

HEALTH SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

27 June 2009 at 6 p.m.

Panel Members present

Councillor Ault
Councillor Aftab
Councillor Carpenter
Councillor Mushtaq
Councillor Robertson
Councillor Paul
Councillor Woodruff

Officers present

Dave Martin – Executive Director Social Care and Inclusion
Margaret Willcox – Assistant Director Adult Services
Steph Simcox – Head of Finance - Social, Care and Inclusion
Dr Sam Ramaiah – Director of Public Health
Marsha Ingram – Head of Corporate Affairs Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
Rosie Musson - Head of Governance and Partnerships
Ham Patel – West Midlands Ambulance Service
Nikki Ehlen – Scrutiny Officer

10/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Creaney, Councillor McCracken and Dr Desai.

11/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitution(s) for the duration of this meeting.

12/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Councillor Woodruff declared an interest as an employee of Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust.

13/09 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2009, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

14/09 SWINE FLU

Dr Ramaiah spoke to the panel about the swine flu pandemic which was generally a mild illness, similar to seasonal flu with prevalent symptoms being a fever and gastroenterol symptoms. In Walsall people were advised to ring the national flu line and if diagnosed with swine flu, antiviral medication was prescribed for collection from designated collection points. People were also able to log on to the website and self prescribe or visit their G.P.

Depending on the demand experienced in Walsall more collection points may be started to include the town centre and Bloxwich. Members were informed that 6,000 people in Walsall had received anti-viral medication, Dr Ramaiah said that the assumption had been made that this meant that 6,000 individuals had experienced swine flu. Dr Ramaiah stated that Walsall people had behaved sensibly, but stated that it was holiday season and there needed to be plans for increased demand.

Members were informed that as had been seen in previous weeks it can be a serious illness, although most deaths were of people with a pre-existing health condition Children were more irritated by the virus. Dr Ramaiah said that the flu line had taken the pressure off G.P's, and said that swab tests were no longer being taken.

Councillor Robertson stated that the media coverage may sensationalise issues such as swine flu. Dr Ramaiah explained that a multi-agency, multi disciplinary meeting was held each Friday, and that things may change over the next few weeks.

Councillor Aftab asked how many collection points there were in Walsall; Dr Ramaiah stated that there were 3, in Darlaston, Harden and Walsall Wood.

Councillor Ault raised the point that many people died each year from seasonal flu; Dr Ramaiah confirmed that the flu virus killed people each year. Councillor Ault asked how organisations were recording staff as being off sick with the virus, to prevent people claiming to have had the virus twice. Officers explained that at the Council specific codes were used to show that the person had been off due to swine flu, and if they were off work with the virus twice, medical advice could be sought. Dr Ramaiah stated that although it was unlikely that a person would get swine flu twice, the medical community were still learning from Mexico.

Dr Ramaiah informed members that it was hoped that vaccinations for swine flu would be carried out by G.Ps through structured programmes. Members were informed that this was a major programme, that this country had never seen a vaccination programme of this kind before, and that it would be a major challenge. Dr Ramaiah stated that evidence suggests that the vaccination would prevent people from getting swine flu. The PCT were putting plans in place to vaccinate from end of August to the beginning of September and that it was likely that people with underlying conditions and health and social care staff would be given priority.

15/09 HEALTH INEQUALITY STRATEGY

Dr Ramaiah stated that the East / West divide was noticeable and stated that awareness needed to be raised in terms of what needed to be done. Members were informed that 15,000 people were socially excluded in Walsall. Dr Ramaiah stated that everything was not known about health inequalities and that more work needed to be

done on this issue. This document had been endorsed by Cabinet and the PCT group. The panel were asked to endorse the recommendations on page 7.

Councillor Robertson asked if different targets were proposed for different areas to encourage greater aspirations. Dr Ramaiah stated that partnership work was key and poverty needed to be tackled.

Councillor Aftab asked what the current progress was with the health inequality strategy. Dr Ramaiah stated that health inequalities had been worked on for many years and that they existed within and outside of Walsall. The panel were informed that improvements were being made. Dave Martin emphasised that this strategy was a high level strategy which referred to other strategies but that it was difficult to monitor the difference the activity had actually made.

Dr Ramaiah stated that it was complex but possible to see how interventions had contributed. Councillor Ault questioned whether the fact that one side of the borough lived longer than the other side of the borough was all about money. Officers explained that this was due to variations that existed in economic well-being, employment, environment, and education. Dave Martin stated that the common feature in these variations was money and that inequalities tended to be eliminated or at least mitigated by achieving economic well being.

Councillor Ault asked what affect the M6 had on the health of residents. Dr Ramaiah stated that there was an increase in asthma related admissions around the M6 corridor, although it was difficult to quantify as the motorway pollution may affect peoples heath but so did lifestyles such as smoking which was a major contributor to symptoms of asthma. Dr Ramaiah informed the panel that fewer people smoked now (46,000) compared to 16 years ago (84,000). Councillor Robertson asked if air quality in Walsall was monitored. Dave Martin suggested that 'environmental health' would monitor air quality and be able to provide a list of where testing stations where. Members requested a briefing note of testing points and details of air quality on the motorway corridor. Dr Ramaiah stated that most deaths from lung cancer were from smoking.

RESOLVED:

That a briefing note on air quality testing points and air quality along the M6 corridor is provided to the panel.

16/09 LEARNING DISABLITY POOLED BUDGET DRAFT OUTTURN 2008/09

The panel received the learning disability pooled budget draft outturn for 2008/09 presented by Steph Simcox. Steph explained that the pooled budget had under spent for 2008/09 and this under spend of provider services had been used to offset overspends in other areas of the budget. Members were assured that actions and achievements were achieved despite under spends. The panel were also informed that a grant had been received for 2009/10. This was due to be signed off by the partnership on 31 July 2009.

17/09 INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT STORE (ICES) POOLED BUDGET DRAFT OUTTURN 2008/09

The panel received the ICES pooled budget draft outturn 2008/09. Steph Simcox informed the panel that there had been an overspend in this budget, and that there was a typing error on page 24, which stated that there had been an 'under spend'. The panel were informed that the Council had contributed to 59% of this budget, so had absorbed slightly more of this overspend. Members were also informed that throughout the year investigations had taken place to find out why this had happened and significant mitigations had been done to bring down the overspend. The service had done exceptionally well to achieve this.

Councillor Robertson asked how much equipment was recycled. Dave Martin said that this was an area which the service had been considered to be underperforming in, but had taken measures to improve and the service were now back up to target.

Steph Simcox confirmed that members were happy to receive a quarterly report on ICES pooled budget and the learning disability pooled budget.

18/09 NHS WALSALL PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2008-09

Steph Simcox presented the NHS Walsall Provisional Outturn for 2008-09, and emphasised that this budget was out of the authority's control. Steph Simcox explained to members that the Department of Health had set a target for NHS Walsall to under spend by £11.5 million.

Councillor Woodruff asked Steph Simcox to clarify whether all trust accounts could be provided to the panel. Steph Simcox confirmed that she would find this out and report the information back to the panel.

Dave Martin raised the point that there was seeming incompatibility with Foundation Trust status and the Private Finance Initiative; he suggested that the panel may wish to ask health organisations in the borough to provide information on their broad financial picture as this would help members achieve a broader understanding of pressures within the health economy and possible implications for social care.

Councillor Robertson asked how much in the way of staff shortages/vacancies had helped to achieve the under spend. Dave Martin questioned whether financial pressures would have an impact on the types of drugs prescribed in Walsall. Steph Simcox confirmed that she would find this out and report the information back to the panel.

RESOLVED:

That the Manor Hospital, NHS Walsall, West Midlands Ambulance Service and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust were asked to provide the panel with a broad financial situation.

19/09 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Ault suggested that the panel kept the dementia strategy on its work programme but removed the item on the PCT criteria for assessing overweight children and LINKs as this had historically and was still being considered by the Social, Care

and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel. Members were asked to indicate if they wished to receive Social, Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel papers for meetings where this item would be considered. Councillor Ault asked for an update on perinatal and infant mortality in 3 months.

RESOLVED:

That:

- **The dementia care strategy is added to the work programme of the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel.**
- **Perinatal and infant mortality is reviewed by the panel in 3 months time.**
- **The LINKs item is removed from the work programme of the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel.**
- **The PCT Criteria for assessing children who are overweight is removed from the work programme**

20/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 13 October 2009.

The meeting terminated at 7.05 pm.

Chair:

Date: