

# Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Primary Care Access and GP Services Working Group

## Initiation Document

Working Group Name:	Primary Care Access and GP Services Working Group
Committee:	Social Care and Health
Municipal Year:	2023/24
Chair:	Councillor Hussain
Lead Officers:	Andrew Osborn (Director of Commissioning, Lead Health and Social Care Officer) Jack Thompson (Democratic Services Officer) Matt Powis (Senior Democratic Services Officer)
Membership	Councillors P. Gill, R.K. Mehmi, K. Hussain, R. Martin and W. Rasab.
Co-opted Members	Not specified

### 1. Context

- 1.1. On 28 September 2023, the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered issues surrounding patient access to Primary Care and GP Services.
- 1.2. Members noted that since the Covid-19 Pandemic there has been significant pressure on GP Practices and Primary Care Access nationally and within the Borough. This has made it harder for residents to secure appointments with GPs and other health professionals in a timely manner, causing frustrations and affecting health outcomes. Coupled with this has been the increase in wait times for referrals, elective care and mental health services which further adds pressure onto GP Practices.
- 1.3. The General Practice Improvement Programme (GPIP) is being implemented by NHS England and delivered by the Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) to help improve support for GP Practices to meet demand and improve patient satisfaction. In addition, continued work is being undertaken by the ICB to improve GP telephone systems and complaints processes.
- 1.4. There was a consensus that the Committee needed to establish a working group to investigate and review obstructions within the industry and work with partners to improve patient outcomes.

### 2. Objectives

- a. Review the current GP commissioning model, the National General Practice Improvement Programme and rights of patients under the NHS Constitution;
- b. Understand changes made to GP and primary care access in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and review delivery plan for recovering access to primary care;
- c. Explore the current issues raised by residents, in particular those who are vulnerable, in regard to accessing GP appointments and primary care access and identify salient themes;
- d. Investigate improvements that could be made to primary care access and healthcare pathways.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1. Consider the issue around primary care and GP access within the Borough.
- 3.2. Investigate and consider the actions of local health partner led services:
  - a. GP practices (commissioned through the Black Country ICB)
  - b. Walsall Urgent Care Centre (Walk in Centre - commissioned through the Black Country ICB)
  - c. Urgent and Emergency Care Centre (A&E – Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust)
  - d. Referrals and elective surgery (Black Country ICB and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust)
  - e. Mental health services (Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)

- f. West Midlands Ambulance Service
- 3.3. To identify key points for the improvement in access to primary care and access to GP services within the Borough, and develop a joint strategy with partners to improve the healthcare pathways for residents.
- 3.4. Review delivery plan for recovering access to primary care.

#### 4. Equalities Implications

- 4.1. The Equality Act 2010 protects children, young people and adults against discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to housing, education, clubs, the provision of services (including healthcare) and work.
- 4.2. The public sector equality duty in Section 149 of the Equality Act requires public bodies, including local authorities and healthcare providers, to take active steps to eliminate discrimination and to do positive things to promote equality.

#### 5. Who else will contribute

- 5.1. In addition to lead officers and members contributions will be required from the following partners and stakeholders:
  - a. Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB)
  - b. Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust
  - c. Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
  - d. West Midlands Ambulance Service
  - e. Public Health (Walsall Council)
  - f. Healthwatch Walsall
  - g. Adult Social Care (Walsall Council)
  - h. Child Services (Walsall Council)
  - i. Walsall Housing Group and WATMOS

#### 6. Timescale and Reporting Schedule

- 6.1. The following dates are based upon the need for the working group to be completed in the same municipal year:
  - a. Terms of Reference – November 2023
  - b. Terms of Reference to be approved by Overview Scrutiny Committee – 7 December 2023
  - c. Draft report to be considered by Working Group – TBC
  - d. Final report to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee - TBC
- 6.2. A detailed timetable of meetings and activities can be found at Appendix A.

#### 7. Risk Factors

- 7.1. The following table documents potential obstacles to the progress of the working group:

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Input from officers will detract from service delivery.	Medium	Identify a manageable scope.
A lack of engagement from external partners.	Medium	Early engagement to provide the best opportunity to identify a mutually convenient time for input.
Complexity of current overlapping health systems	Medium	Provide the working clear guidance on current systems and processes operated.

## Appendix A Timetable

Date	Activity
27/10/2023	Issue draft Terms of Reference for consideration and comment
03/11/2023	Comments on Terms of Reference returned to officers
07/11/2023	Final Terms of Reference agreed with group members
07/12/2023	Terms of Reference presented to Scrutiny Overview Committee
TBC	Review the current GP commissioning model, the National General Practice Improvement Programme and rights of patients under the NHS Constitution.
TBC	Understand changes made to GP and primary care access in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and review delivery plan for recovering access to primary care.
TBC	Explore the current issues raised by residents, in particular those who are vulnerable, in regard to accessing GP appointments and primary care access and identify salient themes.
TBC	Investigate improvements that could be made to primary care access and healthcare pathways.
TBC	Review evidence and draw conclusions in preparation for a draft final report with recommendations.
TBC	Present final report and recommendations to Scrutiny Overview Committee.