

Minutes of Regional Health Scrutiny Chairs Forum

31 October 2005

**Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Civic Suite,
1.00pm**

Present

Cllr. Honor Cox	Solihull MBC (Chair of meeting)
Cllr. Deirdre Alden	Birmingham CC
Cllr. Richard Burt	Dudley MBC

In Attendance:

Joanne Holmes	Solihull MBC
Pat Warner	Walsall MBC
Narinder Saggu	Birmingham CC
Fiona Bottrill	Wolverhampton CC
Earl Piggott-Smith	Sandwell MBC

Dr D Milligan, Medical Director – Pan Birmingham Cancer Network
 Karen Metcalf – Pan Birmingham Cancer Network
 Bridged Canavan – Asthma UK

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr. Honor Cox welcomed members to the forum meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Cllr John Reynolds	Wolverhampton CC
Cllr John Edwards	Sandwell MBC
Cllr Val Woodruff	Walsall MBC
Sean Ward	Dudley MBC
Jeremy Snape	WMLGA

3. Minutes of the meeting 18th July 2005

The Minutes were accepted as a correct record and there were no matters arising.

5. Asthma UK

Bridged Canavan, Community Development Volunteering Officer from Asthma UK, attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the Forum.

The presentation outlined some of the key statistics and facts about Asthma and the impact of Asthma on healthcare and hospital admissions, including:

- Asthma can't be cured, but the symptoms can be managed;
- Many hospital admissions and most asthma deaths are preventable;
- There is a difference in experience of different ethnic groups with ethnic minority populations experiencing many more hospital admissions and this has particular implications for the west midlands;
- A number of PCTs in the West Midlands have the highest number of asthma related hospital admissions and this has cost implications;
- Some of these issues could be linked to access to primary healthcare services;
- Asthma has a big impact on children, especially in terms of education and time missed from school;

Bridged highlighted some of the issues that may be of interest to scrutiny committees and areas where scrutiny reviews could impact to change behaviour.

The Chairman thanked Bridged Canavan for attending the meeting.

6. Cancer Networks

Karen Metcalf from the Pan-Birmingham Cancer Network gave a presentation outlining the role of cancer networks and the structure of the Pan Birmingham Network.

Members noted that Cancer Networks provide a new structure bringing together organisations who plan and provide cancer services for an area covering a population of 1-2 million in a formal partnership.

Cancer Networks work with Acute Trusts and providers to ensure development of high quality cancer services that meet national cancer standards and ensure co-ordination of services across primary, secondary and tertiary providers. They also identify areas of poor performance and support service improvement.

The group sought clarification on recent reviews of specific areas and the changes to services which had been made as a result.

There was some concern raised about the level of consultation undertaken in relation to proposed service changes. Although it was acknowledged that

sometimes changes impacted on quite small groups of patients. Karen Metcalf also outlined the involvement of user-groups in the process.

There was some discussion about the issue of a conflict with the government's proposals to locate services in the community and close to home. It was noted that it would not always be possible to provide quality cancer care for very specialised areas in this way.

The Chairman thanked Karen Metcalf and Dr D Milligan for attending the meeting.

7. Proposal to develop a forensic medium secure unit in Birmingham.

Cllr Alden gave an update on the consultation on proposals for a forensic medium secure unit in Birmingham.

The proposals will have an impact on 30 PCTs in the West Midlands, although, so far, there has not been support for the development of a joint scrutiny committee to review this issue.

Birmingham Health Scrutiny Committee are currently scrutinising the consultation process and attended a recent public consultation event. Members had some concerns about the way the consultation was being carried out and the lack of clarity about what was meant by consultation. There was a feeling among attendees that the decision on location had already been made and that there was a limit to the level of input the public would be able to have.

Birmingham Health Scrutiny Board would be preparing a response to the consultation before Christmas and other authorities were invited to feed in any views to this response as appropriate.

There was some discussion about the impact of consultations on the work load of scrutiny committees and a feeling that the need to respond to consultations was time consuming and diverted attention away from the planned work set out by committees in their work programmes.

8. National Changes to Burns Services

Birmingham City Council gave an update on this issue and stated that they would not be getting involved in the planned consultation unless proposals were likely to have a negative impact on burns services in Birmingham.

The Group noted that the consultation on this issue had been put back until June 2006. It was agreed that this issue should continue to be monitored.

9. Work Updates.

A summary of recent work undertaken since the last meeting is as follows:

Solihull

- Developments with the Care Trust and the connection with 'commissioning a patient-led NHS'
- MRSA – the Board are receiving quarterly updates on infection rates and are due to visit Solihull hospital in the near future.

Dudley

- Monitoring the impact of the Maternity services review
- Wheel chair users review
- Local issues for Health Users
- Osteoporosis – the committee received a presentation from this group and the PCT have since decided to buy a scanner for this area which is a positive outcome.

Birmingham

- 2010 – a joint committee has been established with Sandwell MBC and the consultation will start in February
- Review of Voluntary organisations
- Bird Flu – a review of how the city would cope with a flu pandemic
- Tracking recommendations from previous review including MRSA and Obesity.

Walsall

- Reviews have been delayed as the work programme has been taken up with dealing with consultations
- Mental Health Review – an action plan is being drawn up.

Wolverhampton

- Report on Healthy Lunches at Secondary Schools has been published – this has been overtaken somewhat by national guidance;
- Domestic violence – monitoring and reporting on impact on children;
- A workshop has been held in relation to the annual healthcheck with a focus on a few specific standards and a submission has been made to the Healthcare Commission. This was a successful exercise, but the committee will be reviewing how to manage this process for the future.

Sandwell

- 2010 – Further meetings are planned for this review.
- Healthcare Commission – small working group has been set up to look at responding to trusts across Sandwell.
- Men Age 50+ - focusing on Healthcare needs, but involving a number of agencies such as housing.

10. West Midlands LGA (Provided after the meeting)

John Reynolds and Duncan Whitehouse from Wolverhampton shared their experience of Scrutiny and Executive relations at the last Regional Overview & Scrutiny Network event at Stoke on 14th October. They shared their positive experience of how, through good practice with Health Scrutiny, Wolverhampton had established robust undertakings with the Executive to ensure scrutiny recommendations are responded to within an agreed framework and timetable. Learning from the Network event will be circulated and posted on the WMLGA website shortly.

WMLGA's Information & Intelligence Unit has recently undertaken a survey of users to establish support needs and networking priorities. Its findings are being analysed at the moment. Evidence from this survey will be used to inform a review by the Network's Steering Group of the future of scrutiny support by WMLGA.

Following the last meeting of the Forum and its view that an autumn Regional event to address health inequalities would not be supported, Jeremy Snape consulted elsewhere in the region and confirmed that overall opinion concurred with this view. He will be liaising with Tim Gilling to look at some appropriate event in 2006.

11. Date and Venue for Next Meeting

The Next meeting of the Regional Chairs Forum will be held on Monday 30th January in Sandwell at 10:30.

