this makes.

Some of the initial feedback from the event was very positive and people were encouraged by the way this thematic work had been formatted including having conversations at a younger age, involving schools & families and local community organisations. They were also supportive about the involvement of key agencies for example from housing teams and bereavement services from the council. One of the key pieces for engaging and raising awareness was a collaborative doodle video which is accessible online and was played at the start of the event. This can be viewed here - [Healthier Futures - End of life care](#)

The next steps are to consolidate the feedback from the event and the actions arising. At the next strategic group meeting we shall be updating our Terms of Reference to ensure that we have essential partners and their support to continue with delivery of our key action points. We also have strategic reach via the wider Black Country work on the theme of death & dying included in the Healthier Futures website: <https://www.healthierfutures.co.uk/transformation-areas/end-of-life-care>

**Implications (e.g. Financial, Statutory etc)**

None currently

<b>What engagement has or will take place with people, partners and providers?</b>	<p>We held a virtual engagement event with partners &amp; services users as part of the consultation on the strategy on a page (SOAP) document (Better Endings)</p> <p>We held a virtual event during Dying Matters week in May 2021 discussing the 6 key themes of the Better Endings strategy</p> <p>This workstream was developed and is supported by key partners</p>
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