

Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

20 January 2025 at 6.00pm
Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House

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

In attendance: Alexia Farmer and Amritpal Randhawa (Healthwatch Sandwell).

Officers: Christine Anne Guest (Assistant Director Adult Social Care Commissioning) and Stephnie Hancock (Deputy Democratic Services Manager).

1/25 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Allcock and W Gill.

2/25 **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest.

3/25 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held are approved as a correct record.

4/25

Urgent Additional Items of Business

There were no urgent additional items of business.

5/25

Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2023/24

The Board received Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) Annual Report 2023/24. The production of the report was a statutory function of the Safeguarding Adults Board under the Care Act 2014.

Notable work and achievements during 2023/24 included:-

- task and finish groups in relation to domestic abuse, safeguarding pathway, learning disability and autism, embedding learning from statutory reviews, vulnerable adult risk management, hoarding and all age exploitation strategy;
- further development and monitored the vulnerable adults risk management (VARM) process, ensuring it was embedded in practice;
- development of a range of accessible resources, including “Learning on a Page”;
- engaged and built positive working relationships with the Department of Work and Pensions in Safeguarding;
- contributed to a core training offer to be made available across the partnership;
- developed an effective response to hoarding, adopting co-produced Sandwell Hoarding Improvement Partnership;
- the Operational Safeguarding Team won a national award;
- undertook a joint Care Act compliance and Section 11 audit programme for which a peer review activity would follow;
- continued promotion of “See Something, Do Something” campaign and held workshops on what was and was not safeguarding;
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During the reporting period there had been 773 safeguarding concerns of which 43% related to neglect and acts of omission, 22% financial abuse and 13% self-neglect. Data continued to show positive increasing trends in performance which was consistent with current sustained efforts towards system improvements and changes in the culture of practice.

Looking forward to 2024-25, key priorities and actions were:-

- listening to the voices of services and front-line practitioners;
- developing more inclusive performance data;
- working with all partners to look at Sandwell's "front door" including pathways, referrals and thresholds;
- focus on prevention projects with other statutory boards;
- improving Board governance;
- revising the SSAB's Strategic Plan;
- contributing to the development of an All Age Exploitation Strategy;
- continued learning from reviews using Impact Statements.

The Board was also shown a video on the Vulnerable Adults Risk Management Pathway.

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

- data was not collected on hoarding, but anecdotally it was an extensive problem, requiring a person-centred solution work was underway with experts from the North West to establish best practice;
- there were a variety of pathways for referrals, and those not requiring intervention were signposted to other organisations;
- a person-centred approach was key, and work was led by the individual and support delivered in a manner that made sense to them;
- outcomes from safeguarding audits were reported to the (SSAB) Board;
- patient safety was always secured when an incident was reported, with contact being made with key individuals involved with the patient, urgent action was taken when necessary and taking no action was never an option;

The Board heard that the SSAB Manager, Deb Ward, was nationally recognised for excellent practice.

6/25

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board Action Tracker

The Board noted that the recommendations arising from its review on Loneliness and Isolation had been approved by the Cabinet at

its meeting on 15 January 2025. Implementation would be monitored and further updates submitted to future meetings.

7/25

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.

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk