

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) held at
11.00 am on Wednesday, 13 November 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor C Miks (Chair)
Councillor S Agboola
Councillor S Gray
Councillor L Harvard
Councillor G Lewis
Councillor K Maton
Councillor B Mosterman

Other Members: Councillor L Bigham, (Cabinet Member for Adult Services)
Councillor K Caan, (Cabinet Member for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing)
Councillor G Hayre, (Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing)

Apologies Councillors: A Hopkins, M Lapsa and D Toulson

Employees (by Directorate)

Adult Services G Borro, N Byrne, S Caren

Law and Governance E Jones, C Taylor

Others Present: F Davies, D Fullwood, Coventry and Warwickshire ICB

Public Business

19. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

20. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

21. Matters Arising

Further to Minute 15 – All Age Autism Strategy 2021 – 2026 Implementation Update, the information requested by Members had been shared and raised actions noted.

Further to Minute 16 – Suicide Prevention Strategy – presentation slides had been circulated. Officers had reached out to Age UK and were awaiting a response.

22. Health Sector Skills Development

The Board considered a report and presentation of the Chief People Officer and the Head of Strategic Education and Skills at Coventry and Warwickshire ICB regarding an update on the work in progress and the work planned on the future skills in health and social care.

Since 2022, providers across Coventry & Warwickshire Integrated Care System (ICS), had collaborated to focus on adult nursing recruitment and retention through a project called Project 1000 (P1K). Through the P1K project, recruitment processes had been overhauled for newly qualified nurses to improve the recruitment experience and to remove blockers for candidates applying for roles. Flexible rostering and legacy mentors had also been introduced as part of the project to improve the experience colleagues faced.

As a result, adult nursing vacancies had been reduced from 13.7% at the end of 22/23 to 8.8% in July 2024 and nursing leavers had reduced from 9.1% in March 2023 to 8.2% in July 2024.

The Future Skills Board had been established to take a strategic approach to ensuring Coventry & Warwickshire could grow its health and care workforce of the future in sufficient numbers and with the right skills to provide services that met the needs of the population.

The recruitment and retention of health and social care support workers would link into the ICB's health and social care employability academy programme, where the vision was to create meaningful and accessible education, employment and training opportunities to ensure diversity and inclusion for care leavers, people with disabilities, people with refugee status and disadvantaged people across the Coventry & Warwickshire ICS.

A reduction in the number of applications to undergraduate programmes had been seen and the C&W ICS had partnered with Coventry University on a successful bid from Office Student Funding to support an increase in level 6 apprenticeships.

This funding would enable the creation of an infrastructure to support the expansion of apprenticeship programmes across Health and Social Care.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Councillor L Bigham, commended the update, highlighting the constant changing needs in circumstances and the importance of carers not being disadvantaged.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing, Councillor K Caan, recognised the importance of the work of carers who were 'everyday heroes' referring to enforcing prevention so carers could grow their skills and benefit their families whilst also looking after their own health and wellbeing.

Councillor K Caan declared an interest in this item of business as Deputy Chair of the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).

Members of the Scrutiny Board, having considered the content of the report and presentation, asked questions and received information from officers on the following matters:

- A pilot was underway with Coventry College looking at upskilling support workers so that they felt invested. The NHS supported clinical educators in social care so the ICB was piloting 3 clinical educators in order to make a positive impact.
- In order to remain competitive with other industries, the ICB focused on staff experience, how to improve culture within the organisation, health and wellbeing, upskilling the workforce in technology, with the ambition to retain those technically skilled against other competitive industries, and career pathways.
- Retention and leaving rates were average within the West Midlands.
- The Employability Academy supported diversity and inclusion across Coventry and Warwickshire in education and employment was helping to fill the gaps in the workforce. Students moved through the academy on a career pathway and into an entry level carer role. Apprenticeships were used to grow the existing workforce.
- Health and social care roles were on the skills shortage list and therefore were not impacted by visas. Health and social care were able to offer sponsorships for international recruitment.
- Barriers to recruitment eg. complex application processes; were being addressed by attendance at jobs fairs and linking with government departments to bring people back into work. Work was ongoing to make the Employability Academy sustainable. Roles were currently advertised on the 'Your Route to Nursing' website. Programmes to support disadvantaged groups into employment were running and these were looking to expand further. Funding was in place to work with the employability academy until March 2026.
- Work was ongoing with Councils and schools regarding the promotion of careers within health and social care through schools and the curriculum.
- Improved promotion required for apprenticeships which could be taken up to Masters level and open to individuals of any age.
- In Adult Social Care there was a clear pathway for progress from a role with caring responsibilities into other roles.
- Bank or agency staff did not have access to the same development opportunities as permanent members of staff. Agency spend had been driven down however, health and social care was heavily reliant on bank staff.

The Board requested:

- Officers liaise with veterans (specifically armed forces breakfast clubs) offering opportunities available within the Health Sector.

RESOLVED that the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5):

- 1) Note the progress and future plans.**
- 2) The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change consider the following feedback and consider the barriers to recruitment within the health sector and how these can be addressed in Coventry:**

- a. **Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**
 - i. **Support for ICB to visit schools/be involved in curriculum setting to influence teachers, parents and children from an early age regarding children’s future career paths within health.**
- b. **Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change**
 - ii. **Promotion of Apprenticeships within the Health Sector and highlight and communicate that apprenticeships can be undertaken up to master’s degree level and open to all ages.**

23. **Future Recommissioning of Carers Support Services and update on progress against the Carers Action Plan 2024/26**

The Board considered a report and presentation of the Director of Adults and Housing regarding the Future Recommissioning of Carers Support Services and update on progress against the Carers Action Plan 2024/26.

In the 2021 Census, 27,391 people in Coventry identified themselves as having caring responsibilities. This was likely to be an underrepresentation of the caring population, as many people did not recognise caring roles. Of those 27,391, 8,391 carers reported to be providing over 50 hours of care, which indicated an intense caring role (30.6%).

Adult Social Care in conjunction with Coventry & Warwickshire ICB, commissioned a range of support services for people with caring responsibilities across the city from Carers Trust Heart of England including:

- Carers Wellbeing Services – Information & Advice, Training, Peer Support, Activities, Wellbeing support
- Carers Assessments – delegated responsibility from the council.
- Carers Regulated Support – Carers Emergency Response Service and Carers Break Scheme.
- Carers Projects – Primary Support for Carers, Employment Support, Direct Payments and Grief and Loss.

The services were arranged in a mix of grant-based arrangements and a contract, due to expire on 31 March 2025. The current annual value of commissioned support was approximately £775k which included an annual contribution of £134k from CWICB.

Additional projects costing 96k per year (included in the above costs) commenced in 2020 during the pandemic to respond to emerging needs and identified pressures for carers.

For the future recommissioning of carer services, there would be an overall reduction in budget of £41,870 per year due to the development of alternative information and advice support corporately and how future carer support would be reshaped.

The City Council and the ICB planned to recommission carer support services within Coventry based on carer feedback. The recommissioning was aligned to priorities in the Carers Action Plan 2024-26 which outlined 3 key priorities based on carers feedback as follows:

- Empower carers with flexible respite options, ensuring they can take breaks.
- Deliver the right support, at the right time, and in the right place.
- Maximise the reach of carers assessments to benefit more carers.

The aim of the Carers Action Plan was to improve the experience of carers with a focus on improving the life a carer lives alongside caring. The success of the plan would be reviewed by engaging with carers and reviewing data eg. the local authorities bi-annual survey.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing, Councillor K Caan, commended the multi-dimensional approach referring to the positive impact the streams would have.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Councillor L Bigham, paid tribute to all carers, advising that many were elderly and very young and that the strategy would help to make their work easier and ensure their own health and wellbeing and ambitions were catered for.

Members of the Scrutiny Board, having considered the content of the report and presentation, asked questions and received information from officers on the following matters:

- The reduction in budget amounted to 7% of the councils contribution in terms of funding for carers.
- The service was not provided in-house, but by the Carers Trust in Coventry.
- The website had received an update based on carers feedback.
- The bi-annual survey of carers provided a good indication of progress and performance measures for carers including their quality of life and any concerns which were raised.
- Officers connected with carers on a regular basis. This would continue along with different ways to assess the impact of interventions and understand the impact of carers assessments.
- The tender process would be overseen by the Steering Group to ensure deadlines were met.

The Board requested:

- Carers be provided with links with Go CV and CV Life.
- Information on how the £134,000 ICB contribution was determined.
- Information to be circulated to all Members regarding available information and how to obtain it.
- That the website refresh be shared with Members.
- Information on 'A Day in the Life of' – real life examples – to be provided in future reports.

RESOLVED that the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) notes the Recommissioning of Carers Support Services and progress on the Carers Action Plan 2024-26.

24. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) noted the work programme.

RESOLVED that the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) notes the Work Programme 2024-2025.

25. Any other items of Public Business

The Chair, Councillor C Miks, thanked the Head of Adult Care and Support, S Caren, for her contribution to the Board over the years, it being her last meeting prior to her retirement.

(Meeting closed at 12.40 pm)