

Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

10 March 2025 at 6.08pm
Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House

Present: Councillor E M Giles (Chair);
Councillors Williams (Vice- Chair);
Councillors Allcock, E A Giles, W Gill, Kalebe-Nyamongo,
Millard, Muflihi, Owen, and Uppal.

In attendance: Councillor Taylor (Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Health and Wellbeing), Amritpal Randhawa (Healthwatch Sandwell), Sian Thomas (Chief Integration Officer Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust).

Officers: Christine Anne Guest (Assistant Director Adult Social Care Commissioning), Justin Haywood, (Operational Head of Commissioning, Adult Social Care) and Stephnie Hancock (Deputy Democratic Services Manager).

8/25 **Apologies for Absence**

An apology was received from Councillor Shaeen.

9/25 **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest.

10/25 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025 are approved as a correct record.

11/25

Urgent Additional Items of Business

There were no urgent additional items of business.

12/25

Recommencement of Daycare Charges

The Board considered the recommencement of daycare charges, which had been paused during the covid-19 pandemic as a result of buildings that the services operated from being closed.

The charges would be re-commenced from 7 April 2025 in line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/256. It was anticipated that the income from recommencing the charges would be in the region of £336,000 per annum.

Sandwell spent more on day care provision than any of its neighbouring authorities, currently purchasing 46,000 days of support per annum at a cost of £5.7 million, supporting 394 people. A review of service provision was underway with a view to moving towards a that provided greater opportunities for people to live 'ordinary lives' in their own communities with less reliance on building-based provision and increased access to outreach support and community activities. This would include the promotion of the use of Direct Payments to support people to have more choice and control over the support they received..

A new charging model was being developed for all day care services. Revised fees had been negotiated with Options for Life, the largest provider for people with disabilities and this was the first step towards rationalising fees across the market. The new rates were banded to reflect the level of support a person needed. In-house day care services fee rates were set to match market rates so these new fee rates would also be used to assess charges for those attending in-house services. This approach would form the basis of a framework to be used to reset charges for services across Sandwell.

From the questions and comments by members, the following key points were noted:-

- this was not a new charge, but a recommencement of previous charging;

- service users would only be required to pay a contribution towards the full cost of the service, based on an individual review and financial assessment;
- only disposable income was taken into account in the financial assessment;
- there was not an anticipated increase in demand;
- the re-modelled service would focus on enablement and moving away from traditional daycare models, exploring education, work/volunteering and learning opportunities to support independence;
- the service also included respite for carers.

13/25

Update on the Development of an Autism Strategy for Sandwell

The Board was updated on the development of the Autism Strategy, which was due to be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board for approval in the Autumn.

The current draft strategy only included people with a Learning Disability and Autism. The draft strategy was being revised to include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Specific data on Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ADHD diagnoses for adults in Sandwell was limited. However, a report on children aged 0-5 indicated that the rate of ASD diagnoses had been increasing since 2016/17. The rising number of diagnoses is expected to place significant pressure on health and social care services in Sandwell.

The strategy would be a joint strategy, with input from the NHS, and co-produced with people with lived experience of autism and ADHD.

From members comments and questions the following key points were noted:-

- the Care Act 2014 set out the criteria for access to adult social care services provided by the Council;
- diagnoses was carried out by the NHS and the Council carried needs assessments, but a diagnosis was not required to access support under the Care Act 2014;
- those individuals that did not qualify for support from the Council were signposted to support agencies and there were

a number of voluntary sector organisations commissioned to provide such support;

- employment specialists provided support to help people into work, and to sustain work;
- there was a variety of reasons that people were seeking diagnoses in later life;
- many people with ASD came to adult social care with a criminal history;
- the revised strategy would inform understanding and appropriate pathways.

14/25 Midland Metropolitan University Hospital

The Board noted that the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (with Birmingham City Council) had received an update on the operation of the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital on 11 February 2025.

The next meeting of the joint committee would be held at the hospital.

15/25 Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board Action Tracker

The Board noted progress on actions and recommendations.

16/25 Cabinet Forward Plan and Work Programme

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

Meeting ended at 6.46pm.

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