

Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board

Thursday 11 June 2020 at 4.30pm

This meeting was conducted virtually via MS Teams Meeting

Present:

Dr Ian Sykes (Chair)

(Vice Chair) Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board
Clinical Commissioning Group.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC):

Councillor Farut Shaeen
Councillor Joanne Hadley
Councillor Joyce Underhill
Councillor Elaine Giles

Cabinet Member for Living Healthy Lives;
Cabinet Member for Homes;
Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life;
Scrutiny Chair – Health and Adults Social Care
Scrutiny Board;

Councillor Rajbir Singh

Scrutiny Chair – Children’s Services and
Education Scrutiny Board;

David Stevens
Stuart Lackenby
Lisa McNally
Lesley Hagger
Alison Knight
Chris Ward
Alan Caddick
Tammy Stokes
Rebecca Maher

Chief Executive;
Director – Adult Social Care;
Director – Public Health;
Executive Director – Children’s Services;
Executive Director – Neighbourhoods;
Director – Education Employment and Skills;
Director – Homes and Communities
Interim Director – Regeneration and Growth;
Interim Section 151 Officer;

Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG):

Michelle Carolan

Chief Officer SWB CCG;

Healthwatch Sandwell:

Alexia Farmer

Healthwatch Sandwell;

Sandwell Voluntary Sector Organisation:

Mark Davis

Chief Executive;



Sandwell Childrens Trust:

Frances Craven Chief Executive;

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust:

Toby Lewis Chief Executive

Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:

Marsha Foster on behalf of Mark Axcell CEO

West Midlands Police:

Ian Green Chief Superintendent

West Midlands Fire Service:

Matt Young Operations Commander

In Attendance:

Karl Robinson Business Manager – Housing Solutions;
Clair Norton Health and Wellbeing Board project manager;
Rachel Cotterill Principle Social worker.

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Yvonne Davies **(Chair)** Leader;
John Taylor – Healthwatch

07/20 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2020 were received at the meeting.

08/20 Covid-19 Sandwell's position (Epidemiology) – Director Public Health

The Director – Public Health provided a brief overview firstly considering number of confirmed cases per 100,00 population. Sandwell was ahead of West Midland and England average but below Wolverhampton and Walsall. Confirmed cases peaked around April and had been declining since until around the end of May.

A chart providing data on the total deaths in Sandwell including those not directly linked to Covid-19 was presented that demonstrated at the end of May deaths had dropped to within the all-cause mortality figures average for 2010 – 2019.

Deaths in Sandwell care homes was the lowest in the Black Country.

As with most pandemic's a second wave of cases was expected, however the extent of this was unknown.

In preparation for a second wave the following actions were being undertaken:-

- Expanded outbreak response cell – my health protection team that respond to any new outbreak.
- Working with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust on a new community swabbing service.
- Been increasing risk assessments with schools, retailers and such.
- Working with partners to ensure that complex messages around the government guidance were communicated to the community.

09/20 Update report from the Trust/ICP – Chief Executive SWBH NHS Trust

The Chief Executive of Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital NHS Trust Updated the Board as a health care provider.

The number of wards dealing with Covid-19 had fallen from 10 wards to only one. He was confident that the NHS was prepared to expand as it did before in order to manage a second wave.

Data had been published in respect to cross infection rates which were below the Government anticipated figure of 20%. No issues had been experienced with Personal Protection Equipment and the Trust had supplied PPE to partners and neighbouring authority hospitals.

It was planned to start anti bodies testing in the near future and plans were being prepared to deal with another outbreak alongside the normal increase in admissions during winter.

The Government advice to re admit normal number of visitors to hospitals would not be followed presently as it was felt that this was too soon.

The Integrated Care Partnership focused on Covid-19 in monthly meetings however the original priorities remain to tackle inequalities for families and children and adults in future.

The Chair thanked the Trust for all the work that had been undertaken to not only support hospitals but also Primary Care. Primary Care was working hard to restore routine and re open some practices and maintaining the red site at parsonage street for high risk patients to help protect the community.

Councillor Hadley enquired about the accuracy of home testing kits, she was advised that if they were not used properly they could cause a false negative test. However, if used correctly they were accurate.

10/20

Test and Trace – Director Public Health and Director Adult Social Care.

The Board received an update from the Director - Public Health and the Director – Adult Social Care in respect of Test and Trace.

The main aim of Test and Trace was to separate those infected from those not infected. The system must act promptly to notify contacts as quickly as possible and get them to self-isolate. This has been working well on a local basis.

The Government plan to launch a test and trace app which would provide a system to inform those that had been within two meters of someone who had tested positive in the previous 48 hours.

It was feared that this may deplete the capacity of Social Care workers if they had been in contact with someone infected. A simple survey had been undertaken with partners to ensure that a contingency plan could be formulated to support Social Care services if needed. Up to now there had been no real impact.

There was a protocol around Health and Social care, if the worker was wearing PPE then it was not considered as a contact. It was vital that workers ensure to avoid group contact without PPE protection.

The Test and Trace system was vital to reduce a second surge of cases as 10% of cases were asymptomatic, not having any symptoms.

11/20

Shielding update – Director Adult Social Care – Executive Director Neighbourhoods – Chief Executive SCVO and Executive Director – Children’s Services.

The Board received an update in respect to shielding the local community and how the voluntary sector had been supporting the shielding initiative.

On 24th March 2020 the government issued shielding guidance which resulted in 1.5 million letters being sent out, advising those individuals who were Clinically Extremely vulnerable to self-isolate for a period of 12 weeks. It also outlined the role of local authorities had in respect of delivery of food parcels directly to people’s doorsteps, delivery of prescription medicines by community pharmacies and local authorities with the voluntary sector to contact and support those vulnerable people.

For Sandwell the initial shielding list included around 8000 people, however the current shielding list fluctuated daily.

Sandwell identified that there was a number of vulnerable people who had other needs needed support and the combined Sandwell Shielding and

Vulnerable list was now 23,227 and a number of teams had been established to support these individuals.

Sandwell adopted the following approaches:

Proactive approach

- 135,400 letters were sent out to households setting out details of how the Council were supporting those self-isolating and shielding along with contact details and government guidance, twice.
- 28,000 letters were sent out to over 70's registered with a local GP.
- Over 20,000 of the 23,227 people had been contacted by phone in order to ensure that they were alright.

Reactive approach

- A number of Sandwell residents had contacted the Council to inform them that they need support or that they were alright and did not need any further support.
- There were daily additions to the shielding list from three sets of data received every day.
- Incoming requests from people on the shield list who have registered for support.
- Also a number of requests had been received from the Department of Works and Pensions to contact people who they had been unable to contact.

Shielding Children

There were just under 700 shielded children in the borough, many of those with disabilities or long-term conditions. Data was being reviewed daily as part of the Vulnerable Children Group meeting.

A range of support had been established including the Food Hub, food vouchers, nappies delivery of medication. The provision of learning and play resources was important for emotional health needs. There has also been signposting to family support services and welfare advice services.

Links to VCS provision had been supplied to families which offered lots of different types of support for children and young people. Feedback from parents and families had been very positive and the following example was presented to the Board to bear testament to the good work that was happening.

"We had all hit a low but the pack soon turned it around and we had some much needed family time together with no gadgets in sight. We feel we can cope with a few more weeks now of this crazy world. Thank you will never be enough".

Food Hub

A food hub had been established at Tipton Sports Academy since the end of March. 60 staff from all directorates within the Council had joined with members of the fire service, taxi firms and the Albion Foundation.

Food had been purchased by the authority but in addition we have received large numbers of donations from local supermarkets, restaurants shops and firms.

The hub now provided food to over 150 vulnerable families that had been identified by schools and 20 households living in temporary accommodation.

Practical support calls were still being received from those on the shielded list in particular about support around finances.

As at the 10th June there had been 10,239 parcels delivered within Sandwell.

More people had moved to seeking support through the Voluntary Sector.

Voluntary Sector

The Board was informed that the Voluntary sector were understandably very busy at the moment and most services had continued to deliver support. The Voluntary Sector had been working closely with the Council and other partners.

Over 700 residents volunteered to help support the community and around 400 of those had been deployed.

Sandwell Together had been established through Sandwell advocacy offering a befriending service to help people keep connected throughout this crisis. Referrals to this service continue to increase.

This would provide a good legacy as isolation and loneliness has always been an issue.

The Good neighbours scheme was offering practical support such as shopping and other services to around 300 individuals.

Throughout this uncertain period the Voluntary Sector has been working well with the Council and other partners with very successful outcomes.

The Director – Adult Social care presented the next steps as follows:-

- Continue to address the reactive requests.
- Consider the government review position on shield which was due to be delivered on Monday 15th June 2020.
- The Council needs to then review the future approach.

- Up till now Services have been taking a protection approach, Partners would now work together to promote a more resilience and independent approach.

Councillor Hadley added that she was proud of how Sandwell had managed arrangements during this period and how quickly they had responded to ward residents who had contacted her.

The Chair also acknowledged the excellent response that had been made by all partners and asked if the Council had received extra funding from the Government to cover expenses such as extra postage expense.

The Director – Adults Social Care advised the Board that the Council had received some Covid-19 funding from Central Government which had covered some of the extra expense, however the council had also made best use of existing resources by redeployment of staff.

12/20 BAME Community - Director Public Health

The Director – Public Health updated on the situation in respect of BAME community.

Statistics identified the rate of death in respect of age and ethnicity compared to a comparison group of white British males and females and this indicated an increased risk for BAME groups, however when adjusted to include deprivation the mortality rate dropped. The analysis did not include other important factors linked to exposure including occupation, as many BAME population were employed in Healthcare, Multi-generational households and density of population.

There was a lot of fear and anxiety around these inequalities however there was a fine line between protection and discrimination which has to be considered.

The Chair acknowledged that it was reassuring that we were aware of the problems and trying to address those problems.

13/20 Care Act Easement - Director – Adult Social Care

The Board were updated on the Care Act Easement.

There were four levels of Care Act Easement and level three looked at reducing activity of the statutory functions that the local authority held such as not undertaking assessments, support plans and taking a low level risk approach, reasons to move to level three would be a depleted workforce or a massive increase in demand.

Sandwell has not hit that level yet and remain at level two which allowed use of digital technology for assessments.

Eight authorities had implemented level three, to move to this stage you had to notify the Departments for Health and Social Care. Sandwell had not had a major reduction in staff, however it would continue to monitor workforce levels and demand for services.

The Cabinet Member for Healthy lives and the Health and Wellbeing Board would be kept updated on the situation.

There were no easements on the responsibility the Local Authority had to Safeguarding adults and in respect to promoting peoples' human rights and no amendments to the Mental Health Act had been passed as yet.

14/20

Children/Schools update – Executive Director - Children's Services, Chief Executive SCT and Director Education, Employment and Skills

The Board received an overview of the partnership work that had been undertaken during this lockdown period in particular:-

1. The importance of communication and information sharing.
 2. Vulnerable Children
- Each agency had been holding daily meeting in respect of sharing information and the Council had included Sandwell Children's Trust as part of those daily meeting.
 - Safeguarding Partnership had been meeting on a weekly basis to ensure that children continue to be safeguarded during these uncertain times.
 - Meetings with DfE and Ofsted who were tracking everything undertaken locally and feeding that into regional and national work.
 - Still interacting with families and children and ensure that we hear from children.
 - Vulnerable children ran a number of campaigns, vulnerable children group meeting to ensure that all vulnerable children were in contact with their professionals and information was passed to GP's when necessary.
 - Moving on to a recovery plan – there probably was not a partnership need around surge but there was a need for joint commission around emotional health and wellbeing and domestic abuse.

Education

Since the beginning of lockdown there had been an increase in the provision of Early Learning and Childcare arrangements and individuals were starting to access the resources.

Schools in Sandwell had remained open to vulnerable children and those children of key workers during the lockdown period.

Schools had also been supporting other children via online setting and in the supply of learning packs.

Next week year 10 and 12 pupils will be able to attend secondary schools.

Schools needed to consider risk assessments and make decisions on how to keep children safe. Costs to transport of SEND pupils would increase as social distancing arrangement were still in place.

The Council continue supporting children's learning and play at home and a number of laptops have been supplied to the Council and these would be distributed accordingly.

Students were concerned about exams, schools would be ranking pupils on their performance prior to lockdown, however they would receive extra support if they wished to re take exams in the Autumn.

Many Services had adapted to working on line and statute had been amended to enable admissions and school admission appeals to be undertaken using digital technology.

It was assumed that there would be an increase in Elected Home Education and schools may request increased support from Educational Psychologists to help support pupils with increased anxiety or school refusal issues.

The next stage was to provide support for those pupils who were transitioning from primary to secondary schools in September to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Sandwell Children's Trust

The Trust had adopted a set of principles early on around being child centred keeping them at the forefront of decision making.

The Trust was working with partners and linked into the safeguarding partnership.

Changes had been made to core practice with most of the workforce working from home. Prior to home visits, risk assessments were undertaken in particular around social distancing and whether the social worker would need PPE. Virtual Visits with recording were taking place with some groups of children which were identified in the weekly group meeting.

With enhanced partnership working and sharing information, support to children and care leavers had been strengthened.

There was a hidden risk with less face to face visits and the increase in virtual visits, however this was considered on a daily basis.

There had been a decrease in front door referrals during the lockdown period, however this was steadily increasing, and it was expected that once children return to the school setting referrals would increase and there had been planning and preparation for any possible increase.

Performance had been under scrutiny by Ofsted and their new assurance visits commence in September and the Trust welcomed the visits as they considered that they were in a good position.

The chair add that it was re assuring to know the extent of work which was being undertaken to protect families and children.

15/20 Care Home update – Director Adults Social Care

The Board received an update on the position with care homes within Sandwell.

There were 83 CQC registered residential nursing homes in Sandwell with 3,203 placements. As these residents were some of the most vulnerable group Covid-19 was a significant risk for these homes.

37 homes had reported a level of infection and 41 individuals had died in care homes.

The Council with other partners provided support to care home providers in a number of ways and a grant had been obtained central government to be used for infection control, 75% of which would be paid to care homes.

Preparation for a possible second wave of infection was being undertaken.

The Chair added that Health partners had been working closely with homes from a medical perspective. The care home app had been developed and iPads had been supplied to enable care homes to engage with partners. Also medical equipment had been supplied to enable a residents to be checked for symptoms. There had been no new confirmed cases in care homes since May 29th.

16/20 Finance update – Interim Section 151 Officer

The main points covered in the update was Covid-19 Funding, Financial Pressures and next steps.

The Council had been allocated a number of different grants to support the response to the Covid- 19 crisis and the main grants were outlined. Most of them were ring fenced for specific usage. Only the emergency funding

tranches totalling £21.578m was not ringfenced and could be used to fund the range of pressures being faced.

Total pressures had been approximated to total £23m of which £11m was additional expenditure and £14m loss of income amounting to a £2m shortfall. Assumptions had been made around non payment of commercial rent income, council tax and business rates and the level of support that may be required by care homes.

A letter from MHCLG setting out government priorities now conveyed a shared burden message which could affect the financial pressures.

The big concern was an unachievable planned savings and existing budget pressures increased the shortfall to approximately £7m.

Next Steps were outlined as follows:-

- Completion of 2019/20 closedown and confirmation of level of reserves.
- Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring – end of June – projection of position for end of year.
- Review and update of Medium-Term Financial Strategy to reflect the impact of Covid-19 – would require assumptions to be made about funding for 2021/22 as government timeline was still autumn for settlement this information was usually received around mid to end of December.
- Business Planning and budget strategy would need to be more closely linked than ever before and this would be done through the Reset and Recovery Board.
- Continuing support of regional lobbying to government on sufficient funding for local government based on ‘4 buckets framework’.

17/20

Homelessness update – Director Homes and Communities and Business Manager- Housing solutions.

The Board received an update in respect of homelessness during the lockdown period.

It was confirmed that there was a high homelessness demand compared to the size of the council. The main demand comes from private rented section evictions, family or friends no longer willing to accommodate and Domestic Abuse.

The aim was to move away from the crisis and demand approach and work with agencies and partners to develop and early intervention and prevention approach.

- This was not just a housing issue;
- Closely linked with complex and chaotic life experiences:
 - Mental ill health, substance misuse problems, prison or care system.

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) were part of most street homeless people's life histories.
- Severe health inequalities, poorer health and wellbeing and lower life expectancy.
- Worklessness and skills and education.

Progress so far was as follows:

- Developed a PRS incentive model (Secure and Sustain) to develop increased housing options for our customers
- Developing a new Prevention and Move on Toolkit – we will need help from our partners in pulling this capacity together.
- Exploring IT solutions to reduce bureaucracy and to ensure our time with customers was focussed on support.
- Understanding the real problems to solve so we could tailor effective personalised housing plans.
- Developing a new Rough Sleeper operating model to create single piece end to end flow – based on key worker model.
- Mapping of all rough sleeper provision (3rd sector and agency) in the borough to carry out a gap analysis and to identify a future roadmap to meet needs.

The Chair asked that a progress update be brought to a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

18/20 Inclusive Economy update – Interim Director Regeneration and Growth

The Community Wealth Building Strategy had been approved at Cabinet on 5th February 2020 and the Inclusive Economy deal had been agreed at Cabinet on 26th February 2020. Whilst these were two separate strategies it was important to align them as many of the principles were interconnected.

A Governance Structure was being developed to bring these two agenda's together and were in the process of establishing an Inclusive Economy and Community Wealth Building Board which will be chaired by the Leader of the Council and will include a number of partner organisations.

A delivery plan was being developed to identify those practical actions that can be delivered in the short, medium and long term and some of these actions would need to be reviewed or potentially accelerated due to the Covid-19 situation.

The plan would be used as a toolkit to support economic recovery such as to ensure that our procurement system increased local employment and training and support local supply chains.

In respect of discretionary grants for small micro businesses impacted by Covid-19 those businesses that employ local people and were socially

responsible would score higher when being assessed and could potentially be awarded a larger grant.

Continue to work with partners to secure additional resources to maintain regeneration and economic growth within the borough, it was important to ensure that local people remain to be employed maintain income and not become homeless.

19/20 Any Other Business

Formation of a Sandwell Covid-19 Community Engagement Board.

Local authorities were required to submit Covid-19 Outbreak plans that set out the measures in place to identify and contain outbreaks and protect the public health.

The Board was asked to agree that a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing was established as the Sandwell Covid-19 Community Engagement Board and agree the Terms of Reference of this new Board as set out in the report.

As the meeting was inquorate it was agreed that this would be distributed by e mail to members and responses received by 15th June 2020.

20/20 Board Forward Plan 2020-21

The Health and Wellbeing Project Officer outlined the matters which would be brought to the next meeting of the Board. A number of the items had been due to be received at the March meeting which had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

21/20 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board would be held at **3.30pm** on **Wednesday 29th July 2020. (Virtual meeting using MS Teams)**

Meeting ended at 6.44pm