

Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**Monday 22 November at 6.00 pm
at Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor E M Giles (Chair)
Councillors Akpoteni, Costigan, Fenton, Fisher, L Giles,
R Jones and Melia.

Officers: Alexia Farmer (Healthwatch Sandwell);
Elaine Gilliland (Community Diagnostic Centres Programme
Lead, NHS Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical
Commissioning Group);
Steven Nelson (NHS Kirklees Clinical Commissioning
Group).

34/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhullar and Khatun.

35/21 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Akpoteni and R Jones declared that they both worked in the health and social care sector and would declare specific prejudicial interests if the need arose.

36/21 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 13 September and 4 October 2021 are approved as a correct record.



37/21 **Additional Items of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider.

38/21 **Community Diagnostic Hubs**

The Board noted a presentation outlining plans for the development of Community Diagnostic Hubs (CDH) in Sandwell over the next two to five years.

An independent review (The Richards Review) had outlined the need for radical reform of diagnostic services. The concept was for diagnostic services to be separated from acute care, at sites that were safe from Covid-19 urgent care, and where all tests could be carried out concurrently to stop multiple visits for different tests. The centres would offer a range of tests and scans which could include: imaging (e.g. ultrasounds, X-rays, mammograms); cardiology tests (testing for heart conditions); pathology (testing body tissues and fluids); phlebotomy (testing blood); and endoscopy (looking at organs inside the body using an endoscope). The proposals would create capacity for an additional 14million diagnostic tests a year. Faster access to diagnostic tests meant that people could start treatment sooner for serious conditions like cancer and heart problems, leading to better outcomes.

A hub and spoke model was proposed for Sandwell and West Birmingham and a proposal had been submitted to NHS England to develop both Sandwell Treatment Centre and Birmingham Treatment Centre as hub locations, with a view that further health care centres would be utilised as spoke locations. Four sites had been identified in Sandwell - Rowley Regis Medical Centre, Lyng Centre, Neptune Health Park, and Glebefields Health Centre. No decisions on the locations had yet been made, and feedback from councillors and Public Health would inform the final decision.

NHS England had agreed capital funding to build the hubs. However, revenue funding was only committed until 2027, after which system-based funding allocations would apply.



Workforce capacity was also being reviewed and proposals were being developed, in conjunction with local colleges and universities, to create academies to support specialisms such as sonography and cardiography.

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

- Members were concerned that the proposed locations were not evenly distributed across the six towns with three of the locations close to each other (Neptune Health Park and Glebefields Health Centre were both in Tipton and Lyng Centre in West Bromwich). In addition, Lyng Centre was less than one mile from the general hospital where diagnostic tests were also provided.
- It was important that the hubs were located close to public transport links, and empty town centre locations should be considered.
- Sandwell General Hospital would continue to offer the current suite of tests until the new centres were operational.
- A centralised booking system would be in place for the community diagnostic hubs. This would provide the option for users to access appointments at any of the locations across West Midlands.
- There would be there accreditation from royal colleges for people who wished to upskill where a degree was not required. The emphasis was on “growing our own “ and working together across the system to remove competition and create a stable workforce.
- Recruitment would be from a local pool from within the Black Country and for the advertised positions there would be no salary offer competition between different areas / boroughs.
- It was hoped that when systems leads allocated resources, diagnostics would get adequate priority post 2027 if central government revenue funding ceased. The NHS had committed £2.3 billion to the programme and the benefits of early diagnosis and targeted health checks were widely recognised so it was not envisaged that funding would cease.
- Work was also underway to develop a programme of targeted lung health checks in Sandwell.



- There was engagement with primary care network clinical directors to look at under-utilised space at GP surgeries, however, it was important not to dilute the proposal by creating too many spoke locations.

Members welcomed the proposals in principle and the opportunity to shape them. A public consultation exercise was also taking place.

Members remained concerned about revenue funding post 2027 and the Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health would be invited to a future meeting to discuss working together to lobby government.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Clinical Commissioning Group is recommended to consider using existing empty town centre buildings and under-utilised space at existing GP surgeries for community diagnostic hubs, that are easily accessible, and spread as evenly as possible across the borough;
- (2) that a further update be provided to a future meeting and that the Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health, be requested to attend the same meeting to discuss the financial sustainability of the diagnostic hubs beyond 2027;
- (3) that a report be presented to a future meeting on the Targeted Lung Health Checks Programme.

39/21

Update on Mental Health Services Review

The Board noted that an information pack containing data on mental health services in Sandwell was being prepared and would be distributed to members prior to the commencement of the review.



Resolved that review working group be established to take forward the review on Mental Health Services with councillors Costigan, Fenton, Fisher, E M Giles and L Giles.

40/21 **Scrutiny Action Tracker**

The Board noted an update on progress on previous actions and recommendations.

41/21 **Cabinet Forward Plan**

The Board noted the contents of the Cabinet Forward Plan.

42/21 **Work Programme**

The Board considered its work programme for 2021/22.

The Chair announced that the expected report on the consultation on the future of Walker Grange would now not be received by the Board. This was due to the consultation progressing quicker than anticipated, which had allowed the Cabinet to make a decision at its meeting on 18 November 2021. The Chair had been kept up to date throughout the consultation period and was satisfied that all service users had had an opportunity to make their views known.

The Cabinet had agreed that Walker Grange would remain open and would be refurbished (Minute No. 205/21 refers). Officers in Adult Social Care would continue engagement with the tenants, family members, and staff during the development of the unit and this Board would be kept informed on progress.

Officers undertook to obtain an update from the CCG on the progress on the recommendations made at the special meeting of the Board held on 4 October 2021, relating to Access to Primary Care.

Members discussed undertaking a piece of work in connection with the findings of the national HIV Commission and how Sandwell



would progress the Commission's findings. Consideration would be given to the best time to undertake this work.

Resolved that the following items be added to the Board's work programme for 2021/22:-

- Progress update on Community Diagnostic Hubs.
- Operation of phlebotomy services in Sandwell.
- Targeted Lung Health Checks Programme.
- West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) Winter Service Plan.
- Sandwell's response to HIV commission findings.

Meeting ended at 7.10 pm.

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