

Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

30 September 2024 at 6.00pm
Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House

- Present:** Councillor E M Giles (Chair);
Councillors Williams (Vice- Chair), E A Giles, Kalebe-Nyamongo, Muflihi, Owen, Shaeen and Uppal.
- In attendance:** Michelle Carolan (Managing Director for Sandwell – Black Country Integrated Care Board), Laura Broster (Director of Communications – Black Country Integrated Care Board), Jayne Salter-Scott (Head of Public and Community Engagement - Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust), and Paul Higgett (Project Officer – Healthwatch Sandwell).
- Officers:** Liann Brookes-Smith (Interim Director of Public Health) and Alex Goddard (Scrutiny Lead Officer).

27/24 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Allcock and Kordala.

28/24 **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest.

29/24 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2024 are approved as a correct record.

30/24 **Urgent Additional Items of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business.

31/24 **Communicating Changes to Healthcare in Sandwell**

The Board received an update from the Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals (SWBH) NHS Trust and the Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) on the communication of changes to healthcare arrangements, particularly around the opening of the new hospital site in Smethwick.

The SWBH Trust Board had agreed, at its meeting on 21 August 2024, to set an opening date of 6 October 2024 for the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH). After that decision was made, a communications plan was put into action to communicate the key changes and the positive benefits for the communities the Hospital would serve.

It was reported that patients from the Sandwell General Hospital site would be transported to the new site on 6 October 2024. Maternity and neonatal services would move on 6 November and finally, on 10 November, patients from City Hospital would be transferred.

The communication and engagement around this and other changes was ongoing and included how people accessed care, for example Accident & Emergency would only be for life threatening situations, Urgent Care should be utilised for care needs that couldn't be handled through other services.

Some of the methods being used to communicate changes to the public included:-

- Leaflets to households, guaranteed before 6 October 2024;
- Adverts on bus interiors and exteriors;
- Signage on Sandwell and City sites;
- A paid-for social media campaign (reaching 1.8m);
- Radio appearances including stations that serve minority communities;
- Text messages from GP surgeries;
- Information disseminated through faith and community networks.

From the comments and questions by members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- The Urgent Treatment Centre's opening hours were being increased to 7am-1am, this meant the service was available an additional 6 hours per day. These hours had been chosen based on patient flow and pattern of footfall. Between 1am and 7am patients could access A&E if required, as well as online resources or the 111 telephone service.
- One of the key strands of the communication campaign was around urging patients to double check venues for their appointments on their letters.
- The SWBH NHS Trust had worked with the 111 telephone service to ensure it was aware of changes to sites and to opening times so that they would give callers the latest information.
- New and amended bus routes had been announced by Travel for the West Midlands to serve the MMUH site.
- Leaflets had been designed for a reading age of 7-8 years old. In addition there was an easy read version that had been made in collaboration with a Black Country-based charity.
- Translated written versions and videos had been made in key community languages such as Gujarati, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. NHS officers undertook to review the list to make sure Arabic was provided for also.
- The SWBH NHS Trust chaplains had written to faith leaders in Sandwell and West Birmingham to ask them to share the information around changes, including the videos in community languages.
- The SWBH NHS Trust was holding meetings with Near Neighbours to the MMUH site in late November to catch up and hear about any issues. Local ward councillors would also be invited.

- In order to reach people with sensory impairments the SWBH NHS Trust was working with organisations like Sandwell Visually Impaired and Sandwell Deaf Community Association to disseminate information.
- Taxis were a well-used form of transportation in Sandwell and the changes had been shared with local authority taxi offices to help raise awareness. In addition Uber had been informed about changes in readiness of the opening date.
- Issues around parking had been raised at previous Near Neighbours meetings; these had been shared with both Sandwell and Birmingham Highways departments.
- Tours of the MMUH were currently on hold to allow the moving of patients and services to take place, however these would restart in due course.

The Board thanked representatives of SWBH NHS Trust and Black Country ICB for attending the meeting and wished them a successful opening and transfer of patients.

32/24

Sandwell Winter Booklet 2024

The Board considered the proposals for the contents of the 2024 edition of the Sandwell Winter Booklet. This booklet has been developed collaboratively between the Council and the Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) to help provide information and support Sandwell residents throughout the winter months.

The Sandwell Winter Booklet was an annual, universal resource with physical copies distributed to all residents as well as an online version with links to translated and accessible versions. Approximately 134,000 homes received a booklet, and 500 copies were made available in public buildings. In addition, the booklet reached approximately 2,000 care home residents.

From the comments and questions by members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- The contractor used for delivery of the Winter Booklet was the same one used for the Sandwell Herald. This was the third year that the booklet had been delivered and whilst there had been some complaints in previous years, the contractor had given a guarantee that they will deliver in all postcodes the Council needed them to reach.
- There was the potential for confusion as two separate schemes existed with similar names; 'Think Pharmacy First' and 'Pharmacy First'. This would be clearly communicated in the Booklet, with a link to fully explain the situation.
- The Warm Spaces programme would again be running, supplemented by Public Health Funding. Fuel costs had reduced, which had helped bring down costs for supporting the Warm Spaces programme.
- Winter Warm Packs were once again being provided; they were currently on order and would be distributed to target areas of high deprivation, with each town having allocated numbers of packs. Members highlighted that in 2023 the distribution of packs had been particularly successful and suggested a similar approach should be utilised.
- The Booklet needed to stay within a certain number of pages, but other ideas raised by members such as a quiz would be considered if they could fit within the limit.

The Managing Director of the Black Country ICB thanked the Interim Director of Public Health and her team for their innovation and work on the Winter Booklet; this was not something produced by other Black Country local authorities. The Board added its thanks to officers for their work.

33/24

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board Action Tracker

The Board noted the status of actions and recommendations it had made. Further updates would be presented to future meetings of the Board.

34/24

Cabinet Forward Plan and Work Programme

The Board received and noted the Cabinet Forward Plan and the Board's work programme.

Meeting ended at 7.11pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk